Anna-Christina Rod Østergaard
Mia Rendix
Master's Thesis
02-06-2021

The Folk and the Stranger

The representation of the Stranger within folk and fairy tales not only characterise cultural attitudes toward the Stranger, but ultimately breaks down the barriers between the conceptualised 'Self' and 'Other' and promotes empathetic and innovative thinking.

Contents:

Abstract

From out of the folk and fairy tale tradition, a colourful scenery of characters, plots, motifs and moralities have grown upwards and twisted around the brain stem of the popular consciousness, fixing the folk and fairy tale narratives firmly within cultural psyche and story-telling ritual. Thus fixed, these tales have become a central part of a narrative tradition, which permeates all levels and ages of society. The folk tales and fairy tales represent an archetypal view of the world, of people and of relationship; simplifying these components to fit within a shorter narrative that may appeal and be accessed broadly.

Among the archetypes represented in the tales is that of the Stranger. This particular archetype is central to the notion of identity; it affirms the conceptualisation of community by contrast, outlining a representation of 'them' and 'us'. By analysing the representation of this archetype, this paper will attempt to discuss attitudes towards as well as the conceptualised identity of the Stranger, identifying three fundamental and prevalent sub-types; the Malignant Stranger, the Helpful Stranger and the Magical Stranger. Each of these types, as well as the main archetype, will be analysed and compared to the philosophical and cultural concept of the Stranger and the so-called 'Folk', in order to link the literary representation of the Stranger to a wider cultural context, as well as the particular historical context when applicable.

Thus, this paper will explore the anxieties, bewilderment and awe of the Stranger. Doing so will open up for a further discussion of the tales abilities to represent fundamental human emotions and experiences, as well as the concept of identity and community as they affirmed when encountering the Stranger. The folk and fairy tales have often come to symbolise a national narrative and literary tradition, being linked to a cultural past, which is framed as a so-called 'pure' representation of that country's nationalism. However, the tales have travelled widely across many culture, and many of the same tales form part of various nations' sense of identity. The non-static tradition of the folk and fairy tales stands as a representation for the very fundamental natures of the concepts of the Self and the Other; that neither are fixed and that both are relative and varying by the perspective of others. Furthermore, in the following paper, based on the articles and studies published on the subject, the effects of fiction, on the reader's empathetic and interpersonal abilities.

1. Introduction

There is a strangeness in the human narrative; an estrangement between the story itself and our telling of it. The tradition for story-telling is universal among humans and neither is nor was simply confined to those highly literate elites who, throughout history, have had the benefit of spreading narrative by publication, connection and fame. Though the high ideals of Greek philosophers, poetic soliloquies of Jacobean dramatists and high political satire of revolutionary Russian novelists have no doubt enlightened, uncovered and inspired humanity and change, there is a branch of literary expression, much closer to the earth's surface, which has done much of the same in spite of going largely unrecognised for these efforts; namely that of folk tales and fairy tales.

These forms of narratives have often been discounted as not having any substantial literary merit or even not being counted as literature at all. However, their history, subject matter and characters place them at the heart of human lives; representing emotional conflict, the complexity and duality of identity and the interpersonal relationships. Thus, the tales are central to a debate of literature as a simulation or representation of life and of the effects of literature on the human psyche, which has garnered relative amount of added traction and scholarly debate in the past decade.

This latter concept is based on the notion that an experience of literature, of engaging with a narrative, exposes the reader or the audience to another world; to other lives, other narratives, other perspectives and thus potentially promote empathetic and interpersonal abilities. The likeness of these narratives to our own experiences are important to connect us to the stories, however, the newness and the strangeness within the same stories, may expand our minds, our ways of thinking and our creativity. Several studies have been conducted and articles published to try to debate the scale of the impact of fiction of human cognitive skills. While contention and disagreement still reigns over this subject, questioning the studies' methods of research as well as their results, this paper would like to argue for the value of a discussion of the potential representational, simulative and effective powers fiction hold.

To centre such a discussion as pointedly within the context of human experience, and subsequent conceptualisation of said experience, this paper will be focusing on a branch of fiction,

which has its origin at the heart of the every-day people. This particular branch of fiction is, as previously mentioned, the folk and fairy tale genre. These tales reportedly derive from an oral tradition originating with the illiterate, lower social classes from before literacy was widespread. They have survived into the age of the printing press, becoming the subject of education, middle and upper class authors, collecting them for posterity as evidence of a folk tradition and mentality that might have been ebbing away with the start of the industrial revolution (Sanderson 75). Thus, the tales are evidence of tradition of the people and for the people, centring their themes, moralities and archetypes within the human narrative.

Among the most central of these archetypes within the genre, this paper would like to argue, is that of the Stranger. Though the tales seem to initially have been collected with the view of preserving tradition and have become associated with an idea of unadulterated, original nationalism, it is the unknown, the 'otherness' and 'strangeness' that is central to the folk and fairy tale genre. One of the most prominent and recurrent themes of the tales is that of identity; of becoming and un-becoming. However, the notion of identity only exists if we have its opposite, which is the unfamiliar, the undiscovered, the undefined and the unclaimed. All of these qualities is central to the concept of the Stranger, and places the Stranger at the heart of discussion of representation in fiction. While we are still attempting to understand the effects of fiction of the human mind, a discussion of the archetype of the Stranger is essential; to understand how our empathy may be increased by interacting with narrative, the representation of and morality concerning that of the Stranger ought to be understood.

In order to attempt to discuss the abovementioned concepts, this paper will begin by discussing the genre, or genres, of folk and fairy tales, i.e. their history, format and literary qualities, in order to establish the cultural context and literary significance that the tales merit. Moreover, the readers, audiences and tellers of these tales will be discussed to further the context, placing these and the tales themselves within the tradition of the so-called Folk. Next, this paper will investigate the theories surrounding the social, cultural and identity within the concept of the Stranger, in order to link the archetype of the Stranger within the tales to a wider social context.

2. The Fairy and the Folk

In the following chapter, the fundamental features of the folk and fairy tale genre will be discussed. Including potentially differentiating elements between folk tales and fairy tales, the following chapter will describe the history of these tales, linking their style, form, narrative structures and characters to a wider social context. This will be done in order to understand the tales as a cultural phenomena and to later include this is a discussion about the tales' representational value. Furthermore, the populous whom the tales are regarded as being representational of will be defined as a concept; a concept of the 'native', the Self or the communal Self, labelled under the name of 'the Folk', to provide a counter to contrast to the concept of the Stranger for analysis in later chapters.

2.1 The Tales and the Fairy

To analyse the archetype of the Stranger within the genre of the folk and fairy tale, it is important to establish the frameworks of the genre itself. This is not only to understand how the Stranger is represented but to place the voice that, in this case, represents the Stranger within a cultural and historical context in order to establish its potential cultural influence. Therefore, this paper will begin by outlining some of the defining characteristics of the folk and fairy tale genre, as well as its potential origins, historical development and proposed literary and cultural merits. This will be done in order to set the scene into which the Stranger is placed and plays out their role.

   However, establishing a singular definition for either folk or fairy tales seems problematic as scholars and the public alike sometimes differ wildly in the perception of these types of stories. While the two are often mentioned together, or at least often compared with one and other as two branches off the same tree, many scholars would have them distinctly differentiated. Scholar Marina Warner, who has written several works on folk and fairy tales, defined fairy tale specifically as belonging under the umbrella term of 'folklore'. She writes that the fairy tale genre "(…) belongs in the general realm of folklore (…)", stating further that "(…) many fairy tales are called ' folk tales '(…)" (*Once Upon A Time* xvi) Thereby, Warner places folk tales as a subgenre to the genre of fairy tales. In Warner's estimate, the two genres are interlinked in their format and

history, both falling under the category of folklore, thus not describing them as two separate genres of fiction.

Her viewpoint is opposed, however, by such scholars as Ruth B. Bottigheimer who argues that the two are fundamentally different types of narrative, however much common history they may share. She states that "Folk tales differ from fairy tales in their structure, their cast of characters, their plot trajectories (…)." (*A New History* 4) Bottigheimer describes in detail her view of the fundamental elements of both folk and fairy tales, underlining the ways in which the two differentiate as she goes along. Her definition for folk tales is as "Brief, and with linear plots; folk tales reflect the world and the belief systems of their audiences." (*A New History* 4) She describes a rather un-fantastical cast of characters and sequence of events as forming the basis for the classic folk tale narrative. "Taking their characters from that familiar world, folk tales are typically peopled with husbands and wives, peasants, thieving rascals, or an occasional doctor, lawyer, priest, or preacher. In a typical folk tale plot, one person makes off with another person's money, goods, or honour." (*A New History* 4)

However, defining folk tales thusly, Bottigheimer is not accounting for the folk traditions and belief, which have been evidently prevalent throughout history up until today. First stating that the motifs and narrative structures of folk tales are based on the belief-systems of the 'folk' and then subsequently stating that the folk tale genre does not contain any fantastical creatures is not taking into account the folk traditions for believing in fairies, nature-spirits and other supernatural beings (Eberly). Thus, Bottigheimer, along with many other scholars of folk and fairy tale narratives, over-simplify the belief systems, which are as much part of forming the basis for the motifs and narrative structures of folk and fairy tales as socio-economical factors and historical events. Furthermore, they over-draw the line between religious, secular and mythological belief systems when in fact these are historically much more blended than Bottigheimer seems to be suggesting.

Bottigheimer goes on to state that "(…) a very large proportion of folk tales don't have a happy ending. Marital strife looms large, because typical folk tales that include a married couple are not about the joys of getting married, but about the difficulties of being married. Folk tales are easy to follow and easy to remember, in part because they deal with familiar aspects of the human condition (…)" (*A New History* 4) Sometimes, however, folk tales do exhibit 'larger than life'

events, having the beggar become a king, the shepherd marry a princess or the farmer's daughter becoming a queen. Though such events would broadly be evaluated as historically highly unlikely or even fanciful, the folk tales telling of such events do not ascend to a plane of the whole fantastical and magical for, as Bottigheimer puts it, "(...) on close examination these apparently 'fairy tale endings' have no magic about them. Instead, their unexpected weddings come about through poor folks' cunning, and they are thus categorized as "realistic tales."" (*A New History* 4-5). Thus, she distinguishes between the so-called 'magical tale' and 'realistic tale' by alluding to the structure of the narrative, stating that magical occurrences are a fundamental tool to bring the narrative to its conclusion, whereas folk tales must rely solely on non-magical motifs and events to bring the narrative forward.

   As mention, placed on the opposite hand to that of the folk tale, Bottigheimer describes what she calls 'tales of magic'. This type of tales "(...) exists across a broad spectrum of tales, some of which are fairy tales and many of which are not." (*A New History* 5) She, and many other scholars of fairy tales or 'magical tales', do no simply describe all stories containing magic or supernatural events or creatures as fairy tales. There are a wide range belonging to what may be classified, as Bottigheimer so elegantly does, as a 'magical tale'. There are religious tales, urban myths, mythology, fables etc. All of these are defined by their own characteristics, which separate them from the fairy tale genre. To Bottigheimer's mind, the most defining quality of the fairy tale, which separated it from these other types of myths and tales, is the fixation on earthly, human happiness, mostly solidified by marriage, as opposed to reverence, awe or marvel at the divine; its other-earthly powers and truths it wishes to relay (5). However un-earthly the characters and motifs that often define the fairy tale genre are, the essence of these tale are always focused on the most basic, earthly human interests, emotions and needs; shelter for safety, food for survival, and love for community.

   Scholars of folk and fairy tales not only believe that the two types of tales are not attributed enough distinctiveness, but that that they moreover are too easily dismissed and overlooked for their merit as culturally significant literary works. Scholar Jack Zipes dates this trend back about three hundred years ago, which would be the time when folk and fairy tales became part of collections, such as those of Perrault and the Brothers Grimm. Since this time, Zipes states, folk and fairy tales have suffered decline in estimation, stating that the tales have "(...) been so

negatively twisted by aesthetic norms, educational standards and market conditions that we can no longer distinguish folk tales from fairy tales nor recognize that the impact of these narratives stems from their imaginative grasp and symbolic depiction of social realities" (5). Thus, by entering the folk and fairy tale tradition into the emerging standardised literary elitism and removing them from their original tradition, their value is overlooked.

However, not only is it difficult to gather a universal definition of both folk and fairy tales, it is equally as difficult to settle upon a history and tradition, although the generally agreed upon origins of the folk and fairy tale genre is that of the oral, folk tradition. Bottigheimer states that "Most traditional histories of fairy tales begin with an unlettered country folk that invents fairy tales and then passes them along by word of mouth from generation to generation." (*A New History* 1) Thereby, Bottigheimer, as well as many other scholars, identify the roots of the folk and fairy tale tradition as springing from the non-literate, lower classes. There is a sense of a tradition of story-telling that has been handed down through the ages. Tracing the line of the history of folk and fairy tales back through time, one quickly finds that it begins to fade sometime around the 17th century (Silver). This hazy past lends itself as feeding for the imagination. We are left with the means to imagine an ancient tradition, stretching back into a mythical past. This past, to some, come to signify an age of national purity; an age before multi-culturalism diluted the original culture. The dichotomy of such thinking is emphasized when realising the stark similarities and sometimes near identical narratives told in two or more separate countries, which never the less will be regarded as central canon to the countries cultural history.

The recordings of classic folk and fairy tales are inevitably removed from the 'folk' due to "(…) successive alterations (to the) style and content (…)" (Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales, Folk Narrative and Research* 355) and thus "(…) is the end product in a long process of careful editing" (*Fairy Tales, Folk Narrative and Research* 355). Therefor, the literary collections of fairy-tales, which have come to stand in for the old oral tradition in which these stories once lived, are not a pure transmission of the original tales. Their past, which are the tales supposed origins, is in fact too far removed to conclusively validate. The fact that the tales, such as they exist to us today, existed before they were written down within approximately the last 300 years, is taken for granted. Never the less, there is wide agreement amongst scholars that these tales are originating from an oral tradition, relying on the word of those who say they collected the tales, plucking them out of this very

tradition.

By translating the tales from an oral tradition into a literary tradition does create a fundamental change; it changes the tales into something non-static to stationary, which contradicts the whole notion held by some scholars that the tales themselves were somehow 'tainted' by the process of being written down and edited by other, literate hands. After being written down many of the tales may have been changed, in plot, characters, motifs, themes etc. by those who turned them into collections.

Some scholars call this an appropriation and a contamination of the folk and fairy tales by fundamentally altering them. However, these elements of aestheticism is not the fundamental change that these tales have undergone; it is the change from a fluid, changeable, oral way of storytelling to a fixed, literary state. If we accept the culture of folk and fairy tales as delivered verbally between persons for generations, then it is reasonable to assume these tales would not be retold the exact same way it was first told to an audience. It is highly probable that plot-structures, elements about characters or other details will have been changed, forgotten and confused and intermingled with those of other tales that the teller themselves have previously been told. Thereby, the tales would always have been changing, merging and converging, making the changefulness part of the very essence of this genre.

Since the tales were written down, however, there has been the creation of the so-called original source; one which becomes standardised and centralised to our understanding of these tales As Zipes states "Children subjected to the biases (…) no longer want to be "told" stories that might depart from the "correct" versions printed in books or on film." (4) Thus, the tradition becomes fixed to a certain structure and an idea of originality, which is at odds with the age-old changefulness, which is essential to the folk and fairy tale genre. Although the tradition of fluidity still exists today to some extent, in books and films which are so-called 're-tellings' or re-interpretations of the stories, the notion of an original source has been created and solidified by the text, which are being printed to this day, of the collections of Charles Perrault and Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm.

