

Wicked Stepmothers and Cinderella

Outline

- Wicked Stepmothers
 - Marina Warner (Course Pack)
 - Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (Course Pack)
 - Bruno Bettelheim (For recitation)
- *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (Disney)
- *Cinderella* (Disney)

Stepmothers and their Relatives

- Jealous wives (Basile)
- Jealous mothers-in-law (Perrault)
- Jealous stepmothers (Grimm)
- All powerful women who can be considered interchangeable

Warner on Wicked Stepmothers

- Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde* (Course Pack)
- Why are stepmothers wicked?
- “The experiences these stories recount are remembered, lived experiences of women, not fairytale concoctions from the depths of the psyche ...”

Stepmother Issues

- Stepmothers and mothers-in-law
- Mothers-in-law as tyrants
- The vulnerability of mothers-in-law
- Changing audiences for fairy tales
- What about princes and heroes?

Can Stepmothers be Saved?

“... The evil she does is not intrinsic to her nature ... for it arises from the insecurity of her interests in a social and legal context that can be changed, and remedied.”

Gilbert and Gubar

- “The Queen’s Looking Glass”
- Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar
- King as patriarchal voice of judgment
- Both women locked in transparent enclosures
- Battle between self and self
- Queen frees herself from Snow White within
- Snow White represses the Queen within
- Inevitable cycle of womanhood

Walter Elias Disney (1901–66)

- The Walt Disney Company (Walt Disney Productions, 1929–86)
- Ub Iwerks (collaborator), Kansas City
 - *Little Red Riding Hood, Puss in Boots, Jack and the Beanstalk, Goldie Locks and the Three Bears, Cinderella* (1922–23)
- Moves to Hollywood (1923)
- Disneyland (1955)

Early Disney Films

- *Steamboat Willie* (1928)
- *The Three Little Pigs* (1933)
- *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937)

Disney's *Snow White*

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

Changes Introduced by Disney

(Excerpted from Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tale as Myth, Myth as Fairy Tale*, pp. 87–89)

- Cinderella-like orphan
- Prince appears early, frames the entire story, and inspires the stepmother's jealousy
- Dwarfs with names and a significant role (including chasing the wicked stepmother, who dies trying to kill them)
- Stepmother visits dwarfs' cottage only once
- Prince's kiss is what awakens Snow White

Disney's *Snow White* viewing guide

- The Wicked Queen's look of jealousy as Snow White canoodles with Prince Charming.
- The weak and feeble male role portrayed by the huntsman
- How human emotions are displayed vicariously through the weather

Snow White's Stepmother



Disney's *Cinderella*

- Perrault Version (primarily)
- Walt Disney Studios
- 1950



Cinderella Viewing Guide

- The wicked stepmother's initial look of surprise when she hears Cinderella.
- The wicked stepmother's face as she approaches Cinderella.
 - Coming up with a new plan?
- How does the wicked stepmother thwart Cinderella's attempts at going to the ball?
- The wicked stepmother's look of pleasure telling Cinderella goodnight.
