

Snow White Tales

Outline

- Bettelheim on Snow White
- Afanas'ev: "The Magic Mirror"
- Aleksandr Pushkin: "The Tale of the Dead Princess and the Seven Knights"
- Disney
 - The Dwarfs at Work
 - The Death of the Wicked Stepmother

Bettelheim on Snow White

- Red/White (blood/snow) symbolism
- Oedipal conflict (projection of jealousy)
- Narcissism
- Hunter: father substitute
- Dwarfs: pre-oedipal existence
- Snow White and the Dwarfs: latency
- Red and white apple: divided personality (id/superego)
- Sleep: gestation period (gap between physical maturity and readiness for marriage)
- Birds: owl (wisdom), raven (mature consciousness), dove (love)

“The Magic Mirror”

- Stepmother role shared with father and uncle
- Father (merchant) alive throughout the tale
- Oedipal conflict displaced from father to uncle
 - Consistent emphasis on threats to the heroine’s virtue
- Brother as merciful huntsman
- Suicidal (!) bogatyrs as dwarfs
- “Mean old woman” as stepmother’s agent
 - Heroine succumbs to enticements out of vanity
 - No apple
- Embedded tale (cf. “The Armless Maiden”)
- Mirror, glass coffin

Pushkin and Snow White

- Aleksandr Pushkin, 1799–1837
 - “Rusalka”
 - “The Tale of the Dead Princess and the Seven Knights”
 - More to come ...
- How is the Pushkin text similar to or different from the Grimm or Disney “Snow White” that you know (and the *Snow White: A Tale of Terror* film that we will watch next week)?

“The Tale of the Dead Princess ...”

- Verse: trochaic tetrameter, rhymed couplets
- Includes framing story of heroine’s (princess) birth (cf. Grimm)
- Prince Yelisei as major character from the beginning (seeks help from nature to find her)
- Chambermaid as huntsman
- Knights (who want to marry princess) as dwarfs
- Mirror, glass coffin

Disney's *Snow White*

- *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*
- Grimm version
- Walt Disney Studios
- 1937
- First full-length animated fairy tale film
- Oscar nominee, Best Musical Score, 1938

Snow White's Stepmother



The Wicked Stepmother

- How does the queen threaten Snow White? Why doesn't she simply kill her?
- Is the wicked stepmother ugly? Is evil ugly?

The Seven Dwarfs

- What do the dwarfs represent for Bettelheim
 - ...
 - In the Grimm tale (described in Bettelheim)?
 - In the Disney film?
 - In *Snow White: A Tale of Terror* (next week)?
- What does the dwarfs' labor suggest?
 - In the Disney film?
 - In *Snow White: A Tale of Terror*?