With the many lives the folk and fairy tales have lived, in their various states of reincarnation, it perhaps becomes difficult to state conclusively which culture, country or social layer they represent; though many will try. As the tales, those that were recorded or rewritten by such as the

Grimm Brothers, Hans Christian Andersen and Perrault were supposedly based, were meant to come out of the oral tradition of an illiterate, working-class culture, this is the culture which the tales have often been interpreted to represent. Due to the historical lack of literacy among the lower classes, the folk and fairy tales thus prove a potentially valuable source to uncover the dynamics, moralities and psychology of these people whose private lives went virtually undocumented for centuries. Thus "(…) folk and fairy tales have come to be thought of as useful sources to document the world view and experience of the lowest social classes." (Bottigheimer, *Research and History* 356)

Therefore, cultural literary analyses of folk and fairy tales, as well as mythology and folk lore in general, have been done in order "(…) to investigate social conflicts, psychological phenomena, the attitudes or even daily habits of broad segments of society." (Bottigheimer, *Research and History* 356.). However, with the acknowledgement that the tales are both fluid and static, national and international, the oral invention the lower classes and the literary product of highly educated middle and upper class persons, how to we determine a particular culture to attribute our findings to? At Bottigheimer states, "Folk narrative specialists demonstrate a growing – and corresponding – conviction that folk and fairy tales are historically determined, a belief that content, style and plot grow out of the surrounding culture rather than representing an ageless and unchanging tradition." (*Research and History* 356) but how do you place a specific folk or fairy tale within history when the exact age of the tales are unknown? Likewise, how do you pin a particular folk or fairy tale narrative to a specific geographical point on a map, when one fairy tale recorded in Russia is so much similar to one recorded in Portugal and none know which came first to inspire the formation of the other?

At times, a particular detail in one of the versions of the tale may reveal a certain peculiarity relevant and traceable to a specific time and place, providing a point of discussion of the cultural context. Perhaps the same story that is told is western Europe about a witch gets retold in a Slavic country but with the figure of Baba Yaga instead. The figure of Baba Yaga may be particular to Slavic culture but her representational significance and metaphorical power may be referred to with equal effect in another country who have an understanding of the connotations of a witch or a wise-woman. The tales appeal much broader through their use of archetypes and universal human problematics than to be merely confined to one socio-economic class, one country or one

era of time. It is important to "(…) realize that in folklore as in life, there is often no one correct or right version. One traditional version is just as traditional as another version (…)" (Dundes, 58) because the tradition itself is based in metamorphosis and universality; appealing broadly and varying widely. By the tales being "(…) evidence of universal archetypes." (Bottigheimer, *A New History* 1) they refer to and affirm a humanist culture, pertaining to universal ideas, characters and moralities.

   This very aim may prove to be the purpose of the tales; to increase human understanding and break down cultural barriers which hinder empathy by referring to universal experiences. Their generalising and at times simplistic narratives and characterisations will be understood by all. "Not only did the tales serve

to unite the people of a community and help bridge a gap in their understanding of social problems in a language and narrative mode familiar to the listeners' experiences, but their aura illuminated the possible fulfilment of utopian longings and wishes which did not preclude social integration." (Zikes, 5) All these factors may be converging together to conclude a singular, accessible, humanising culture; that of the folk.

2.2 The Folk

According to Marina Warner, the fairy tale "(…) is a short narrative, sometimes less than a single page (…)", (*One Upon a Time* xvi). Warner names these little narratives as belonging to the tradition of the 'folk'. The word folk stems from the old Germanic terms, still existing in many of the Germanic languages, and refers to the wider, general public. The word 'folk's' holds such connotations as broad accessibility and broad appeal to the masses, rather than an elitist form of culture.

   When the German Brothers Grimm dedicated the tales of their collections to the 'Volk' (Warner, *Once Upon a Time* xviii), they were naming them after a tradition, a culture, as much as a collective noun for a people. With the many scholars and every-day consumers of folk and fairy tales referring to the two genres as more or less interchangeable with one and other, it stands to reason that there is some shared origin between the two; though they may not be quite the same, they seem to be two branches off the same tree. This paper would like to propose that to discuss

this origin, in context with the concept with the 'Volk' or 'Folk', is crucial to examine folk and fairy tales as literary works in a cultural context.

It is when we begin to attempt to define this cultural context, however, that it gets a little more complicated. As previously mentioned, it is difficult to pinpoint a given folk or fairy tales to a specific geographical spot or historical era of origin. It is therefore hard to name an original author and put the tales into the cultural context of that person or that people. While folk and fairy tales may be deemed as two sub-genres belonging to the same mother-genre, splitting into to two neat lines for us to look upon, the tales themselves, when each are investigated, flitter off into entirely different directions, drawing not straight but crossed, tangent and irregular, all made with a faded ink. One tale, sworn by locals in a rural community in Ireland as part of their most sacred local lore, may crop up in near-identical form, both in plot and characters, in a village near the Ural Mountains of Russia, where it is held in the highest regard as a most faithfully Russian tale. Without being able to establish which may be the elder, it is impossible to regard a folk or a fairy tale in the light of a specified cultural context. Without even being able to establish exactly how old any folk or fairy tale might be, it is just as difficult to place them within a specific historic context as well.

Elements being thus situated, this paper proposes another option; to regard the tales within a culture which is not primarily defined by geography or historical era. Rather, that it is possible to place them in the context of a shared culture; a culture which spans across nations and much of time. This culture, this paper would like to propose, might be named the culture of the folk.

Like the folk and fairy tales specifically, the wider span of folk culture has regularly been deemed unworthy of high-brow, academic investigation. The literature, as well as the music, traditions etc. are considered to be without devoid of depth. At best, it is emotive, but without any real intellectual value to justify the emotion. Indeed, even what may be referred to as popular or folk literature, is hardly ever deemed as real literature by academic elites. Historian Robin D. G. Kelly identifies a malignancy within this trend among academic, stating that how normal it "(...) has been to dismiss popular culture as little more than escapist, formulaic, mindless trivia imposed on an uncritical mass in order to shape consumer consciousness and defuse opposition." (1400) Thus, Kelly points to the link between popularism and consumerism, but is critical of the idea that this link should be inevitable.

While Kelly is referring more specifically to a contemporary, consumerist society that is highly powered by capitalism, this tendency to dismiss the popular culture, the culture of the masses, the culture of the common folk as weak-minded and the mere pacifier of anxieties of the ignorant larger populous is far from merely modern. When the philosopher Plato referred to those 'little stories' that were popular among the common people, he famously called them 'old wives' tales' (Warner, *Once Upon a Time* 45), creating an idiom which exists in commonly used language even today to refer to something nonsensical, silly and unintelligent.

However, far from being trivial and without merit for academic analysis, folk and fairy tales may be essential to a wide range of academic subjects, particularly those seeking to understand cultural interactions and catalysts. This idea is stated by Vladimir Prop, in his book Theory and History of Folklore. Prop mentions states "(...) the solution to many diverse phenomena of spiritual culture is hidden in folklore." (4) His idea of spiritualism refers to an idea of the so-called soul of the Folk, which is best translated through and oral tradition. Furthermore, he emphasizes the importance of regarding folklore as a product of what he refers to as "(...) spiritual production (...)" (4) Prop narrows the concept of folklore to be defined solely by the verbal tradition; a lyrical, poetical tradition. Thus, he dismisses the notion that the collections, such as those of Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, are folklore; moreover, a true, spiritual product, i.e. in the spirit of the people or the common folk.

Perhaps they are products of this tradition, an outcome thereof, but cannot be classified as part of the tradition in itself. They have been removed from the original source and thus lost their meaning. The tales have been censored, edited and abbreviated by the collectors of these tales as well as by their editors and their publishers. These people who have reworked the tales do not belong to the folk culture. Rather, they are educated, highly literate, middle- or upper-class and elitist. The literation of the tales thus removes them from their original culture and format, disassembling the folk-cultural aspects, which was essentially expressed through oral reiteration. Prop's emphasis on the verbal aspect of folklore as essential to the entire genre, stating that the soul the people is in the voice that expressed them; in this case, the folk and fairy tales, mythology and lore is the nearest thing we get to the historical equivalent.

3. The Stranger:

Before analysing the literary archetype of the Stranger, as it exists within the folk and fairy tale tradition, this paper will first discuss the Stranger as a cultural, social and socio-economical phenomena. This will be done in order to later link the literary representation of the stranger to the cultural concept of the stranger or other. In addition, this is an investigation of the idea that literature is a reflection of life, history and culture, which this paper will be discussing further later on. While the folk and fairy tale genre is, as previously established, difficult to pinpoint to a specific geographical place or historical era, the conclusions regarding the perception of and attitude towards the stranger will be based partly on the notion of a universal and timeless feeling towards an indefinite other, as well as to the specific cultural and historical context when applicable and traceable.

   Very rarely is archetype of the Stranger in folk and fairy tales singled out as a subject for academic study. Most often, the Strangers are placed within other typologies in the cast of folk and fairy tale characters, e.g. the stranger met with on the side of the road is described as a beggar or a vagrant until he reveals himself to be a king or prince in disguise, the unknown travelling salesman is identified by his line of trade and the witch or sorcerer living in isolation will be identified by their supernatural abilities. Rarely are these strangers looked upon under one common identity. This paper will propose that to analyse these folk and fairy tale characters as belonging under one archetype of the Stranger or the Other, will be to examine the attitudes toward the stranger, the outsider or the Other held by a society; their expectations, anxieties and understanding of the either 'known-' or 'unknown Other'. These societies may be identified as a village, town, country, family unit, gender or any other socially constructed unit, which clearly notion-of-self clearly distinguishes between 'insiders' and 'outsiders'.

   In the fields of philosophy and sociology, Georg Simmel often takes his place on centre stage when it comes to scholars' academic discussions of the Stranger. Overall, Simmel seems to evaluate the life of the stranger in a very positive light. He writes that "If wandering is the liberation from every given point in space, and thus the conceptional opposite to fixation at such a point, the sociological form of the "stranger" presents the unity, as it were, of these two characteristics." (1). As Simmel points out, the stranger is both unidentified, unfamiliar and

unfixed as well as identified as a stranger; familiar and fixed by this status. The stranger, who is often characterised as having no position within society or standing outside of societal structure, is, by being named as a stranger, given a status that relates to the social structure and gives the Stranger an identity within the community, namely that of the 'strange'; personifying a sense of 'otherness'. Thus, the Stranger's identity in society is determined, though their identity may at some point shift in the minds of the native society and thus they may become 'un-strange'.

Simmel moreover discusses the fact that those who live in faraway places do not necessarily fall under the category of Stranger. The Stranger must come into our lives in order to figure within it. The stranger only becomes the stranger once they enter the society where they will figure as the Other. Populations of nations and cultures unknown to us, cannot be identified as the stranger in the same sense. This point of Simmel's is particularly relevant when considering the pre-industrial and pre-internet era. Up until the 18th and 19th century, widespread information about other nations, peoples and cultures where limited (Sanderson 75-76) Firstly, the printing-press was necessary to make informative writings popularly available. Secondly, the rise in literacy was crucial for broad consummation of literature.

Information, or the lack thereof, being a pre-requisite for the evaluation of what is Other, 'strangeness' is arguably relative and dependent on an evaluated majority and minority. According to Simmel, the evaluation of the stranger is partially dependent on the socio-economical structures of the society to which he is a stranger. The stranger is often a new-comer or at least associated in their current environment as belonging to or originating from another. Simmel uses the example of the traveling salesmen or tradesperson who enter into the agricultural society, which is self-sufficient either from necessity or otherwise, as in the rural societies of the post-roman and pre-medieval era in the United Kingdom and other European territories. The traveling trader who is simply passing through such a territory may not struggle much under his outsider-identity, but if he, as Simmel points out, settles in the society, the trader will find themselves defined by the status of the stranger.

The stranger's interaction with the 'native' community is likewise based on individual perception, histories and level of immersion as well as practical and emotional attachment to the 'native' community. The "(…) expression of this constellation lies in the objectivity of the stranger. He is not radically committed to the unique ingredients and peculiar tendencies of the group, and

therefore approaches them with the specific attitude of "objectivity." But objectivity does not simply involve passivity and detachment; it is a particular structure composed of distance and nearness, indifference and involvement." (2) Thus, according to Simmel, the stranger is peculiarly placed; they are active, interactive, often proactive, but still their interaction with the community does not take away their 'strangeness'.

According to Simmel, the outsider status of the stranger may in fact place it more within the confidence of the 'natives' of the society. As Simmel puts it, the stranger "(…) often receives the most surprising openness -- confidences which sometimes have the character of a confessional and which would be carefully withheld from a more closely related person." (2) Their impartiality and the fact that they are not always expected to remain forever within the particular society, may make the stranger sometimes privy to information, which would otherwise have had potential consequences within the society if shared with one who was a fixed member. This theory relies on the trust in the stranger; that the populous or person sharing this information would not suspect malignant intent from the stranger, but rather see them as a representative of pure objectivity and lack of self-interest.

Some self-interest, however is evident in an essay by Alfred Schuetz, as he uses the specific example of a stranger who is "(…) an adult individual of our times and civilization who tries to be permanently accepted or at least tolerated by the group which he approaches." (1) in order to illustrate the situation and the status of the immigrant. However, he stresses that the following points of discussion are equally applicable to a variety of 'outsiders' seeking entry into an 'enclosed' and established society. He uses such examples as the "(…) applicant for membership in a closed club, the prospective bridegroom who wants to be admitted to the girl's family, the farmer's son who enters college, the city-dweller who settles in a rural environment, the "selectee" who joins the Army, the family of the war worker who moves into a boom town (…)" (1), citing all of these as characters who fall under the definition of the Stranger and going through a point of 'crisis' and transformation which leaves them estranged from a community.

The dynamic between the Stranger and the community, the Other and the Folk, is essential for a discussion of the identity of the Stranger. Although the word Stranger may imply a lack of identity, as the identity of such a person would be unknown, the Stranger does in fact constitute and identity of its own with its own connotations and stigmas. Carmen Blacker, in her book The

Folklore of the Stranger; A Consideration of a Disguised Wandering Saint, defines the dynamic between a Stranger and a community, specifically a rural, working-class community, as strained due to inevitable economic tensions. She writes that "(…) a traveller (…) whose way of life is wandering, in contrast to the static agricultural life of the village." (163). Their character is undefined, their responsibilities vague at best and their past unknown. This, contrasted with the structured, role-defined, tightly knit communities of village life, may cause a suspicion or uneasy towards the stranger. Combining these factors with a folk-tradition for believing in magic, there is the added possibility that they stranger may be a supernatural or magical being.

Blacker states the mentality of the natives, as regards to the Stranger, as they can "(…) never be of us." (163) and subsequently "(…) is excluded from the network of relationships and hierarchies which comprise our community; he must therefore refract round it, either above or below." (163). The fact that the stranger stands outside of the 'system' or society of mankind causes the stranger who enters society/a society to be viewed as a possible threat to the system and cosmos of the society. Their entrance into a society may alter the status quo. Springing from this is the fear that they will alter it for the worse. Because they exist outside the structure, they may be viewed as not needed to necessarily adhere to its determined rules; the rules which are seen as being in place to maintain order. Thus, the stranger be an object of fear and find themselves rejected by the larger community, who fear how their presence or emergence may disturb the peace. Perhaps the stranger may even bring supernatural evil into the society. The unfamiliarity with the stranger, their character and their past, is a usual cause for unease.

