

Sorina Georgescu

MA American Studies

E-mail address: eu\_sorina@yahoo.ie

University of Bucharest

Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures

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### Cinderella and the American Dream

My inquiry focuses on the evolution of the American Dream of the elected hard working man of the Puritans – the poor man allowed to become rich – and its connections to the myth of Cinderella, the beautiful young girl who makes Prince Charming fall in love with her and marry her because of her qualities, disregarding her poor origin (as the traditional story goes).

In the first part of the paper I'll talk about the general definition of the fairytale, exploring its affinities with the American Dream. I'll also show how the traditional French tale of Cinderella, written in 1697 by Charles Perrault - the next written version after the Chinese one from the 7<sup>th</sup> century - was taken over by the German Grimm brothers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The focus will be on the main character's description and her way of making the dream come true.

In the second part of the paper I'll talk about the different ways in which the American Walt Disney, and other American movie directors after him, dealt with the same main character of the story. My thesis is that the story of Cinderella has been so widely screened in America because it actually fits the American society (dream) very well: it promotes the idea that the social transgression of the classes is still open.

“Cinderella” is easily one of the most well known fairytales around the world. Its themes appear in the folklore of many cultures, from China to Europe.

As a fairytale it is a subdivision of the folktale. According to Tristram Potter Coffin in his article “Folktales”, it is hard to define a folktale. But the fairytale has a more precise scheme: first; “it takes place in a wonderland filled with magic and strange characters (Coffin 1)”. Second, the typical plot talks about “an underdog hero or heroine who is put through great trials or must perform seemingly impossible tasks, and who with magical assistance secures his or her birthright or a suitable marriage partner (Coffin 1)”.

What is then the connection between a fairytale and the American Dream? Well, in my opinion, the very scheme and principles of a fairytale. There is a lot of literature and theory concerning the American Dream, and all agree on at least one feature: it starts from an idyllic myth, from an wonderland – America was supposed to be the New Garden of Eden, a new paradise. For the first Puritans this new paradise was the place of religious freedom, for the next immigrants it was the place where they could find gold and become rich.

Like in a fairytale, there is a typical hero, a typical plot, and a typical end. The hero is usually a poor, but very self-motivated young person. The plot refers to his way of advancing in the social hierarchy only because of his own qualities. And the end is always moral and happy for that particular person in the story. And the best example in this sense is the classic American model of the way from rags-to-riches, namely Benjamin Franklin.

What is, more exactly, the connection between the American Dream and “Cinderella”?

The first written version called “Yen-Shen” is very far-off in time from the ‘American Dream’ kind of stories, since it appears in China in the 850-860s and the action takes place “in the dim past, even before the Ch’in and the Han dynasties (Erickson, “Yen-Shen” 101)”. The

main character in this first written version, Yen-Shen, is the little orphan of Chief Wu's second wife, "a bright child and lovely, too, with skin as smooth as ivory and dark pools for eyes (Erickson, "Yen-Shen" 101)", unlike the other girl who is quite ugly. Yen-Shen is mistreated by her stepmother and stepsister, and has only one friend: a fish with golden eyes. One day, the stepmother kills the fish, and Yen-Shen discovers the magic power of the fish bones that are able to fulfil all her wishes. When the spring comes and with it the Festival time, the stepmother sees it as a good opportunity to find a proper husband for her own daughter. She forbids Yen-Shen to go there. But, due to the fish bones, Yen-Shen finds herself "dressed in a gown of azure blue, with a cloak of kingfisher feathers draped around her shoulders. Best of all, on her tiny feet were the most beautiful slippers she had ever seen. They were woven of gold threads, in a pattern like the scales of a fish, and the glistening soles were made of solid gold. There was magic in the shoes, for they should have been quite heavy, yet when Yen-Shen walked, her feet felt as light as air (Erickson, "Yen-Shen" 102)". So she goes to the Festival. Everybody admires her, even her stepsister who actually recognizes her. So Yen-Shen must come back home. She accidentally loses one of the golden shoes the fish had specifically asked her to take care of. Meanwhile, at the Festival, a peasant finds the shoe and sells it to a merchant who gives it to the King. The King immediately decides he will marry that particular girl the shoe belongs to, for she must have the tiniest feet in China, which makes her the most beautiful maiden in the country. As Yen-Shen comes back to find her shoe the King sees her beauty and goes to the cave to propose her. She was "very frightened at first, but the king spoke to her in a kind voice and asked her to try the golden slippers on her feet. The maiden did as she was told, and as she stood in her golden shoes, her rags were transformed once more into the feathered cloak and beautiful azure gown. Her loveliness made her seem a heavenly being, and the king suddenly knew in his heart