This same fear caused by unfamiliarity may on the other hand cause the society to "disarm (the stranger) with hospitality; we treat him with all the ritual of a guest, which will elicit from him blessings rather than harmful enchantments." (Blacker, 163) The folkloric beliefs teach that your treatment of the 'unknown' or stranger may turn itself back on you; how a society greets the stranger may affect its fate. Respect and generosity is repaid with aid and prosperity, whereas cruelty and selfishness reaps misfortune and disaster. The stranger is often something seemingly innocuous and easily taken advantage off, such as a beggar on the road, a child on its own or a small animal or bird. Thus, the stranger seems easy prey for exploitation by a majority or other singular character who possess the advantage over the stranger, but is actually the most crucial, determinate factor to the fate of the society or protagonist or both.

This vulnerability is at the heart of the character of the stranger. The same aversion of normality, i.e. not belonging to a societal-structure, mystery and outsider-status, which causes them to be viewed with suspicion, are the same factors which makes their state as a stranger quite precarious. They are not part of the social-structure and therefor does not enjoy its protection, nor do they have the benefit of the same stability that the members of a community may achieve. Thus, the stranger in folkloric tales and fairy-tales are often impoverished or even emaciated. Moreover, the stranger is usually a numeral minority to the societal majority. Thus, the reception of the 'other' or stranger by the majority or person with the advantage over the Stranger may be interpreted as a test of their goodness. This goodness, especially towards those less fortunate, is highly rewarded in stories stemming both from the old pagan faith as well.

These contrary characteristics of the Stranger, identity and fluidity, vulnerability and independence, will be the focus of the following chapters in which the archetype of the Stranger, as it exists within folk and fairy tale narratives, will be identified and classified in relation to its representation. In the interest of simplifying the representation the Stranger, this paper proposes three predominant interpretation of the archetypes of Strangers within the genre: The Malignant Stranger, the Helpful Stranger and the Magical Stranger, all of which will be discussed in reference to a literary tradition and cultural context.

3.1 The Malignant Stranger

In folk and fairy tales, the Malignant Stranger is perhaps the most naturally famous, having spun such memorable characters as malicious, magic-wielding queens, charming, hungry wolves and infanticidal stepparents. These characters may have left some of the most striking impressions on the readers and audiences of folk tales and fairy tales, and for very good reasons. This particular sub-archetype of Stranger seems to be representative of some deeply held anxieties; both those instinctual and primal as well as some more pragmatic and economic.

Since the essential identity of the Stranger itself is as neutral as it is non-static, due to its relative status depending on perception, the notion of the Stranger or the Other as a malignant or harmful entity by the native population, or the Folk, must arise from some pre-conceived concerns with regards to the Stranger's presence within the community. Often, such fears may due to cultural,

economic or other factors based on historic or ancestral memory. All of which conclude in the same emotion, namely fear, which in turn often transcends into other feelings such as anger, aggression or hate. It is when the "(…) stranger, who intrudes as a supernumerary (…) into a group in which the economic positions are actually occupied." (Simmel, 1) that anxiety of obstruction to the economic systems, in which everyone has their place, or the expressed fear of being excluded from this system, which may induce hostility from the native populous, i.e. the Folk, towards the Stranger. It is the healthy and functioning economy, which is arguably most likely attract outsiders, who are hoping to benefit from it and take part in the thriving economy. If this particular economy is based on a smaller, potentially rural, setting, where the economic balance is more easily shifted, there may be a perceived reluctance to welcome the Stranger and the reaction may be one of aggression and even expulsion towards them. However, in larger, more widespread and even national economies, the very same suspicion of and wish to exclude the Stranger is apparently just as likely to prevail.

   Simmel uses the historical example of the Jewish population in Europe to illustrate this very point. The perception of the Jewish people of Europe as strangers is a further representation of the relativity and often conceptual nature of the state of the Stranger. In spite of the fact that a Jewish population may have inhabited a certain country, city, town or village for generations, and even generations beyond memory, as a social group, they have been still often been prescribed the status of immigrants. Though a Jewish person or populous may live in the same neighbourhoods, attend the same schools, speak the same language and have their identification papers stamped the same, as the perceived Folk, they are often still set apart from the native Folk. Thus, the state of the Stranger is not merely that of a traveller appearing for the first time within a community, or economy, and thus we are alluded to the notion that 'strangeness' is delegated based on a system of conceptualism; one which may vary from place to place.

   The anxieties felt towards the Stranger, whether they are a so-called 'native stranger', i.e. one who is native to a community but whose identity in the eyes of this wider community makes them a 'conceptual stranger', or an actual unknown person, seem to always relate back to a concern for one's own safety. Perhaps this safety begins to feel jeopardised when the society, which the Folk rely on for both security and community, has formed its interpersonal and economical structures internally; not relying on the influx of outside forces of trade or other ways of supplying to the

community. This has historically been the case in smaller, rural communities which, though not always necessarily wholly cut off from the rest of the wider world, may be in need of generally relying on themselves alone. Moreover, communities lying more in-land, as opposed to coastal communities, would historically also be more likely to have a self-sufficient economy and social structure, as they are not liable to the influx of travellers coming onto land via the sea. Though all of this is purely speculative, and far too broad an assumption to base any real conclusions on in this instance, such communities are the reputed cradles where most of the folk and fairy tales had their infancy. Thus, this paper would like to argue, it is a valuable point of discussion to examine potential geographical, economical and, as a result thereof, cultural aspects, which may inform the representation of the Stranger in the tales.

Though there are times when the perception of a Stranger as malignant is based on economical concerns or fears of safety, however much or little founded, in some instances, the Stranger need neither pose a physical or economical threat to be perceived by the native community as malignant. In some cases, the very presence of the Other or a Stranger may be perceived as a threat to the culture of the native community. Their very presence in the community, the presence of their culture, language, traditions, etc. is at times perceived as threatening to 'dilute' the 'native' or Folk culture already established. In the tales, this is sometimes exemplified by stepparents wishing to be rid of step-children, odd-looking creatures being subject to punishment for creating off-spring with beautiful humans, etc. This nativist, isolationist ideal is present in human history as well as contemporary times as evident through xenophobic, racist, Islam-phobic, anti-Semitic, and other minority groups, in rhetoric, propaganda and political campaigns. When regarded through this point of view, the Stranger is inevitably classified as an intrusive and Malignant Stranger; being perceived, by their very presence and their natural Strangeness or Otherness, to have negative impact on the wider community, by potentially affecting change. The sub-archetype of the Malignant Stranger, as represented within the tales, will be explored further in chapter 4.

3.2 The Helpful Stranger

Contrasting the inevitable review of the Stranger as malignant, is the perceived archetype of the Helpful Stranger. This is another fundamental characterisation of the Stranger in the folk and fairy tale genre. Its prevailing presence as an archetype within the tales, suggests it to be also prevailing within the Folk psyche. This Stranger is the benign Stranger, even the altruistic Stranger; the one who shows up only to provide acts of service to the protagonist, then fades away again between the lines of the narrative as the plot moves on. This character is often unnamed and merely identified by their occupation or status, or their lack thereof, i.e. vagrant or beggar. They are often met with when the protagonist is travelling and is on their own. Other times, the Helpful Stranger appears when the protagonist is at their marked crisis point. The Helpful Stranger shows up in folk and fairy tales across the globe and appears in various guises.

   The frequency of the appearance of the Helpful Stranger is hardly to be wondered at when considering the main theme of many folk and fairy tales, namely that of suffering. This theme is evident by the identities, or even the very names, of the main characters of the stories. Often, the protagonist is the marginalised figure; the less-favoured step-child, a member of the family or community deemed too ugly or too stupid for respect and affection, or simply the one who finds their life or their freedom at peril without means of saving themselves. These characters are often given taunting nicknames meant to demean and even dehumanise them by not affording them the traditional human custom of being given and addressed by a so-called proper name. Thus, they are set apart with an identity that is solely based on their outcast status, often in their own native community, enjoying no more interaction with the wider community than that of derision and without much hope of escaping that fate. Until, that is, we have the entrance of the Helpful Stranger. The character of the Helpful Stranger is therefore often essential to moving the plot forward and towards the classical happy ending of the fairy tale; the very same effectiveness which may render the Helpful Stranger as often too fantastical for the folk tale genre by the definition by Bottigheimer (1989).

   What reasons the Helpful Stranger has for being helpful may be as little defined as its character. The interpretation of the Helpful Stranger's actions may vary between from reader to reader and tale to tale. The character of this type of Stranger itself vary so widely that it is difficult to establish their psyche, feelings, their motives and motivations. However, there seem to be some existing

recurring themes sticking to the archetype of the Helpful Stranger. Like the Malignant Stranger, the value of their interference does not always appear clear at first. Unlike the Malignant Stranger, however, the Helpful stranger is at length identified by their benevolence. Their interaction with the protagonist or the cast of main characters come to ultimate good; their knowledge proves true, their advice proves wise and the gifts they give turn out to be highly useful.

Other than providing this aid to the main character or characters of the tale, the Helpful Stranger does not much figure in the tales. They perform like a cogwheel to move the tale onto its aforementioned happy conclusion. Their function within the narrative is to move it along; to support the other characters whose lives are at the centre. The usually unexplained presence of the Helpful Stranger, popping up from out of nowhere to aid is at odds with the arguably essential role it plays in acting as a catalyst for change; leading the narrative to completion. The Helpful stranger is rarely explained, their history seems to be deemed unimportant and their own motivations and ambitions seem to be virtually non-existent.

As mentioned, in some of the tales, the Stranger is to be met with on the road whilst the protagonist is traveling from one place to another. Often, they provide aid in the form of food, magical gifts or advice in exchange for something else, seemingly much less significant. In the Soldier and Death (Avery, Ransome), the poor Soldier returning from the war has nothing but three biscuits in his pockets. As he walks along the road, he meets three strangers. Each one look more impoverished than the next and each ask the soldier to spare some change or some food. The soldier tells them that he only has the biscuits, but never the less gives each of them one biscuit until he has nothing left for himself. In exchange for his kindness, however, each of the three strangers give the soldier some magical gifts, which enable him to become a wealthy man, defeat an army of devils and even overthrow death itself at the end of the tale.

These three strangers reward the soldier, independent of one and other, for his good-heartedness, thus create the notion of you will receive what you have paid forward; doing good onto others will ensure good will befall you as well. This, of course, relates to several religious philosophies and ideas of karma etc. Moreover, the mystery of these three strangers, why they should be so needy when possessing such powerful magical items themselves, leads to a possible conclusion that they are representational of some other force or ideal. Perhaps they are meant to represent a higher power, a magical order or a deity, rewarding virtue and promoting

benevolence. This type of Helpful Stranger is present in many of the tales both of the folk and fairy kind, potentially linking to the deeply held beliefs of always being watched and evaluated for your actions, as prescribed by many religious doctrine.

In other cases, the Helpful Stranger is identified by some familial relation to the protagonist. The most recurring character of this type is that of the fairy godmother, or so otherwise named but performing to the same effect. Sometimes these are elves, spirits, animals or other types of natural or magical creatures that come to the aid of the main character. Often, the protagonist inadvertently or advertently asks for help; says their wishes aloud, knocks on the tree three times or openly weeps, lamenting their fate. This, like the three strangers in the Soldier and Death, is reminiscent of ancient and old religious practices of prayer and sacrifice, and that to make your plight or your wishes known, speaking them aloud, will provide you with what you need.

Other times, the Helpful Stranger may in fact not be identified as a person but rather as a force restoring balance; rewarding good and punishing evil. In the tale of the Juniper Tree (Grimm), a wicked stepmother murders her stepson and cooks the meat from his body into a stew, serving it to his unsuspecting father and sister. However, the stepson is resurrected from the dead and reappears as a magical bird who kills his stepmother by having a mill-stone drop over her head. In this instance, the Helpful Stranger may not be said to be a person but rather an invisible force; the force of magic, which grants the boy a second life and a chance at revenge to bring the tale to a somewhat bloody though perhaps just end. This magical force performs the part of the Helpful Stranger by aiding those marginalised and most in need of help. This version of the Helpful Stranger does more than help the needy, however, but also punishing the wicked and thus restoring some sense of karmic balance. The often magical aspect of the Helpful Stranger is frequently needed since many of the tales' protagonists are those marginalised, those seemingly without hope in a natural world which grants them little opportunity for change, justice or freedom, rendering magical interference crucial to escalate the plot towards its happy or perhaps merely justified end.

Placing the representation of this sub-archetype of Stranger within that of a largely illiterate, working and lower-class population, the Helpful Stranger may signify the antidote to strife caused by being outside of a community. In places and times when people would be reliant on the efforts and supports of a community for survival, the fear of sudden being without a community must be

a source of anxiety. Much as a beggar relying on charity, a person excluded, separated or otherwise outside of a communal structure, would need to seek the aid of those who could be compelled to supply it, not from a duty prescribed a communal contract of mutual support, but out of benevolence; almost appearing from out of nowhere, much like the archetype in the tales. Thus the Helpful Stranger may a symbol of the hoped-for alleviation of suffering and anxiety, whereas the Malignant Stranger symbolises the feared-for catalyst of suffering and anxiety.

3.3 The Magical Stranger

Lastly, among the Stranger-archetypes that this paper would like to propose is the Magical Stranger. Out of all the stranger-archetypes, the magical stranger is the one most likely to elude moral alignment. This type of stranger presents no outwardly bias nor intent and is therefore as fickle to description as it is to the characters of the stories in which it appears. The Magical Stranger can be either malignant or benign, or both, shifting their intentions both for and against the protagonist and other characters of the stories. Thus, the Magical Stranger archetype is not determined by its goodness of character, or lack thereof, but by its own essence, which is the supernatural. The Magical Stranger is not identified by its relation or behaviour towards other characters. Rather, it is placed only in relation to itself as a magical being. It is these magical abilities that underline the mystery of this archetype. Anything may be possible, since their abilities stretch beyond 'normal' human means. Their world, but inner and outer, is somewhat unknown to the non-magical human, who can only guess as to their scope, however much the Magical Stranger may interact with them.

   Additionally, the Magical Stranger often lives apart from the wider community, thus adding to their mysticism and outsider-status. In the folk and fairy tale tradition, you find the wizard living in a cave on a secluded mountainside, you find the witch holed up in her little house in the woods and, traversing the loneliest spots in nature, abandoned castles or wild moors, you will meet with trolls, pixies, devils and other characters of myth and lore. They exist outside of the regulated societal structures and hierarchies, which most others must conform themselves to, thereby becoming an indefinite Other; one who may be just about anything. Their station is undefined and their potential motivation unclear, as is the scope of their abilities, due to their relative

independence.

It should be noted, though, that this independence does not mean that the Magical Stranger may not enjoy some measure of interaction with structured society and its human inhabitants. There is always some level of contact, which serves to underline and even elevate the Magical Stranger's singularity and mysticism. The entrance of the Magical Stranger into human society as well as their interactions with other non-magical characters, emphasizes their peculiarity. Moreover, as the Magical Stranger is rarely ever the protagonist of the narrative, their identity is inevitably set at a distance from the audience or reader of the story. They are not the primary focus for empathy. They are a fundamental Other, representing mysticism and magic, set apart from human society; a fact which is made only clearer by their interaction with non-magical, human protagonists of narrative which are created by human persons for the consumption of human persons.

However fantastical the character of the Magical Stranger might seem, it is not one which, historically, has not had some cultural merit. In fact, examples of the Magical Stranger appears throughout much of human history as an important and often even revered figure, and not merely a creation of fiction. The character of the wandering or reclusive wise-man is one which crops up in the history and mythology of nations and religions across the globe. This figure have been recorded at least as far back as the early Roman Empire (Anderson 3). This concept of the holy Stranger has held cultural, and often religious or spiritual, significance to the wider community (Lawrence 62-63). These were often people who had chosen to step away from the wider community and live a solitary life. Sometimes this was done for spiritual reasons, sometimes for religious reasons and other times for simply philosophical reasons.

After coming to Rome as a young man to study, the future St. Benedict was revolted by the influx of paganism and barbarism that had occurred in the capital since the sacking of the Roman Empire just a few decades earlier, and therefor went to live a solitary existence in a cave at Subiaco to live a life of purity and contemplation (Fry, 10). Through his way of life, he soon gathered a following of devotees, which became the foundation for the later monastery order named after the saint himself; the Benedictine Order (Fry, 10-11). This idea that a life away from the popular masses, who were tainted by the vices of sin, brings you closer to God and holiness proved popular. In the medieval period, many monasteries adopted the principle of Benedictine monasticism, of isolation

and poverty, as a foundation for a holier life.

Those who had forsaken a worldly life and devoted themselves to such an existence were deemed to be the more divine for their asceticism by the wider public and thus the better to seek an indulgence from. (Lawrence, 100-101) The services of the solitary nuns and monks were solicited, by those who could afford to pay for them, to pray to God for the absolving of the sins they who lived worldly lives out there in the sin-ridden world. (Lawrence, 62) Thus, the estrangement from the wider world elevated these figures of the cloth to mythical status.

In this, the medieval monks and nuns were not singular; they extended far beyond the west and did by no means originate there. The same concepts could e.g. be found in cultures practicing Islamism and Buddhism. In Israel, hermit prophets were said to receive messages from God and the Holy Spirit. (Howe 108). By the time of the Georgian Era, rich estate owners would acquire a hermit to live in their garden-grounds, where a cave, or cave-like structure, would often be built for them and they could serve as a talking point for friends and tourists alike who came to visit the garden (Campbell 96). The Georgian era was the age in which Sensibility became a fashion and Georgian high society very much wanted to prove that they had a flair for the philosophical, spiritual and possessed emotional and intellectual depth. Having a hermit living in your very own back garden, the Georgians believed, apparently proved that you possessed all of these qualities. The hermit, the stranger leading the mysterious, reclusive life, had come to be associated with a higher state of being, sometimes so high that they could grant miracles; even if the only miracle was to fluff up a Georgian aristocrat's reputation by acting as a lawn-ornament.

These supposedly magical abilities attributed to the reclusive, seemingly contemplative Stranger delivers archetypes, which are familiar both in literature and culture both contemporarily and historically. As evident by the previous mentions, such individuals have achieved almost mythical and sometimes cultish status. In literature, we likewise have the archetype of the lone wise-man or wise woman, mysterious and knowing, in their occultism and strangeness. In folk tales, we often have the wise-man or –woman appearing to cast some light on the problematics faced by the characters or to provide some much needed forewarning. In fairy tales, we have the witches, warlocks or wizards, as well as a host of un-classifiable magical beings taking part. These are often somewhat human, somewhat magical, somewhat good, somewhat evil or other time wholly neutral. The archetype of the Magical Stranger in the folk and fairy tale genre, is not meant to

represent either inherent good or inherent evil. Rather, they are an open-ended entity whose motivations and future actions are as mystifying until they are clear as their magical abilities, which enables them to act out, are.

4. Learning to Love the Stranger: *Donkey Skin* and *East of the Sun West of the Moon*

The theme of virtue versus wickedness is, as previously mentioned, central to many of the folk and fairy tale narratives. This somewhat simplistic theme and type of characterisation is in alignment with the usually unambiguous, 'black and white' style of the tales. There are those who do good and those who do harm; those who deserve their hard-won happiness and those who deserve what we hope they have coming for them. However, this paper would like to argue, there is more to be uncovered from the tales than simply who is good and who is evil, as well as who triumphs, who fails and do they all deserve what they got. There are subtleties, which describe the complex themes of human experiences; familial relationship, class tensions, gender dynamics and the striving for personal freedom and identity. Adding to this, the folk-beliefs, religious ideologies, sense of nationalism, community and exclusion, the folk and fairy tale genre provides a rich, detailed tapestry for study of culture and as a representation of cultural understanding of archetypes and problematics.

   Most affirmative of these themes is when we have the meeting of contrasts. The characters, plot structures and themes of folk and fairy tales often seem squarely divided into two opposites; day and night, black and white, good and bad. Though this may be perceived by some to cause the tales to be superficial and trivial, the simplistic narratives achieves a wide-reaching representation which is not merely that of one place and one time, but every place and all time. The straightforward troubles and aims of the character lends itself to a universal experience, with one of the most human of these experiences being community or lack thereof. Whether through physical isolation or mental isolation, in the sense of keeping a vital part of one's true self hidden, the experience of inclusion or exclusion is known to all to some degree or other. Never is the essence of exclusion and seclusion more evident than when we have community to contrast it, just as good is affirmed by evil and love is contrasted by hate or indifference.

   Often, a metamorphosis of the self is part of this process of achieving harmony and community, and to release oneself from one's strangeness. These instances of metamorphosis is most overtly represented, within fairy tales specifically, as a literal change; a physical change. The characters will be tried and tested in their virtue and abilities, before undergoing a shedding of their former self. This transformation is another typical fairy tale trope; a character is converted by virtue,

sometimes their own and sometimes that of another, into a figure which is overtly more loveable. Before this transformation, the character is usually described as being abnormal of appearance. Sometimes, the character is described as hideous. Other times, even animalistic or with clear attributes of some kind of animal; somewhere between human and creature. This appearance sets them apart from the wider human community. It isolates them and dehumanises them in the eyes of others. It is often the actions of another, enduring a test of loyalty and faithfulness to prove real love, which causes the final transformation. The willingness, not only to engage with the Grotesque Other, but to understand and thereby, according to many of the tales, love them, erases the in-human appearance and shows their humanity which laid beneath all along. Sometimes, this grotesque, in-human appearance is due to a spell or a curse of some kind, whereas other times, like in the tale of Donkey Skin (Perrault), it is a distinct, deliberate choice made for very practical reasons.

In Donkey Skin, a king and a queen live happily together with their daughter. Until, that is, when the queen contracts a fatal illness and dies. On her deathbed, she makes her husband promise never to marry again unless the woman is as beautiful as herself. The king gives her his word and the queen dies, comforted by the belief that he will never find a woman who is as beautiful was she was. At first, the queen appears to have been proven right when the king can find no one who is as beautiful as his first wife was; no one, that is, except for their daughter. In spite of the unhappy protestations of the young princess, her father proceeds at his attempts to force her into the marriage. At length, she tells him that she will agree but only if he brings her three gifts before the wedding-day; a dress as golden as the sun, another dress as silver as the moon, a third dress as glittery as the stars themselves and, finally, the skin of the king's prized donkey, who produces gold in its droppings every day. In spite of these demands, the king agrees, searches the kingdom and eventually brings her the gifts she has asked for. Before the marriage can take place, however, the princess, her three dresses and her donkey-skin, have disappeared.

In Perrault's version, the young princess is advised to ask for the dresses and prolong her wedding day by her fairy godmother. In his original version, the fairy godmother is not a stranger but a familiar figure to the young woman who knowingly seeks her out. In other versions, especially when the narrative gets retold as the story of Cinderella, the fairy-godmother is a stranger who appears in the young princess' hour of need and instructs her of what to do. This

relates back to the classical figure of the Magical Stranger; a mysterious, magical being who appears seemingly from out of nowhere and guides or gifts items to the hero or heroine that will help them solve their predicament or achieve their happy ends.

The story then goes on to describe the life she lives as Donkey Skin, living as a stranger within a community yet never quite part of said community. She is known to its inhabitants, the very ones who gave her the name of Donkey Skin, yet she isolated. In this story, unlike many other fairy- and folk-tales, the Stranger or Other is not encountered by but is the main character of the narrative, and she does not assume the identity of the outsider and stranger, until she has dressed herself in the skin of a donkey and left her father's kingdom. Her filthy and grotesque exterior when wearing the donkey-skin, sets her apart from her new society. This serves her aim of anonymity; the anonymity which provides her with safety. Her isolation and 'otherness' is necessary for her to protect herself and to live in peace.

In her self-garnered safety of precious isolation, Donkey Skin lives alone. On a particular feast-day, she wears one of her beautiful dresses inside of her house. A prince coming past, hearing about the mysterious creature named donkey-skin from the locals, peaks in through the keyhole of her front door, sees her wearing the beautiful dress and instantly falls in love with the strange woman living in the house of Donkey Skin. Returning to his home, the prince is lovesick and vows that the only cure will be a cake baked by Donkey Skin and thus she is sent for. Curing him and earning the love of all, she sheds her donkey-skin and marries the prince.

The tale of Donkey Skin has had many lives. Its narrative structure, characters and motifs are repeated in such stories as 'All Kinds of Rough', 'Cap O' Rushes', 'Sapsorrow', 'Cat Skin', 'The She-Bear', 'Tattercoats' and many others (Warner, *Once Upon a Time*). These stories have many times been compared with the contemporary understanding of the Cinderella narrative; a young woman dressed in rags, who is in an unhappy domestic situation, catches the attention of a young prince when wearing a beautiful gown before mysteriously vanishing, only for her true identity to be revealed in time for the two of them to marry and live happily ever after.

This particular story, due to its overt references with incest, have been one of the least re-produced, adapted and talked about fairy tales from Perrault's collection (Warner, *Once Upon a Time* 63). This is often the case with many older tales. As previously mentioned, once the tales were being put into print, they became subject to censorship and many details where changed.

The grotesqueness of many older stories have been sanded away and sanitised until many of the darker and more unpleasant details had been forgotten. Thus, it is perhaps not to be wondered at that the folk and fairy tale genre is regarded as superficial and a genre that is not equipped to deal with the more complex human experiences and dilemmas. It is not to be forgotten, however, that there is as much to be understood from readers or audiences reactions to the tales as the tales themselves; what we celebrate, what we recoil from and what we omit. In these factors there are truths which highlight cultural and socialised ideas and ideals that are perhaps often taken for granted.

Much as in the tale of Donkey Skin, the tale of East of the Sun and West of the Moon (Asbjørnsen) deals with the relativity of the state of the dehumanised Stranger, by showing us a character who undergoes a literal and physical transformation to show their underlying humanity. In this story, a white bear comes to the house of a poor peasant farmer and offers to make the peasant wildly rich in exchange for his youngest and most beautiful daughter. Eventually persuaded by her family's pleas, the girl is carried away on the back of the white bear and taken his castle. There, at night, the white bear changes himself into a man when he lies in bed with his young bride. However, this only happens in the dark, thus never allowing her to see him.

When the young woman, longing to see her family again, is allowed to return home for a visit, the white bear asks her to make him one promise; that will not speak with her mother alone. Ultimately breaking this promise, the young woman tells her mother about what takes place at the castle. Her mother, convinced it must be a grim troll her daughter have garnered for a husband, she persuades her to take a candle and look at her husband while he is asleep. The young woman heeds her mother's advice upon returning home to the castle, holding a candle over the 'white bear' as he lies sleeping in their bed, and sees that he is in fact a beautiful, human man. He wakes up however, when wax drips from the candle and onto his skin.

Realising that his wife broke her promise not to speak to her mother alone, he leaves her, saying that he has been put under a spell by his wicked stepmother. Had she stayed a year and not sought to look at him at night, the spell would have been broken, but now, he has to return to his stepmother who lives east of the sun and west of the moon and marry her equally wicked and hideous daughter. The young woman has to make the journey, use her cunning and perseverance to gain back her love, which she does in the end.

This story may, to many modern audiences, be very reminiscent of the story of Beauty and the Beast; a beautiful young woman, through her love, transforms her animalistic bride-groom into a beautiful, human man. However, the roots of the story stretch much further back in history, all the way back into the time of ancient Greece; its origins can be traced back to the story of Psyche and Eros, whose names mean soul and love, respectively (Gollnick, 5-8). In this story, Psyche is the beautiful daughter of a farming couple who had been prophesised to be married to a beast. She goes to live alone with the beast in his palace. The 'beast' always keeps in the shadows and instructs Psyche never to look at him. She breaks her promise, however, and looks at him while he is sleeping in the night, discovering that he is in fact the god Eros, son of Aphrodite. Just as in East of the Sun and West of the Moon, she spills some oil from the lamp she is holding onto her sleeping husband. He wakes and soon disappears. Psyche now has to stand a number of difficult tests laid out by the Goddess Aphrodite to win back her husband, which she does eventually.

When French author Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont wrote her version, which was to become the most famous version, of the story of Beauty and the Beast in the late 1740's, she was basing her abbreviated version on the novel of the same title, by another French author Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve in 1740 (Warner, *Once Upon a Time*). Beaumont wrote her version when she was working as a governess. The young girls in her charge were facing the prospect of arranged marriages as was custom among the upper classes at that time (Warner, *Once Upon a Time* 39). It has been argued by scholars of fairy tales and of Beaumont that she wrote this story for the young girls as a way to reassure them; that if they acted with patience and open-mindedness, they might find a kinder and more loveable centre beneath the brutish and domineering surface of a husband who was not their choice.

In this case, the Stranger or Other does not represent the marginalised or outcast figure, but rather a fixed part of the powerful social-majority; a central figure to the socio-economical, patriarchal system. The stranger in this instance is the one representing the dominant social structure and is themselves a dominant figure, ruling the life of their un-emancipated wives. Instead, it is the young women who, when encountering the stranger, i.e. their arranged husband, must do so with open-mindedness and love, for their own benefit. The stranger, in this instance, is the masculine control of a husband to a young girl who has purposefully been kept from having encounters with men for the sake of social reputation and sexual purity. When forced to

encounter the stranger and the other, she must exercise the very qualities that she wishes to inspire in her husband; patience, kindness and love. Very rarely is this narrative reversed. From the days of Eros and Psyche in antique Greece, to the German folk-tale of Hans My Hedgehog, to the novel the Beauty and the Beast in renaissance France and onwards, the story has almost exclusively been told from the perspective of the woman forced by circumstance to enter into a marriage with a male figure who is a stranger to her.

If one were to flip the narrative, however, and analyse its characters by placing the Eros, Hedgehog or Beast figure at its centre, the woman now plays the part of the Stranger or Other. She may then be characterized in the role of the magical stranger. Though the male character most often is the divine or magical, whether naturally so or cursed, the power of transformation lies with the female character, garnered through perseverance and loyalty. Virtue grants her transformative powers, much is the same practices as the monastics. This places unusual power in the hand of the woman. To achieve or regain her lover, she has to earn him and happiness. This is a reversal of the usual notion of tales of romantic heroism where the daring male hero performs daring deeds and rescues the maiden. Thus, the female characters of these tales are provided with agency in their own narrative; placing them as the subjects with objectives and qualities shown through action, rather than as the passive, sought-after object, glorified only through the equally passive quality of physical beauty.