that he had found his true love (Erickson, “Yen-Shen” 104)”. So, here we have, from the very beginning, a bad stepmother, a bad and ugly stepsister and a persecuted beautiful young girl. Then we have a fish and his magic bones, a Festival, a wonderful dress and a pair of golden shoes. And at the end of the story there appears the King, who marries the young girl, conquered by her beauty. As we can see, the idea of the poor beautiful young girl who becomes rich by marrying the King comes from the very remote China.

The next and most famous version, written by Charles Perrault in 1697, is closer to the ‘American Dream’ stories. Like the Chinese version before it, Perrault’s “Cinderella” or (“Histoires ou Contes de Temps Psee. Cendillon, ou ta Petite Pantoufle de Verre”), has the classic basic elements of a fairytale. First, there is a magic element, this time a fairy godmother with a magic wand. Second, there is a typical plot, a typical heroine, and a typical end. The plot remains Cinderella’s wish to escape that miserable estate of being the servant of her stepfamily. The heroine is a still a young girl, “but of unparalleled goodness and sweetness of temper, which she took from her mother who was the best creature in the world (Heiner 1)”. But this time there is a Ball given by the Prince in order to get married and all the girls in the kingdom are invited to try their luck. Perrault’s Cinderella is dressed by her fairy godmother in a “lovely gown and a pair of glass slippers (Erickson, “Cinderella” 99)” and has a “pumpkin changed into a handsome coach while the mice become wonderful prancing horses (Erickson, “Cinderella” 99)”. She still has to run away and loses one shoe. This time Prince Charming falls in love with her at the Ball. Like in the Chinese version, when he finds her and allows her to try the shoes, her rags turn again into lovely clothes. And the end remains a moral one: because of her qualities she marries the Prince, so her dream comes true. And since it is a wonderful romance, at the end of the story good Cinderella forgives her stepsisters and finds them husbands among the lords in the Palace.

But, as the American Benjamin Franklin says in the first part of his *Autobiography*: “Only in a democratic country like America could a poor boy with no patrons have the possibility of becoming one of the most famous and powerful men in the world (Lemay 63)”.

The 'democratic' side of “Cinderella” is the fact that, in a European aristocratic country like France, one hundred years before the French Revolution, or even in a remote aristocratic China, her qualities allow her to advance in the social hierarchy. Of course, one could argue that “Cinderella” is just a fairytale, while Benjamin Franklin’s case is real. This might be a proof that a wonderful Asian-European dream started in the 7<sup>th</sup> century and still dreamed of in 1697 was going to become reality in the 18<sup>th</sup> century America. According to Blake Spitz in his article “Once Upon a Time”, in the Europe of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the poor were worse off than in the Middle Ages. And the fairytales that focused on the scarcity of food, brutal conditions and abandonment, filled with magic elements such as witches, miracles and assured justice, represented a way for the poor to deal with the horrors of real life. What Charles Perrault did in France was a wonderful fairytale that provided hope, for the initially poor heroine was rescued from the harsh existence and justice was achieved, just like in an ‘American Dream’ kind of story. Even if his story is more about class differences than about extreme poverty, it is the fictionalized written expression of the social tensions preceding the French Revolution. The main focus is on the envy of the aristocracy by the less fortunate and allows the lower class a glimpse into a world they wished to see and experience. This explains in Blake Spitz’s opinion why the main character is a ‘good’ person “who deserves to be embraced by the Prince, just as the lower class should be welcomed by the upper class. It is hope for the French peasants by promising that one day the rest of France will accept them and work to form a world of social equality (Spitz 1)”. And also according to the same Blake Spitz, Perrault’s “Cinderella” became so famous

because it represents the “timeless, universal dreams and wishes of a struggling community (Spitz 1)”.

The message of the two versions I’ve talked about till now could be expressed in Charles Perrault’s final moral: “Without doubt, it is a great advantage to have intelligence, courage, good breeding, and common sense. These, and similar talents come only from Heaven, and it is good to have them. However, even this may fail to bring you success, without the blessing of a godfather or a godmother (Erickson, “Cinderella” 100)”. Yen-Shen needs a magic fish, Perrault’s Cinderella needs a fairy godmother, the American Benjamin Franklin needs the “Blessing of God” in order to succeed.