In The Tales of a Thousand and One Nights (Dawood), the Sultan believes that all women are wicked, sexually and morally corrupt, and therefore commences a sequence of marriages to young women, spends the wedding-night with them, only to have them executed in the morning. To curb the Sultan's behaviours, a young woman named Shahrazad volunteers herself to be married to him. On their wedding-night, Shahrazad tells her younger sister a story, which lasts all night long. In the morning, the Sultan, who has been listening in on the story, decides to delay the execution so that he may hear more the next night. Thus, Shahrazad manages to survive the first one thousand and one nights with her husband, at the end of which he is converted and Shahrazad maintains her life.

To understand the basis for The Tales of a Thousand and One Night, it is important to set up the space in which the story takes place, and use the cultural context of the ancient Arabic world, with its religious and gender-based dynamics, to explain the setting and circumstance as crucial for the

development of the plot. In this world, the daytime is the time when the masculine, patriarchal structures rule the hours. During the day, men and women part; men go about their business out in the open, women retreat into their own spaces and the time is overtly dedicated to a religiously ordered life with times for prayer, male might and female-modesty (Warner, *Stranger Magic*).

At night, however, men and women come together, which provides the opportunity for intimacy. This intimacy is not strictly physical, but also social and psychological. It is the two worlds, the masculine and the feminine, who are otherwise kept apart, colliding. It is during this time that Shahrazad sees the opportunity to enlighten the Sultan, and she does so seemingly inadvertently. The stories are told during the secrecy of the night and supposedly in the confidence of two women, two sisters. This method of exposure, letting the Sultan overhear the stories as opposed to telling the them directly to him, allows Shahrazad to tell stories that are explicit about sex, lust and female rebellion; subjects which were all considered very unfeminine. Thus allowed to speak to openly, she alerts him to the emotional, psychological and sexual complexity of women, allowing him a 'peak behind the curtain' into the reality of the world of women, which society dictates must be kept apart from his own, and thereby humanising women to him.

In The Tales of a Thousand and One Nights, it is the entire female sex, which plays the role of the Stranger. It is a lack of the knowledge of the stranger, which causes misery and death. This unfamiliarity of men towards the reality of the psychology of women, leads men to interpret the woman as the malignant stranger; harmful, full of self-interest and inevitably to lead to the destruction of what is good. Once enlightened and the symbol of masculine power, i.e. the Sultan, has uncovered the character of the mystery of the stranger, i.e. the character of the female sex, cosmos is re-stored; the sequence of execution is halted.

Though the subject of marriage and the relationship between men and women is at the heart of these tales, there may be a broader truth hidden within the lines of these narratives. Although there is a fair bit to be said about gender dynamics and gender identities, the concept of knowing, knowing of the Self and the Other, as relayed by these narratives, outline broader ideals of the importance of empathy. To some, these tales may seem little more than a pacifier used to comfort young women who were facing the necessity of marrying within a culture which placed them almost entirely at the mercy of their husbands, telling them to cross their fingers and hope for the

best. However, there are deeper themes at play here. The lack of understanding of the Other in the tales is what leads to disaster. The interpretation of the Stranger, as a Malignant Stranger, is often the catalyst for tragedy. Thus, the importance of knowledge and empath is underlined.

5. Learning to Beware of the Stranger: The Wolf, the Witch and *The Six Swans*

Many folk and fairy tales, who has the Stranger as one of its main characters, have often been classified as cautionary tales. Perhaps the most famous of all cautionary tales in contemporary times is that of the Little Red Riding Hood who met the wolf in the woods and strayed off the path into the woods, in spite of her mother's instructions of staying on the path on her way to her grandmother's house. Allowing herself to be swayed by pretty flowers, the Little Red Riding Hood ends up within the belly of the wolf, after she has directed him to her poor, old grandmother's house only a little further down the path. Her thoughtlessness, in not heeding the advice of her elders, leaves the little girl near to disaster. Thus, it answers to what has now become part of the formulaic cautionary tale. The theme of the young and naïve warned against the wicked by those older and wiser in folk and fairy tales is much the same process as the children who are the most common, modern audience for them told tales by adults who are the most common tellers.

The wolf in the tale of the Little Red Riding Hood is our Malignant Stranger; the archetypal villain of the cautionary tale. He is the stranger met with on the road by the young girl as she traverses the path she is meant to travel along. His intentions are likely suspected by the audience or reader of the tale, however little they are questions by his little red-cloaked victim, and are soon confirmed as the wolf sneaks off to grandmother's house and swallows her whole, fortunately without doing her the curtesy of chewing her first.

The wolf is a usually sly character within the folk and fairy tale genre. In the tale of the Three Little Pigs (Alperine), the wolf is also the villain, as is he in the stories of the Wolf and the Seven Young Goats (Grimm), Peter and the Wolf (North) as well as many others. In these tales, the wolf always referred to as a male figure and is humanised by his ability to speak. In stories such as the Three Little Pigs and the Wolf and the Seven Goats, the characters that are the targets of the wolf-character's malicious intent are personified by animals that are the wolf's natural prey in the natural world. It is an obvious thing, to the readers of the tale, once the goats, the lambs, the bird or the pigs are introduced in the same space as the wolf, that it will be the wolf's intent to try to make a meal of them.

In the case of the Little Red Riding Hood, a young girl all on her own might be counted as just a natural prey for a wolf as any animal. This, added to the highly humanised character of the wolf as

well as his assigned gender, hints at an overtly representation of a gender dynamic; the young, naïve girl being led astray by the more experienced male figure with ulterior, sexual motives. This is perhaps the most classic interpretation of the Little Red Riding Hood tale and may be over-exercised to some extent as the only possible interpretation. Whatever the case, the wolf is one of the most primary examples of representations of the Malignant Stranger in the folk and fairy tale genre.

However, it is not only the character of the wolf that may be deemed as the cause and effect of the tale. The characters with which the wolf comes into contact, are equally as important to regard. In the tale of Little Red Riding Hood, it is as much, if not more, the fault of the girl's inexperienced innocence as it is the wily cunning and trickery of the wolf. In this tale, as in the other aforementioned tales, the wolf has been humanised by being given human language and human logic. The wolf's human abilities is almost as fantastical as the little girl's lack of perception in discovering that it is a wolf that has dressed himself in her grandmother's clothes. Her inexperience and wide-eyed naiveté makes her the archetypal innocent to whom the cautionary tales were meant to be directed. Her story becomes an example of what might happen if one trusts in the Stranger; especially if one does not have the provenance of experience, wisdom or cunning to properly question the Stranger's intentions and understand whether such intentions may not be malignant. This level of ignorance maintained by those around such characters as the Little Red Riding Hood, by not being properly enlightened as to the dangers they face, i.e. why they must exercise caution when encountering the Stranger, may be just as central to the theme of 'beware of the stranger' as any other within the folk and fairy tale genre.

A wide branch one the tree of the cautionary tale, far-reaching and strong at the crotch, is the type of tale widely understood to warn young people against sexual precociousness; most particularly meant to warn young women against the attentions of men. This gendered morality on sexuality is based both on socialised norms and ideas about gender-roles and –identity, as well as concerns which are arguably more practical, economical and medical. These moralities may be representational of the age of Perrault and the Grimm Brothers; the age where most traditional folk and fairy tales were recorded. Firstly, there is the double-standard, which condemned, and in some cases ostracised, women much more for the loss of virginity than men. Secondly, there are the cultural and socio-economic conditions, which placed women at consequential disadvantage if

faced with the prospect of single-parenthood. Aside from the high risks to a woman's health and life when going through childbirth, the lack education and paid occupations afforded to women placed them in a very precarious situation; putting both their lives and their lives of their children at risk.

Considering the intrinsic misogyny to the cultural and political system, which placed women at such a disadvantage in providing for themselves and any child they might have when compared with men at the time, the caution provided to women on becoming sexually active in many of the aforementioned tales seems perhaps more kindly and more practical in case of abandonment by their sexual partner or wider family. Although, to a progressive 21st century audience, being asked to swallow the idea that women should refrain from sex rather than be afforded equal opportunity in education and career makes the moral of such tales seem defeatist, weak and not a little bit chauvinistic.

However, it seems likely to be the case that this type of morality- or cautionary tale is the product of a sanitization of the old tales, which occurred once they began to appear in print and thus be subject to a wider distribution and the prim moral tastes of the middle- and upper-classes of the time. The Brothers Grimm collected the tale of Rapunzel for their 1812 collection (Grimm). This version of the story of Rapunzel contained some plot-points that were crucial in underlining its morality, but which were removed or changed in the version written by Grimm, and subsequently different in every version since (Warner, *Once Upon a Time* 60).

Much of the original plot is the same; a child-less witch kidnaps a little girl and takes her far away from the rest of the world to live, isolated and alone with only the witch for company, in a tall tower, and names her Rapunzel. By the strength and length of Rapunzel's long hair, the witch is able to enter and leave the tower at will. However, she warns the young girl against the evils of the out-side world and cautions her never to allow any other visitors. She warns Rapunzel against men in general but does not specify any reason for this caution. Of course, this is fated to go wrong, and so it does. A young man, who is a prince in some versions and in others a king, comes past the tower and hears the singing voice of Rapunzel emanating from within. Once the witch is away, he persuades Rapunzel to let down her hair and thus gains access to the tower. In the original version, the witch finds out what has been happening because Rapunzel one days asks why her clothes have become so tight.

The witch, realising that the young girl is pregnant, is enraged that she has not heeded her advice and throws her from the tower into the wilderness, where Rapunzel gives birth to a set of twins and lives some time on her own before she is found there by the prince and brought to happiness and security at his palace. Later editions of the Grimm's version, however, got rid of the pregnancy all together. They relied instead on a mindless slip of the tongue on the side of Rapunzel to push the narrative forward. The idea that Rapunzel had had pre-marital sex was too indelicate an idea to suit the moralities of the time, most especially those of the middle- and upper-classes who were more likely to be purchasing the Grimm's Brothers volumes of folk and fairy tales.

Changing this particular detail in the plot, of Rapunzel not understanding that she has indeed fallen pregnant, entirely reshapes the point of the narrative. In both the early and later Grimm's versions, the witch warns Rapunzel against the outside world and forbids her from having visitors. The seclusion of Rapunzel sets her apart from the world and makes any would-be outsider a Stranger, with the witch attempting to make her believe any Stranger would be of the Malignant kind. To Rapunzel, the Other is most especially defined by male persons, as female company is all she has ever known. However, the witch's failure to inform Rapunzel about conception and childbirth, leads to disaster as Rapunzel inevitably comes into the contact with the other, i.e. a man, in the form of the prince. Thus, when including the original plot-point of Rapunzel's pregnancy, the tale high-lighted the irresponsibility of not informing explicitly as to the potential consequences of sex. Instead, the later versions diminishes this fact, painting the character of Rapunzel as merely a bit ditzy who was lucky enough to be rescued and married off at the end, as opposed to the victim of a lack of education and a representational figure to remind those who are the caretakers of young people that they have a responsibility to properly inform those in their care.

The everyday dramas of life are a typical subject for the folk and fairy tale genre. Heightened and hidden between the stories of magical objects and fantastical creatures, are the same anxieties and emotional troubles which has faced communities, both great and small, universally and, it seems, throughout time. The smaller community, often nesting within a wider community, is the family unit. The dynamics of the family unit is often a central theme within both folk and fairy tales; the competition between brothers for their inheritance, the house-wife longing for a child of

her own and the king wishing to murder his prospective son-in-law before his daughter is given away in marriage, to name a few. These tensions, frustrations and conflicting interests between family members often create the backdrop of the tales, acting as catalysts, to further the plot or to bring it to its conclusion.

Surprisingly modern among these family tensions, is that of the parent re-marrying after the death of their first spouse and the mother or father of their children. This particular dynamic is a common one in folk narratives and fairy tales. In fact, the trope of the Wicked Stepmother has become one of the arguably most well known fixtures of the fairy tale genre. The complications of emotions, anxieties and potential jealousies make for a potently emotive and relatable drama when people are reading or listening to the folk tales and fairy tales. These family dynamics and dramas are not confined to the culture of a singular nation or a singular era of time. Thus relating broadly and widely may be the deciding factor as to why the trope of the Wicked Stepparent is such a common occurrence in folk and fairy tales across the world.

The character Wicked Stepmother is easily labelled as belonging to the archetype of the Malignant Stranger, with the highly obvious clue thereof being in the prefix. In this instance, the native community is that of the family unit and the stepmother is the Stranger, or Intrusive Stranger, having penetrated the community. Their role is not defined by their blood-relation to the family and therefor their attachment is strictly legal. The attachment is fashioned by the power of the word and a conceptual fixture that is cultural, legal and, very often, religious as well. The primary commitment of the stepmother is to the father; the attachment to the children within the family is consequential and incidental. Perhaps this is why the stepmother is often represented in folk and fairy tales as unfeeling, unkind and even resentful towards her stepchildren. Usually, the resentment does not end at innocuous, private feeling but comes to fruition and results in some revenge, harm or even murder or attempt thereof of her stepchildren. Thus the stranger that is the new stepmother entering into a family unit, is not merely strange within most tales but also malignant; even, it perhaps may be said, malignant due to her strangeness.

The fact that the character of the Wicked Stepmother is so prevalent may be a case of chauvinism, since the male equivalent is not so often portrayed. Then again, the fluency, and the tendency for folk and fairy tales to 'build' on the plots of one and other, may be the simple cause. Whatever the case, the archetype of the Wicked Stepmother, the Intrusive and Malignant

Stranger, has become a prevalent figure in the popular consciousness and she crops up in numerous tales; both of the folk and fairy kind. In the tale of The Six Swans, for example, a king remarries a beautiful young woman some years after the death of his first wife, with whom he had seven children; six sons and a daughter. The new queen, who practices witchcraft in secret, wishes to have the children out of the way and so she sews shirts for each of the sons, shirts, which, as soon as the children put them on, curses them and turns them into swans. Only the king's daughter manages to evade her stepmother's curse. She discovers that she may break the spell placed upon her brothers by leaving her father's kingdom behind, go live in the wilderness on her own, sew six shirts made from stinging nettles, all the while never uttering a word for the length of six years; one for each of her brothers.

   Much like the monastics of the medieval era, her desired end, i.e. the salvation of her brothers, must be earned by the virtue of seclusion. Through self-denial and loneliness, she is granted the magic to reverse the curse placed on her brothers. What may be concluded is a general sense that self-denial leads to purity, and purity is deserving of good. The fact that her commitment to reclusiveness, first physically and later only psychologically as she never communicates with any of the other characters around her, is not questioned by the reader nor the narrator. Furthermore, the physical pain she will have to endure whilst picking the nettles and sewing them together by hand only adds to her suffering; a suffering which altogether, through the silence, isolation and pain, grants her grace. This is likewise similar to early monastic practices, where monks would punish themselves, often physically, to gain the favour of God. (Fry, 50) The purity of soul, as proved through the willingness to endure suffering for the sake of others, seems to be an idea passed down through long-held religious ideologies as evident in early monastic orders.

   Later in the story of the Six Swans, while she is serving out her six years in the wilderness, the young woman meets with a King in the forest. In spite of her silence, it is arranged for them to be married and for her to travel back with him to his kingdom. Once they return, they are greeted by the king's mother, who takes an instant, jealous dislike to her daughter-in-law. Shortly after the new young queen has given birth for the first time, the child disappears. The king's mother accuses her daughter-in-law of having killed and eaten the child, but the kind refuses to believe it. However, the same thing happens twice over; the queen gives birth and the child soon disappears. These reoccurrences eventually persuaded the king to believe in his mother's accusations and the

young queen is arrested, condemned as a witch and is to suffer the death of being burned alive. In reality, the king's mother is the one who has stolen away all three of the children while the queen slept.

Here, the dynamic between daughter- and mother-in-law spells out both the relativity and multi-faceted nature of the identity of the Stranger; an identity, which relies a great deal on perception. As the new young queen arrives, she is the most easily identifiable stranger. She is viewed by the old queen with suspicion and dislike. The dislike felt by the king's mother towards her daughter-in-law may be due to a mixture of fear and jealousy, caused by what Simmel classified as a classic reaction to an outsider intruding into an already establish social-order and causing inevitable changes to it. The ill feeling of the old queen may be said to be due to a fear of being supplanted, causing her interpret the new queen as a Supplanting, and therefor Malignant, Stranger. Moreover, like the stepparent, the mother-in-law does not have biological connection to her daughter-in-law, nor any agency in the matter as the choice befalls to her sons will. Therefore, the old queen can be seen another representation of the anxieties and complex emotions at play when people need to cope with new family dynamics.

On the side of the young queen, the king's mother also represents the archetype of the Malignant Stranger. The malignancy of the king's mother is insidious; there is no outward appearance of evil towards the young queen or her children, until it is revealed to the other characters that she was responsible for their disappearance at the very end of the tale. This hidden, fundamental characteristic of the old queen's, this paper would like to argue, is what makes her a Stranger. The fact that the true nature of the King's mother is unknown, is hidden behind a masque of good intentions, makes the truth about her character a Stranger to the other characters of the tale. Thus, the two queens, the young and the old, each personifies the archetype of the Malignant Stranger from the other's perspective; intruding into or threatening their station and stability in life.

Though the tale exists in many variations and under many names, the basics of the narrative remain largely the same. The tale of the Six Swans was originally collected by the Brothers Grimm in 1812, but exist in a number of different versions. The Danish author Hans Christian Andersen wrote his own version of the tale in 1838 naming it instead The Wild Swans, and changing a few of the plot-points to suit. Other versions are entitled The Twelve Brothers, The Magic Swan Geese

and The Three Ravens (Grimm). In some versions, the young woman does not marry and the tales merely describe her efforts to save her brothers. In some versions, the stepmother kills the king and remarries to become the young woman's mother-in-law, by marrying the father of her husband, who in this version, is a prince. In all of them, however, the virtue and perseverance of the young woman grants her favour to save her brothers. Thus, the young woman must engage with some form of magic, i.e. Other and hitherto unknown, to bring the plot to a happy end.

In any of these above-mentioned tales, it is the power of knowing or the disadvantage of ignorance which either makes the characters flourish or fall. Moreover, it is the knowing, the understanding and the sharing of stories which enlightens and is the pre-requisite for growth; both in the narratives alone and in the very art-form itself. The young woman in the tale of Six Swans, Wild Swans and Three Ravens, personifies this very idea beautifully; the lack of understanding between people is often the catalyst for human disaster. Ignorance, isolationism and lack of communication estranges human connection and dilutes empathy. In finally using her voice and sharing her story, the conflict is resolved and the plot finally comes to its happy conclusion.

5.1 A Stranger in Our Midst: Changelings and the 'Supplanting Other'

The native fear of the Stranger invading society, and potentially displacing those already inhabiting it, is evident in century-old lore, being expressed in both folk-beliefs and folk literature. The creatures found in fairy tales have, throughout history and across the globe, have not always been considered as mere figures of myth and fanciful fantasy; to some, the world was alive with fairies, trolls, river nixes, spirits and others. (Silver) Though the narratives in which they figured were not meant to be taken as historical facts, many still believed in the creatures which they featured. Thus, such creatures were not merely confined to the story-world, playing parts in both fictionalised narratives and the folk psyche. Some of these supernatural beings seem to voice the anxieties felt by the greater population, making tangible the basic fears, which were as puzzling as they were unpredictable and ungovernable.

One such creature, which seemed to represent some very specific fears, was the changeling. Recorded examples of people believing in changelings exist well up into the 20th century and

stretch far back down the centuries. Medieval chronicles make mention of changelings and Martin Luther wrote manuals on how parents, as well as the wider society, should deal with the presence of a changeling or changeling child in their midst. Moreover, changelings figure in various recorded folk-tales, both European and Asian, supposedly originating from the medieval period (Goodney, 2001), as well as in high literature both old and contemporary. Due to its pervasive mythical and literary existence, the changeling roots itself deep in the human psyche as the supplanting Stranger, often inevitable being identified as malignant, whether regarded as fiction or factual.

The changeling is most often described as a fairy or another creature derived from the world of the fay (Goodney, 2001). They were the substitute left by the fairy folk in the place of the human infant, which the fair folk would take back with them into their own world. According to Carole G. Silver, "(…) an authentic changeling was: a substitute for an infant, child, or adult whom the fairies had abducted. Left in their stead, it was actually a starving imp, an aged, useless member of the elfin tribe, or even an animated log or stump of wood." (60) This imp or fairy would look something like a human infant, but there would be something odd or uncanny about their appearance, which would allude its parents and community to its true origins.

The changeling's appearance being the tell-tale sign that such a switch had occurred, they were explicitly described in many manuals and help-books. "If the changeling, as was most usual, took the form of a child, the child had an old, distorted face, a small or wizened body, and dark or sallow skin, and was often backward in learning to walk or speak. Some changed children were active though monstrous little beings; others were immobile, doll-like wooden creatures who soon lost all semblance of life, becoming "stocks" (Silver, 60). Martin Luther described the "(…) changeling traits as perverse moods, ravenous appetites, filthyness, and a tendency to injure their mothers by literally sucking them dry (…) To him, such creatures were diabolical in origin, "devil's spawn," and merely masses of flesh devoid of soul (…) Luther made no clear distinction between the incubus and the changeling; both were diabolic, both were to be destroyed" (Silver, 61). Ultimately, the uncanny appearance of the changeling ought to alert its parents, family or community to its true identity and subsequently lead to the purging of this usurper.

As touched on by Silver, it was not merely the appearance of the changeling which many described as signs of a fairy having invaded a human family and thereby its wider society, but also its behaviour. Silver describes how "(…) whether child or adult in form, the changeling was a

creature noteworthy for its gluttony and peevishness, its lack of heart or soul, and its strange, malicious, or ungovernable spirit." (60)

The worry of the fairy folk was expressed, among other ways, in "(…) a fantastic anxiety peculiar to the (Victorian) period." (Silver 59) Though the folk-tradition for believing in fairies and changelings was by no means an exclusively Victorian phenomena, Silver believes to have identified a particularity about this period which he sees as adding fuel to the fire of fear. The Victorians valued separation. They saw the order of society as relying on a social-separation, therefore "(…) the possibility of the existence of actual changelings increasingly came to be located in the nexus of Victorian anxieties about difference, race, and class." (Silver 60) The changeling phenomena, strikes at the heart of a culture who fears 'otherness' principally and, when regarding identifying this other as crucial to maintain order, will look to the super-natural if there is no natural explanation in order to calm destress.

The belief in fairies was of such force that it resulted in several cases of infanticide. One famous case of this happening was from 1826 in Ireland of a woman by the name of Anne Roche who killed a young boy, Michael Leahy, of only four years old by dunking him several times into a local river while the water was of sub-zero temperatures. Roche was later acquitted at trial for this deed. She protested against the charge of murder, stating that she had acted under the instructions of the boy's grandmother and that both women had believed that dunking the boy into the water in this manner would be "to put the fairy out" (Silver 62). Due to the boy's apparent learning difficulties and speech-impediments, his grandmother had concluded this to be the result of the boy's body having been possessed by a fairy.

The trend of the Victorian age, particularly in the British Isles, for believing in fairies and fairy changelings (Silver), made such figures a central figure to many works of literature, both of fiction and non-fiction. Many writers and poets set out to uncover these deeply held folk beliefs, writing both fictitious stories, works of fictions based on real events as well as non-fiction works, marking out to take a cool, objective, distanced measure of such beliefs and customs. For example, Sir Walter Scott identifies the folk-tradition for believing in fairies and changelings as belonging particularly to the Celtic nations; Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Cornwall and the Isle of Man, though making no real mention of Brittany. Scott goes on to mention tales he has heard of people who believe they have had encounters with the fairies and changelings, describing much of the same

systems of belief as applied to the case of the murder of Michael Leahy.

Certain trends, linking this as a particularly Celtic folk-tradition, can be found among many of the writers of the time. One being the Scottish writer William Sharp, writing under the pseudonym of Fiona Macleod, wrote a story focusing on the subject of changelings called "The Fara Ghael", which translated from Gallic means "False Love". The story is about a woman whose newborn child is sickly and weak. She leaves it on the sea-shore, presumably seeking a similar cure as was sought for Michael Leahy. When she comes back to reclaim the child, she finds a stout, healthy beautiful child whom she takes home and raises for several years. One day, however, the child announces that it needs to return to its own kind and the woman realises that her own child was not cured but substituted with a fairy changeling. Returning the changeling to the sea-side, the woman later returns for her own child only to find the same sickly child that she had left all those years earlier.

Realising she cannot love this child and that she has lost the changeling child, which she did love, the woman drowns herself, but not before lamenting at the "(…) the hardness and coldness (of the fairy folk) to give her again the unsmiling dumb thing she had mothered with so much bitterness of heart" (Works 5:133)". (Silver 62-63) As Silver remarks, "Macleod's ironic tale reverses the usual tradition to make its point. Here, the changeling is loved and valued, while the human child is despised and abandoned. Here, too, the fosterer rather than the fostered is false in love. Morag is not blamed for following the laws of her nature and returning to her kind; it is the "mother's" misdirected love and pride that leads to her tragic end. And the tale is cautionary, a warning against the refusal to accept the value of any human being." (62-63) In this case, the Stranger is beloved and the supposed native, i.e. the human child is estranged from its human community. As Silver pointed out, this intentional irony of Sharp's tale, be reversing the narrative, underlines the relative state of the Stranger as well as the dislike, which is often directed towards them.

W.B. Yeats, another Celtic Scottish writer, likewise wrote both fictional tales, poems and non-fiction works concerning the changeling and fairy-phenomena. According to Yeats, "(…) very young children were believed to have 'weak spirits' which were hard put to defend themselves against the devils which hovered everywhere. To protect the soul of a new-born who had died, the blood of a freshly-killed cock was sprinkled on the doorstep to waylay the demons.23 Other birthing customs reflect this concern with protecting the fragile soul of the child, fending off the

supernatural child stealers who could come down chimneys or through unguarded doorways; and with defending the mother, in her physically weakened and spiritually vulnerable state, from similar dangers." (Silver 61) Yeats also wrote a now famous poem entitled The Stolen Child, which contains the much repeated line of "Come away, O human child!". The poem is about fairies enticing a human child to come with them back to their fairy kingdom. This poem, likewise built on typical Celtic folklore, underpins another side to the anxiety concerning the 'other'; not only that the Strangers will infiltrate human-society and cause disruption and chaos for their own benefit, but that there is a general threat from the other, which may come to fruition in any manner of ways. What all of these anxieties show is a particular, fundamental idea that about the malevolence of the Stranger.

   According to Goodney and Stainton, changelings were "Creatures (…) substituted for human children by fairies, trolls, witches, demons, or devils (…)" and they "(…) appear frequently in the compilations of world folklore that have been a widespread genre for nearly two centuries." (223) The common consensus that changelings are merely the product of a misunderst of mental and physical disability is labelled and oversimplification by Goodney and Stainton. They argue that theorists investigating this subject have tended to use "(…) the folklore compilations as a basis for modernizing it from the respective standpoints of anthropology, psychoanalysis, and (the latter two) cultural history." (223) They seem to suggest a contemporary agenda, which discolours the modern understanding of the changeling-phenomenon.

   Goodney and Stainton credit the tendency to over-simplify the changeling-phenomenon as a way to placate modern fears of inhumanity being at the centre of human history and legacy. "From a historiographical standpoint, the demonization of pre-modern authors seems itself to be a projection and a form of guilt displacement, away from a present whose values are not up for question." (Goodney 239) The desire to distance oneself from one's cultural heritage re-plays the same tendencies evident in those who could not accept their off-spring, whom they regarded as 'odd' and much less than perfect, as their own. (…) labelling them as changelings on the whole gave them diabolic connotations they had not had before. There was an already existing convention about behavioural difference between children and parents—"wild" offspring can come from "sober" parents and "religious" from "debauched" (…) which was used as evidence for the immortality of the soul, since it showed that God (not parents) generates the soul. This would

have fostered the thought that the progenitor of soulless changelings, if not God, might be the Devil" (Goodney, Stainton 238). The understanding of children being a product of their parents, even a reflection of their parents, plays to the same notion of cultural heritage; the present being a product of the past. Due to this link, which is viewed as inevitable, when it is yielding findings that are undesirable are attempted to be explained away to create a disconnect between the forbearer and the off-spring.

Moreover, much like the tendency of folk and fairy tales, the folklore surrounding changelings changes and morphs, garnering different interpretation over time. "The concept of the changeling is thus itself a changeling. It has survived and reproduced by substitution, a Protean mould for intellectual otherness. The ascendancy of the new eugenics is unlikely to mean the end of history for changelings, whoever they turn out to be" (Goodney, Stainton 239). They thus suggest a potential new interpretation of the changeling-phenomena in the future.

Susan Eberly, in her book "Fairies and the Folklore of Disability: Changelings, Hybrids and the Solitary Fairy", likewise links the changeling-phenomenon with early misconception of mental and physical disabilities due to a lack of medical knowledge. She writes, "Congenital disorders which are not immediately visible, but whose effects become apparent after the passage of time, often produced individuals who evoked a similar, though more subdued, response of mingled awe and fear" (59). The lack of understanding and the search for answers will have turned religious minds towards the church for confirmation. Several prominent churchmen of the late medieval and renaissance eras, among here notably Martin Luther, interpreted these children, whose 'odd' characteristics could not otherwise be explain, to demonic influences or other supernatural powers will malignant intent. This attitude of the church, according to Eberly, set a fear in parents of such children, who would "(…) fear for their lives if they parented, or were even in the vicinity upon the birth of, atypical new-borns, animal and human." (60) The anxiety felt by parents that the so-called 'abnormal' child they had produced reflected poorly on them, their Christian souls perhaps even, may have contributed to an escalation in the beliefs and practices to deal with the fairies

Ebberly emphasises, however, that the changeling- children were not always received negatively. Nor were they always children. Sometimes, these children who were considered to be changelings or possessed by fairies, were believed to survive into adulthood and even old-age, and many folk

tales relate of such examples. "Not all changelings died in infancy, however. In many of the tales from Britain and Ireland, the changeling is portrayed as an adult, or even an elderly, creature who must be tricked into revealing his age, and who gives away his maturity when he plays the pipes or dances to a wild tune, addresses someone with a poem, or exhibits supernatural powers. A prodigious eater, constantly hungry and continuously demanding food ('Johnny was aye greeting and never growing'), the changeling is nonetheless undersized and sickly. He frequently has unusual features-misshapen limbs, an oversized head, slowness in learning to walk. He rarely sings or smiles or-that most human of all behaviours – talks" (62-63). This notion of changelings secretly growing old among the humans built upon the idea of the stranger infiltrating the community and living amongst them as a stranger in the guise of a native.