The next version of “Cinderella” that I’ll briefly mention was written by the German Grimm Brothers, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The story keeps the plot, the main character’s qualities and the happy end but it is really harsh. Aschenputtel is much more miserable, and one could argue that what actually surfaces is not the big success, but the pain she has to suffer till she gets where she wants. There is no fairy godmother, but a tree on the mother’s grave and two white pigeons to help her. However, it is another step in the fairytale’s circuit around the world. If Perrault’s story talks about the social tensions in France, Grimm’s Aschenputtel is the reflection of the desperate situation in Germany. According to Blake Spitz, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century many historians such as the Grimm Brothers in Germany, tried to emphasize the differences and uniqueness of cultures. Their Aschenputtel, even if inspired by Charles Perrault, is modified according to their own social situation: like in “Hansel and Gretel”, Aschenputtel is almost starved and desperately wishes for a better life. She is much more desperate than Perrault’s Cinderella, the Prince has much more difficulties in finding her and the end is much more painful for the bad characters than in the other version. Even if people understand that the innocent is

rescued while the evil forces are punished, and that the person who struggles for a better life and is very faithful will be rewarded, the romantic element of forgiving the two sisters from Perrault's story is replaced by a cruel punishment: some birds pick up the eyes of the negative characters. I think that could explain why this version is less famous than Perrault's is.

The next important step for "Cinderella" is this time Walt Disney's animated motion picture released in the United States in the year 1950. Historically speaking this happened in an era of general optimism, consensus and national pride. By the turn into the Fifties we can talk about the 'American miracle': it was the only country to emerge from the war with her economy strengthened and richer than any other nation in the whole world. At the international level, the Americans entered the Fifties as a global superpower –their responsibilities ranged widely through Europe, the Middle East and the Pacific. American politicians and the State Department had to address themselves, as never before, to many primary issues that would affect the future destiny of the world at large. Their anxieties were no longer economic. As Howard Temperley and Malcom Bradbury explain us in their article "War and Cold War" from the *Introduction to American Studies*: "The ideology of American democracy now offered itself as a world model for the new nations that were emerging out of the postwar chaos, and large parts of the world now turned to the United States to admire and emulate its affluence, its political system, and to assimilate its culture. America came to represent one of the two essential principles of modernization and development - the successful 'American way' of individualism, capitalism, and mass consumerism, which faced, and increasingly confronted, the 'Communist way' of collectivism, the managed economy and the one-party state (Temperley and Bradbury 289)". However, they were at the beginning of the Cold War, and there were internal tensions. Besides the fact that there still were entire neighborhoods with poor people from low-middle classes, this

was the era of the so-called 'McCarthyism'. This showed, on the one hand, the doubts, the traditionalism, and the desire for simplicity of the American politicians. On the other hand it indicated that to finance the Marshall Plan in order to redress the European industry, aid the United Nations, make generous gifts to developing countries, the Americans needed to persuade themselves that they were indeed 'at war'. The leaders had to convince their people that the struggle was not just between America and Russia, but between good and evil, right-thinking and wrong-thinking. So the stress was rather on the moral side than on the political or economic side.

In the movie history this period is known as 'Hollywood in Transition: 1946-1965'. Basically this was characterized by the continuation of the Production Code created in 1930 that asked the movie-studios to do only moral movies. The movie-directors were forced to avoid brutality, sexual promiscuity and they were asked to show that illegal or immoral life was neither possible nor pleasant in America. "This way the Production Code Administration hoped to formulate, concretely and precisely, the publicly admissible mores of an entire culture, i.e. the kinds and deeds suitable for public depiction, and, especially, the kinds of words suitable for public utterance (McDougal 276)". Generally speaking, the movies were essentially romantic and Manichean: there were film characters who lived beautiful lives and others who lived vile ones.

For the Walt Disney Studio, the year 1950 represented an effort to return to the fairytale 'roots' of Disney that, by the late 40s, had a nostalgic appeal for filmgoers. So, he produced the story of "Cinderella", based upon Perrault's version. This was, according to The Big Cartoon Data Base, a favorite of filmmakers over the years. Unlike Grimm's harsh version, this was a wonderful romance with a moral happy ending emphasizing a dream coming true. The American people wanted such things as simplicity, beauty, romance, joy, and happy end. They all wanted



hope, moral and assured justice, especially the middle and lower classes from the American society. According to the same source, this “Cinderella” was a smash-box-office hit that saved the Disney Studio. This happened because of the adaptability to the modern audience, which could mean both the technique – Disney was the first to use sound and color - and the national historical context.