   Thus, the changeling phenomena comes to represent deeply held fears of the others. It underlines a fundamental human desire to understand the insensible and explain the unexplained. Therefore, "(…) the changeling phenomenon was a mysterious and frightening occurrence that could, if successfully probed, provide explanations for sudden death or disappearance, mysterious illness, and eccentric and bizarre behaviour" (Silver 60). However, there are other fears at play. This is the fear, not of what the Other is, but what one's own self is. The changeling phenomena underpins a desire by the community to dissociate itself with strangeness or even malignancy. As much as the 'other' is counted as separate to native culture, it is a part of it. The changeling, however estranged its identity may be perceived to be, was a part of the culture which believed in the existence of such folkloric creatures.

6. Learning from the Stranger

The following chapter will contain a discussion of the effect of the representation of the Stranger within the folk and fairy tale genre; discussing the concept of 'strangeness' and 'otherness' in relation to the wider theme of identity, also as represented within the tales. Moreover, the illustration of changefulness, or metamorphoses, within the tales will be related to what this paper will argue to be a defining quality pertaining to the tales' representation of identity and strangeness, i.e. the non-static, fluid and relative nature of both.

   Lastly, this paper will discuss the theory surrounding the effect of literary narrative on the cognitive skills of the reader. The notion that engaging with a narrative will enhance a reader's interpersonal and empathetic cognitive skills will be debated in conjunction with the question of what 'type' of literature would potentially be most effective to that end. This discussion will be built on the findings and processes several studies as well as other academic works published on this subject. Based off this, the chapter will attempt debate the question of narrativity as a foundation for social and cultural constructs.

6.1 Metamorphoses: Differentiating Between the Self and the Other

Central to the theme of the Stranger, this paper would like to argue, is the concept of identity; it is how we conceptualise and subsequently identity the Self and, thereby, how we determine what is the Other. This intersubjectivity is crucial to determine a distinction between the 'us' and the 'them'. It is what makes the difference between connection and dissociation to others. Identity, both in the sense of personal as well as communal identity, it the pre-requisite for determining who is a Familiar and who is a Stranger.

   In the world of folk and, particularly, fairy tales, however, something often times happens to this sense of identity that destabilises the clear lines of distinction. Things happen to items, places and characters to fundamentally change their identities and stations in the world. Many of the tales are either centred upon or conclude with a transformation; the soldier becomes a king, the princess becomes a beggar-woman, the beggar-woman becomes richer than the king. In the fairy tales specifically, the change is often more than situational; it is a physical transformation of the

self, often representing a psychological transformation or the true nature underneath the 'odd or sometimes grotesque exterior. Due to the magical realism of the fairy tale world, such transformation are accepted and usually understood to be a metaphor for some other type of transformation, more realistic to our natural world. These recurring transformations in the folk and fairy tale narratives, ranging from the unlikely to the downright fantastical, sets a precedence for changefulness. Neither the identity, social status or even physical form of the Self or the Stranger is certain or finite. Thus, in the tales, the line is blurred between the known and unknown; when any kind of change is possible, the conceptualised determinism of the Self, and therefore the Stranger, is brought into question.

In the tales, such transformations often take place in spaces, which represent a metamorphic process in and of themselves. As previously mentioned, the travelling protagonist often comes across the Stranger on the road and from this exchange is given some item or advice which turns the protagonist's fortunes on its head. Moreover, in the tales of changeling children, the sickly, human child is often left out by the sea-shore or sometimes by a river, being exchanged for another being by an element which itself is always travelling with its current. Thus, the setting in the tales, the points of shift in narrative, represents the flow of changefulness within the genre.

Much the same trend of changefulness of place seeping into literature may be said for the practice of recording the tales. Marina Warner, in her book Fantastic Metamorphoses, Other Worlds : Ways of Telling the Self, identifies places of trade, immigration and multiculturalism as the places where tales, concerned with the theme of metamorphoses, first flourished. She writes that the "(…) tales of metamorphosis often arose in spaces (temporal, geographical, and mental) that were crossroads, cross-cultural zones, points of interchange on the intricate connective tissue of communications between cultures. (…) It is no accident that fairy tales were first written down, for example, all round the edge of the Mediterranean, in Egypt and in the great ports of Venice and Naples, and travelled along trade routes from far and wide (…)" and being thus transported and shared by "(…) figures who are themselves often situated at turning points in culture and at moments of clash and conflict between one intellectual hegemony and another: it is characteristic of metamorphic writing to appear in transitional places and at the confluence of traditions and civilizations" (17-18). Citing such origins of the tales, it is easy to see the link between this and the wide-spread and metamorphic nature of folk and fairy tales.

It was perhaps necessary that it should be places steeped in multiculturalism, different cultures which would challenge and turns one's own norms and beliefs on their head, who should be the original bearer of many of the fantastical tales. In places where mono-culturalism and religious conservatism predominated, the idea of metamorphoses, of the creation of new, fantastical creatures and places, came to represent disorder and chaos. Perhaps this was because the influx of newness and the merging of cultures and ideas was not a natural part of such places, and where therefor regarded as disruptive. In mono-religious, Christian communities, for example, the lines are drawn up much more evenly, making sure to "(…) distinguish good from evil, the blessed from the heathen and the damned: in the Christian heaven, nothing is mutable, whereas in hell, everything combines and recombines in terrible amalgams, compounds, breeding hybrids, monsters-and mutants." (Warner, *Stranger Magic* 36) This is not to say that transformation, representative in the conceptual sense, was not a part of Christian culture. There are ceremonies within the Christian faith which "(…) involves a transformation of substance, but not appearance: bread and wine changes miraculously into the body and blood of Christ. In pagan metamorphosis, species-outward appearances-are all changed, but the inner spirit remains the same: it inverts the wonder, profanely." (39) Thus, perhaps the magical, physical transformations within the fairy tales that sprung out of the folk culture was a remnant of old pagan tradition as well as the influx of travellers and migrants.

The anxieties felt towards uncertain, changeful ideas, juxtaposing with an ordered world-view provided by religion, may be due to the lack of general exposure to 'otherness', the recurring influx of new ideas morphing together. When a community relies on one narrative to understand the world, provide safety and surety, then all that diverts from this narrative is a cause for anxiety.

This, though potentially holding some true, seems a bit of an over-simplification of the matter. Firstly, folk-beliefs and Christian ideology in such places as northern Europe, were not two distinct entities without overlap; they converged and merged together, transforming old, pagan traditions and beliefs to fit within a Christian community (Silver). Ideas of the origins and workings of the world and the Self, in communities all over the world, has always been subject to change. Cultures have merged, intermingled and effected one and other, and continues to do so to this day. Therefore, the essence of human culture, and individual and communal identities, is changefulness; metamorphoses. Much as the identities of the characters in the tales, the tales

themselves are metamorphic in their nature and thus a symbol of the man cultures they represent; for culture itself, whomsoever it belongs to, is likewise changeful. Coming to understand the Other or the Stranger is to understand relativity of any identity of being and exploring these themes of the Self and the Other through the language of fairy tales, with their fantastical abilities of performing a whole range of transformations, is to learn enough to see the stark line between the Self and the Other begin to blur.

6.2 Empathy and Imagination

Several scholars have discussed the topic of the effects of literature on humans' ability for empathetic thinking. Many have argued for this being the case, citing that reading literary narratives enhances a human beings empathetic abilities. This conclusion is based on the idea that empathy functions much like a muscle and can be augmented through training. There may be persons who, in some cases, have more of a neurological predisposition for interpersonal intelligence and there may be those who may be less so. However, generally speaking, the wider populous has the possibility to exercise and enhance this their empathy skills.

The usual reasoning behind this theory is simple; the experience of reading a narrative is, in essence, to share in the experience of another, even if that other is entirely fictional. When reading fiction, the reader is exposed to the events, emotions and sensations that the characters of the narrative are experiencing. In essence, when a reader is "(…) absorbed in a narrative can stimulate empathic imagination. Readers go along with the author/narrator in a (fictional) thought-experiment, imagining how it would be to be in the shoes of a particular character, with certain motives, under certain circumstances, meeting with certain events." (Koopman, Haukemulder 79)

Keith Oatley (1999) takes the classical Aristotelian idea of Mimesis, i.e. the relation between the 'real' world and the story-world, and reinterpret its meaning, expanding into signifying simulation as opposed to simply representation. The simulation of reality in fiction, while not relying solely on a descriptive representation of the 'real' world, delivers deep experiences of what is real. However, this experience relies on the reader's willingness, or perhaps ability, to fully engage with the text. As Oatley states, his notion of the process of simulation when reading only "(…) works if a reader or spectator can get the whole thing to run - to imagine the story world with its people,

and to become absorbed in it." (441) In discussing the following theories, this paper would like to propose that literary fiction, when consumed, is an exercise in empathy. When 'ingesting' a narrative, outlining the thoughts, feelings and situations of another, the reader or listener is being asked to relate to this 'other'. In order for narrative to be effective, this paper will argue, the reader must have some experience of understanding the life of another. In essence, literature is believed by some to have the ability to promote interpersonal intelligence and, as a consequence hereof, heighten empathetic social interaction.

While such studies as have been done on the subject of literature's effect on human empathy, doubts are cast by some scholar who express reservations about the long-term effects, positive effects, of reading promoting interpersonal skills. Koopman and Haukemulder adds their voice to these critics, stating that the "(…) claims about the effects of reading on empathy would need to take into account how far-reaching and long-lasting these effects are, if they occur at all. It does seem possible that we cry in response to the tragedies that befall characters, but fail to sympathize with a neighbour in need (…)," (84) and concluding that "(…) this might curb the general enthusiasm about the relevance of literary imagination for society at large." (84) However, Koopman and Haukemulder's focus on the immediate and emotive response of the reader as the primary effect central to this theory is not taking into account the cognitive practices, which are being rehearsed every time a reader engages with a narrative.

A study done by Stanley Chellis Mahoney in 1960 sought to define and differentiate between so-called 'poor empathisers' and 'good empathisers'. The study proposed to do this by having the test-persons read pieces of fiction, then their response thereto. Mahoney chose to define the two groups by the following criteria; he defined a 'poor empathiser as individuals "(…) who are not capable of Imaginatively transposing themselves into the thinking, feeling, and acting of another and so structuring the world as he does (…)" (12) as well as lacking in navigating interpersonal relationships, and defined 'good empathisers' as individuals who excelled in the imaginative thinking and navigating interpersonal relationships. A good empathiser, the study argued, would not only to be able to understand the responses of the others but also predict them, whereas a 'poor empathiser' would largely fail in both of these areas. Though acknowledging the subjectivity of the analyses of the findings and that the empathetic skills of an individual could not be conclusively determined by such a test, Mahoney did state that the study would be able to

indicate tendencies of high empathetic abilities. The test-individuals were given four separate pieces of fiction depicting narratives centred on four separate characters witch widely different personalities. The test individuals were then given un-finished sentences, which they themselves had to finish in accordance with how they believed that character would respond, based on a selection of multiple-choice answers. Though the study does not seek to determine whether fiction develops empathetic and interpersonal skills, it does base its thesis on the notion that fictional narratives will evoke empathetic responses and require interpersonal intelligence.

Another much more recent study from 2013, conducted by social psychologist Emanuele Castano and David Kidd, likewise sought to investigate the effects of reading different genres of literature on the cognitive functions enabling complex interpersonal skills, explained as the "(…) capacity to identify and understand others' subjective states." (377) Castano and Kidd named these cognitive functions Theory of Mind, abbreviated as ToM. Castano and Kidd segregated those participating in the studies into separate groups, giving each of the groups a different type of reading material. Some were given excerpts of non-fiction, others excerpts of popular, genre fiction and another number of participants were given highbrow literary fiction to read. Other participants were not given any reading material before conducting the second part of the study in which all participants were given tests to measure their ability to understand motives behind the actions and reasons behind the emotions of other people, relying of significant tendencies within different test-groups to mark out one genre of literature as particularly effective. They concluded that "(…) experimental evidence suggests that reading fiction increases self-reported empathy (…) Fiction seems also to expand our knowledge of others' lives, helping us recognize our similarity to them (…)" (377). However, they stress that their results show literary fiction to be most effective in inducing these effects, citing a advanced level of form and narrative techniques which engages the reader's mind to a higher degree than popular fiction, which, according to Castano and Kidd, merely entertain the reader; making the reader a passive participant and not mindfully engaged, thus rendering the exercise less effective.

All of the participants in the study of Castano and Kidd were adults, but similar studies have been conducted on children, specifically using fairy tales as their literary material. One study, conducted by Sharon C. Milner, attempted to "(…) to investigate the effects of a children's literature curriculum intervention using fairy tales on preschool children's empathy level (…)" (116) By

children's literature is meant fairy tales. Including fairy tales in the curriculum, both as a reading and interactional material, over a three-week period, the children who were given fairy tales to read and were employed in interactive fantasy role-play games, before subsequently undergoing psychological empathy test. The study found both the fairy tales as reading materials as well as the interactive games, were effective in increasing scores for empathy, social abilities as well as cognitive learning skills.

While the folk and fairy tale, being part of the folk tradition and aesthetically simplistic, does not usually qualify as literary fiction. However, the study by Castano and Kidd does not specifically make use of these types of literature, therefore concluding nothing specific as to these tales. Perhaps it is due to form, the shortness and bluntness of the narrative-voice, the archetypal characters or the simple plots, which prevent an adult reader from fully engaging with folk and fairy tale narratives. However, it may be the conceptualised identity of the tales, which creates a disconnect to a grown-up target audience. Especially the fairy tale genre has, since the romantic era (Silver 1999), been associated with children and, as narratives have been reworked and sanitized to fit the ideal of a children's tale, adult readers may have been socialised to feel a disconnect towards fairy and folk tales, regarding them as merely 'children's fiction'.

The subjectivity of a reader, and of a reading, makes analysis of the emotive effects of a particular piece of literature dubious. Though we may hypothesize some response in the reader when engaging with a narrative, our idea of the specificities of that response can only be conjecture. This is due to the endless variability when combining the three major, interactive components of author, narrative and reader. This is because, as Oatley states, "(…) interpretation is active. Interpretation of fiction offers not just the possibility of choosing how to read a text, and of creativity , it also allows a choice of what to read, and it enables an affiliative joining of reader and author, or reader and characters." (*Meeting of Minds* 451-452) The reader is not a passive entity merely receiving a narrative. The agency is not only with the author in their choice of structuring narrative and character, but also equally with the reader in their interpretation. Thus, the effects of that emerge from the narrative, the creation of the author, depends on the perspective of the reader.

While the 'closeness' the reader might feel when reading about the trials and tribulations of the characters within the story, the emotive responses of joy, anxiety etc., may be part of what

enhances the empathetic abilities of that reader, the distance, which the reader is able to have from the narrative, can be equally immersive and effective. "(…) narrativity can result in a broadening of readers' consciousness, in particular so that it encompasses fellow human beings. Fictionality might stimulate readers to consider the narrative they read as a thought experiment, creating distance between them and the events, allowing them to experiment more freely with taking the position of a character different from themselves, also in moral respects." (Koopman, Hakemulder 79)

Moreover, the 'reality outside of reality' which fiction projects, may create a consequence-free space where the reader can experience emotions and contemplate without restraint, since they are a 'third-party' standing outside of the narrative, as opposed to the narrative of their own lives. Though stories require our involvement to properly experience them, the dissociated state of the fictional world frees the reader up to experience every sensation without consequence. "(…) literary and fictional narratives may evoke the type of aesthetic distance (stillness) that leads to a suspension of judgment, adding to a stronger experience of role-taking and narrative empathy." (Koopman, Hakemulder, 103) Picking up a novel, we can hate antagonists, thirst for revenge, revel in pain, then put the book back down when we are done and return, without a stain on our character, to our own lives.

In fact, the reader themselves are often inserted into the narrative, even if they do not realise it. Often, it will be their own perspectives and experiences which create the background for what they will feel and think while engaging with the narrative. According to Oatley, "Specific emotions are primarily evaluations of events in relation to goals; what is important to one. If, therefore, emotions of reading are one's own, not just the pale reflections of the emotions of fictional characters, insight would be more likely when such emotional experience is combined with context of fictional stimulus that allow it to be understood better than is often possible in ordinary life." (*Why Fiction May be Twice as True as Fact* 115-116) Our own context is, whether whole or only somewhat, subconsciously interjected into our impressions of the narratives we consume when reading fiction.

It may be that it is our human propensity to recognise patterns of humanity in everything, which enables us to engage with fiction and fictional characters. We will attach our own human emotions and experiences to even non-living entities, within literature. This is evident in narratives

which feature characters that are supernatural, animals or inanimate objects, e.g. toys or household objects coming to life, still evoke empathetic responses and a sense of kinship with the reader. "This suggests that character identification and empathy felt for fictional characters requires certain traits (such as a name, recognisable situation, and at least implicit feelings) but dispenses with other requirements associated with realistic representation" (Keen, 68). This suggests that reading fiction is an act which highly engages our cognitive functions that enable us to relate and sympathise.

   In folk and fairy tales, many characters are often something other than human; sometimes more than, sometimes less than and other times human and something else. Fairy tales in particular present a world full of fantastical characters that require both out most natural instincts and creative imagination to engage with them, understand their humanity and become immersed within their narratives. We have to both exercise our natural tendencies to see patterns linking to human qualities and our abilities to suspend belief, broaden our minds of the possible and engage with the creation of the new. A story about the scientist of Albert Einstein goes that, when a mother asked him what she should read to her child so that said child might grow up to be a genius themselves, Einstein answered that she should read the child fairy tales. The mother then hesitated for a moment before asking what else she should read to the child. "More fairy tales," Einstein replied (Zipes 2013). The supposed reason for this instruction to read fairy tales to stimulate genius, is the notion that the fantastical, imaginative world of the fairy tale will stimulate the ability for innovative thinking. The idea is that, in order to exercise the ability for creative, advanced and pioneering thinking, we must be exposed to newness and strangeness.

   Innovative thinking does not find inspiration from mere reproduction or pure representation; unless it is representation, which expands on its expression. By combining several already known meanings together in a hitherto unseen combination, a new meaning is created. Innovative and creative thinking "(…) involves the otherness of an independent mind, of writer or story character. (…) it involves that special kind of meeting, which can be involved but not too involved, potentially transforming of self (…) Occasionally, when story structure, discourse structure, and associative structure occur in special configurations, meetings of literature can occur at the fight aesthetic distance, so that we experience important emotions (our own, not those of the characters). On such occasions, as well as experiencing intimate and specific emotions we can think about them,

perhaps even understand them for the first time." (Oatley 452) The realm of the magical fairy tale or unlikely folk tale expands the mind of the reader by their uses of transformative narratives and metamorphic characters; thus making strangeness familiar.

 While the effects of narrative in the form of literature on the human psyche is still a subject of un-affirmed study, debate and contention, the effects of what we might name 'social narrative' should not be overlooked. The presence of fiction within the natural world is pervasive through a number of social, historical and cultural narratives, which get told and re-told, thereby established, affirmed and re-affirmed. While there are those who contest the long-term effects of fiction in literature on the human psyche and relationships, and may be right to do so, it would be important not to regard our concept of fiction as wholly separate from our concept of reality. Our notions of the world, our way of conceptualising it, are often built on narratives, which might be no more than fiction, but still have great impact on humanity. For example, nations and nationalities are built on a historical narrative, many religious doctrine rely on mythological narratives, gender has been spun from a socialised narrative about femininity and masculinity and socio-economical classes have been constructed of the foundations of a material narrative; the concept of monetary value. Thus, the fairy tale of Them and Us, the Stranger and the Self, is constructed through various narratives, which are often first told to us in infancy, whose darker aspects only appear to us as we grow older and whose realism we may subsequently begin to question.

7. Conclusion

Seeking to isolate, define and subsequently discuss the social, cultural and literary archetype of the Stranger, this paper used folk and fairy tale narratives to analyse how this archetype was represented. This was based on the notion that these types of narratives represent the ideas and attitudes of the broadest section of human population, being accessible to the illiterate lower classes through their tradition of being relayed orally. Moreover, that these tales permeate all layers of society as well as multiple cultures and nations, first through their fluidity, metamorphic qualities and mobility as verbal tales and later due to wide-spread circulation in written form after the invention of the printing-press and the rise in general literacy.

   In order to evaluate the potential significance and effect of the representation of the Stranger within the tales, this paper first sought to establish the historical, cultural and literary form and significance of this form of literature. There is some degree of disagreement between scholars as to how to define folk and fairy tales. While most generally agree that the two are closely interlinked, most scholars prefer two differentiating definitions; citing an inherent naturalism within the folk tales and magical realism as due to the fairy tales. However, the supposition that what we today would classify as supernatural elements, i.e. fairy-folk, spells and witches, does not have a tradition with the sections of the folk psyche as belonging to the natural world, is to overlook a whole folkloric and cultural tradition. Therefore, this paper proposes an overlapping in the definitions of the folk and fairy tales, placing them both between tradition and fantasy; not being chronicles of supposed historical events but, through imagined narratives, representing ideas present within the Folk psyche.

   Moreover, the idea of the tales as static entities, with an original version to be referred to and upheld, creates a false notion of the whole story-telling tradition, as pertains to folk and fairy tales. An idea has been created of a 'true' version, an 'original' version, of each of the tales, citing a necessity for preserving and even 'honouring' this supposed 'original version'. This may be due to such collectors of the tales as Perrault, Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen, giving the stories a tangible 'source' as opposed to when they only existed in the minds of the people. However, all of these above mentioned collectors of the tales re-named, censored and re-told the same narratives in different versions, thus contradicting the idea of stoicism themselves and

alluding to the true nature of the tales. As opposed to the idea of one static version delivered down through the ages, this paper proposes that fluidity, changefulness and re-telling is the very definition of practice behind these tales. Thus, constituting the act of 're-using' and changing narratives to express particular personal or cultural truths of the tellers, is at complete adherence with the 'original' tradition of the folk and fairy tales.

Hereafter, to link the literary representation of the Stranger to a cultural context, it was necessary first to discuss the Stranger as a philosophical and sociological concept. As constituted by Simmel, Blacker and Schuetz, the Stranger is defined as unfamiliar entity, who is identified by the native community by this unfamiliarity to them. The native community may view the Stranger with hostility due to socio-economical concerns of the Stranger usurping a position within the economic structure or a fear of the Stranger 'diluting' or 'polluting' the native culture by inferring parts of their own. Though the Stranger may seek entry into the native community, they would need to shed their 'strangeness' and become immersed with the native culture, thus stepping out of the identity of the Stranger or Other. However, when maintaining a sense of identity which differentiate from the majority populous, the Stranger or Strangers will often always be regarded as and Other, in spite of their presence within and interaction with the community whose culture represents the majority cultural identity. On the other hand, the Stranger may be viewed as a disinterested party with no objective of personal interest and therefore be considered harmless.

After reading a wide body of classic folk and fairy tales, this paper identified three over-arching sub-types of the literary archetype of the Stranger within the tales, labelling them as the Malignant Stranger, the Helpful Stranger and the Magical Stranger respectively. Each sub-type were moreover linked to wider social as well as literary context. All of these typologies, however, are dependent on the perception of the Folk within the native community, being defined by their interpretation of the Stranger's intentions, motivations and over-all character. The Malignant Stranger is perceived as a threat, either to individual security or social status or to the order of the wider community; they are the result of anxieties felt by the native community, usually of instability or chaos. These anxieties of the natives are heightened due to the uncertainty and unfamiliarity with the character of the Stranger. In literature, the Malignant Stranger is often represented as an intruder with intentions of usurping the positions of or causing physical harm to the other characters. The Helpful Stranger is often attributed an objectivity of mind which places

them in a position of trust with the native community. Their outsider status is interpreted as them having no bias and no personal aim to excite selfishness or self-interest at the expense of the members of the native community. While the core definitions of the two aforementioned types are based on their interaction with the Folk, the Magical Stranger cuts a much more solitary figure; being defined neither by its kindness nor its malevolence. Instead, the Magical Stranger stands out as the ultimate symbol of the Other. They are estranged due to their magical abilities, origin, appearance or character and are unlikely to shed their 'strangeness' and become a fully, conceptually integrated member of the community; they may always be of outsider status due to their un-human persona and unknown abilities.

After analysing the representation of the Stranger within the tales still further, two principle themes of morality with regards to the Stranger seem to emerge; one teaching its reader to beware of the Stranger, the other teaching the reader to love the Stranger. The former morality classifies the Stranger under the sub-archetype of the Malignant Stranger, typifying the Stranger as intrusive and with malevolent intent. Often this is characterised by a predatory animal, such as a wolf, seeking its prey, which has often been interpreted as a warning for women against the sexuality of men. Other times, this is a human-intruder invading the community with a hidden identity and agenda. Often this hidden identity is based on a magic identity, thus classifying this type of Stranger, not only as Malevolent, but as a Magical Stranger.

The later morality, of loving the Stranger, also often classifies the Stranger as a Magical Stranger, often cursed, who the protagonist must learn to love the Stranger in spite of their 'otherness' to reveal their humanity. Often, this otherness is represented by the appearance of the Stranger, describing them as looking uncanny, animalistic or grotesque. Once the protagonist, by an act of love, virtue or loyalty, has broken the spell, the 'true' nature of the Stranger is revealed and their appearance becomes human. The former, in-human appearance of the Stranger, before they have been familiarised and accepted, may represent the exclusion and apprehension of the native community towards the Stranger. Once the Stranger becomes socially accepted or known, their humanity is revealed; as figuratively in reality as literally in fiction.

What the folk and fairy tales tell us, as much in their form as in their history, is the relativity of identity; both our own and those of others. Having fluctuated throughout their lifetime, travelled from country to country and settled there, adapted and grown new branches of the mother-tale,

the folk and fairy tales have often become synonymous with a literary legacy; a symbol of nationalism from the 'true' people of the Folk particular to that country. This, in spite of the fact that the very same tales have garnered the same significance in other countries, exemplifies the changefulness and relativity in the ways in which we, as individuals and as communities, conceptualise our own identity and differentiate it from that of the Others; the Strangers.

While centuries old traditions reveal an unease and suspicion about the Stranger, as typified in the folklore surrounding the belief in changelings and fairy folk, a potential for enlightenment on the subject of the Other has been presented in recent years, as some studies have suggested that interacting with literature may enhance the reader's empathetic and interpersonal abilities; reading a narrative becomes an exercise in 'putting oneself into the shoes of another'.

Works Cited

Alperin, Mara. The Three Little Pigs. Little Tiger Press, 2015

Andersen, Hans Christian. The wild swans. Routledge, 2003.

Anderson, Graham. Sage, Saint and Sophist: Holy Men and Their Associates in the Early Roman Empire. Routledge, 2014.

Asbjørnsen, Peter Christen, et al. East of the Sun and West of the Moon. Lulu. com, 2009.

Avery, Gillian, and Arthur Ransome. "Russian Fairy Tales." (1995).

Blacker, Carmen. "The Folklore of the Stranger: A Consideration of a Disguised Wandering Saint." Folklore, vol. 101, no. 2, 1990, pp. 162–168. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/1260319. Accessed 24 Feb. 2021.

Bottigheimer, Ruth B. Fairy tales: a new history. SUNY Press, 2010.

Bottigheimer, Ruth B. "Fairy tales, folk narrative research and history." Social history 14.3 (1989): 343-357.

Campbell, Gordon. The hermit in the garden: From imperial Rome to ornamental gnome. Oxford University Press, 2013.

Dawood, N J. Tales from the Thousand and One Nights. Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin Books, 1973. Print.

Dundes, Alan. "Who are the Folk?." Frontiers of folklore. Routledge, 2019. 17-35.

Eberly, Susan Schoon. "Fairies and the Folklore of Disability: Changelings, Hybrids and the Solitary Fairy." Folklore, vol. 99, no. 1, 1988, pp. 58–77. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/1259568. Accessed 9 May 2021.

Fry, T. The Rule of St. Benedict in English. Liturgical Press, 1981.

Gollnick, James. Love and the soul: Psychological interpretations of the Eros and Psyche myth. Vol. 15. Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, 1992.

Goodey, C. F., and Tim Stainton. "Intellectual disability and the myth of the changeling myth." Journal of the History of the Behavioural Sciences 37.3 (2001): 223-240.

Grimm, Jacob, and Wilhelm Grimm. The Original Folk and Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm: the complete first edition. Princeton University Press, 2016.

Howe, John. "The awesome hermit: The symbolic significance of the hermit as a possible research perspective." Numen 30.Fasc. 1 (1983): 106-119.

Kidd, David Comer, and Emanuele Castano. "Reading literary fiction improves theory of mind." Science 342.6156 (2013): 377-380.

Koopman, Emy, and Frank Hakemulder. "Effects of literature on empathy and self-reflection: A theoretical-empirical framework." Journal of Literary Theory 9.1 (2015): 79-111.

Lawrence, Clifford Hugh. Medieval monasticism: forms of religious life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages. Routledge, 2015.

North. Peter and the Wolf: Op. 67 (1936). Tunbridge, Vt: Trillenium Music Co, 1999.

Oatley, Keith. "Meetings of minds: Dialogue, sympathy, and identification, in reading fiction." Poetics 26.5-6 (1999): 439-454.

Oatley, Keith. "Why fiction may be twice as true as fact: Fiction as cognitive and emotional simulation." Review of general psychology 3.2 (1999): 101-117.

Perrault, Charles, Harry Clarke, and Thomas Bodkin. The fairy tales of Charles Perrault. Courier Corporation, 2012.

Sanderson, Michael. "Literacy and Social Mobility in the Industrial Revolution in England." Past & Present, no. 56, 1972, pp. 75–104. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/650473. Accessed 1 June 2021.

Schutz, Alfred. "The stranger." Collected papers II. Springer, Dordrecht, 1976. 91-105.

Silver, Carole G. Strange and secret peoples: Fairies and Victorian consciousness. Oxford University Press on Demand, 1999.

Warner, Marina. Fantastic metamorphoses, other worlds: ways of telling the self. OUP Oxford, 2004.

Warner, Marina. Once upon a time: A short history of fairy tale. OUP Oxford, 2014.

Warner, Marina. Stranger magic: Charmed states and the Arabian Nights. Harvard University Press, 2012.

Yeats, William Butler. Irish fairy and folk tales. Read Book

Zipes, J. The golden age of folk and fairy tales: from the brothers Grimm to Andrew Lang. Hackett Publishing, 2013.s Ltd, 2013.