The next movie-version I’m going to briefly mention was released sometimes around 1980. In the history of America this period is known as the ‘Reagan Era’. Characterized by economic recovery and “more money in the hands of citizens (Woloch 1)”, especially at the beginning, this was a period when the “two mutually exclusive American ideals – a belief in American uniqueness, innocence and simplicity and a commitment to a future of technological growth and sophistication (King 289)” were somehow harmonized. Reagan’s career as an actor and as a politician has been devoted to traditional American values rooted in the experience of heartland America. For the American people he represented another example of patriotism, moral and a real model of how to get from rags-to-riches because of one’s own qualities. Because of him Americans entered the 1980s as the world’s largest creditor nation. Even though, for many of his Leftist opponents “the persistence of poverty in the midst of economic recovery was an overwhelming failure (King 291)”. And that was because the gap between rich and poor in America, already higher than in almost all industrial countries, continued to widen during the decade. What Reagan’s administration tried to do was to recover the national pride lost in Vietnam and Afghanistan as quickly as possible and, at the same time, to reinforce the viability of the American Dream after two decades of inflation, low payments, government regulation in business, and lost battles abroad.

In the movie history this is the beginning of the ‘Return of the Myth’ period. Basically there was a typical scheme to follow. The movies presented an extremely positive character opposing an extremely negative one, and a moral ending. There were heroes “one wanted to root for (McDougal 515)”, villains “one could only hate (McDougal 515)” and “happy endings (McDougal 515)”. This period was “technically advanced and politically in retreat, devoted entirely to entertainment but afraid of ideas and risks, with films that are innovative but rarely new (McDougal 515)”. That’s why it seems to me an appropriate moment to release a movie like Perrault’s “Cinderella”, based on a fairytale with all the basic elements needed in the context I’ve talked about. This version depicts the main character just like Perrault, keeping all her traditional qualities: beauty, graciousness, and goodness. It also keeps the fairy godmother, the shoe, and the Ball scene. And of course, the moral happy end providing the same old hope for the middle and low class American people.

If the two movie versions I have talked about up to this moment are very much like the traditional French version, but released in certain contexts that make the connection with the American Dream possible, the last two versions I am going to analyze are much more Americanized.

The first was released in 1997 and it is a multiculturalist musical. I think it can be seen as a combination between “the best of what the mainstream has to offer (West 4)” and a sort of alignment with “groups who vow to keep alive potent traditions of critique and resistance (West 5)”. In the history of the United States, as Nancy Woloch explains us in her article “United States (History)” from the *Encarta Encyclopedia*, this is the time of massive immigration, especially from Asia and Latin America. During the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there appears the term ‘multiculturalism’ in order to deal with this new situation. Woloch defines ‘multiculturalism’ as

“the acceptance of immigrants and minority groups as distinct communities, distinguishable from the majority population (1)”. And then she talks about the debates over this issue. Basically, the advocates of ‘multiculturalism’ believe that members of minority groups should enjoy equal rights in the American society without giving up their diverse ethnic cultures. They oppose the idea of a ‘melting pot’ and assimilation. The critics argue that ‘multiculturalism’ creates conflict among groups more than it fosters tolerance of one group for another. In their view cultural pluralism promotes rivalry and divisions. According to Nancy Woloch, “some find ‘multiculturalism’ a token gesture designed to hide continuing domination of American culture by the majority group. Others argue that recognition of cultural differences and group identities does not help address social and economic disadvantages (1)”. The period we are talking about is also the time of Affirmative Action policies. The supporters see it as a good opportunity for the members of the groups that suffered past discrimination. The opponents consider it a reverse discrimination.

In the movie history we are in the same ‘Return of the Myth’ period. But the combination between the basic scheme used in this period and the ‘multiculturalist’ political discourse makes this version special. This time the main character is not a White female, but an African-American one, just like the fairy godmother, one of the stepsisters and the Queen. The Prince is Hispano-American Chinese and his father is a White Anglo-Saxon American. So, an important phenomenon in the movie is the Afro-centrism due to the selection of the African-American actors in four of the key roles in the story.

This Cinderella differs from the traditional one not only in color, but also in her way of acting and talking. She is obedient like Perrault’s, but she sings a lot and dreams in her little corner in the kitchen. When she is not allowed to go to the Ball she dreams of it and prays. So

her African-American fairy godmother helps her with a very important piece of advice included in her song. Cinderella must have faith, she must dream but she also must do something in order to make the dream come true. At the Ball Prince Charming falls in love with her and she wants to run away for fear he might find out who she really is. But the fairy godmother asks her not to give up. Cinderella has an interesting dialogue with the Prince whom she tells he should not resume to the dreaming thing: he should actually do something about it. At midnight she runs, she loses one shoe, the Prince finds her and they get married. And the fairy godmother draws the same conclusion: you should even move the mountains in order to fulfil your dream. So here we have precisely the American idea about the way dreams come true in the American society. The fact that one should not only dream about something he or she really wishes, but he or she should actually fight in order to make the dream come true is suggested three times in the movie: at the beginning the African-American godmother says it to the African-American Cinderella; in the middle, Cinderella says it to the Hispano-Chinese-American Prince during the Ball; at the end, after the wedding, the fairy godmother tells it to the audience, as the conclusion, as the message of the movie.

But there are also some other important ideas that we can decipher here. These ideas are connected both with the American Dream as such and with ‘multiculturalism’ in general. So here we have two very important combinations: one is between a white Anglo-Saxon American man and an African-American woman – the parents of the Prince. The other is between an African-American woman and a Hispano-Chinese man. And the director emphasizes the Ball Scene, the best scene for a musical. The dream comes true for the African-American woman even if we can’t talk about a ‘mainstream’ husband. But that’s not important here, they are in love, they get married and everybody is happy, except, of course, for the negative characters. If we make even

a deeper analysis, we can see that Cinderella is a Black woman, a perfect match between the real Asian-European character's function in the story and the role of the African-American woman in the American society starting from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and lasting till the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The fairy godmother is also an African-American woman, like the character she must take care of. One of the stepsisters is also African-American, the one that sort of communicates with Cinderella. And the Prince's mother is Black, too, maybe in order to convince the audience that the color is not the problem. I think the movie could be analyzed from two opposite perspectives: one that shows us that in America, due to the Affirmative Action policies, you can become rich and powerful, not only when you start from a servant position, but also when you are a Black person, -and a woman-, or any non-white character, except maybe for the Natives who are absent from this movie. That's the optimist way of seeing a wonderful romance. There are characters of different 'colors' and they understand each other. That's what the dance stands for. In a word, everybody is happy. And the opposite perspective: like Cheryl Harris would put it, even within the Affirmative Action program the Black (*woman*) will never be the ruler even if she is the Queen or the King's daughter-in-law. She will always be the subordinate. And the White man will always be the ruler, even if he marries a Black lady, a phenomenon that is now allowed in the American society, according to this version of the movie. The Hispano-Chinese Prince is not exactly a white person, but he is neither a Black. So he can also marry a Black woman, but, unlike African-Americans, he can have access to power since he is the King's son. White is also the stepmother and one of the stepsisters and, generally speaking, almost everybody in the Palace. As I've already mentioned, Cinderella doesn't marry a 'mainstream'. Her future husband is still not the authority here: he is just Prince Charming falling in love. I think he could be an example of the Anglo-Saxon conception of Chinese men as beautiful, like

the Japanese women. Here we could even talk about the erotic attraction that makes a non-Black person fall in love with a Black woman. The attraction is double here: the symbols of erotic attraction (African-American woman and Asian men) get married. On the other hand, the Prince is not a white Anglo-Saxon, so, one could argue that, after his father, the authority in the state would be a 'non-white' one. We could say that the margin moves to the center: we can see the Afro-centrism when talking about how many African-Americans we have in the key roles, and then there is a future non-white King in Prince Charming's person.

The second version was released one year later and it is a feminist one, somewhere between the feminist trend that includes such movies as *Xena-The Warrior Princess*, and Perrault's "Cinderella". This time she is a White female, whose real name is Danielle, but who is called Cinderella. She is completely different from the original, in the sense that she is not obedient at all. She is young and beautiful and good, but she cannot stand her stepmother and one of the two stepsisters whom she even hits and she is severely punished. She likes to read a lot and she dates the Prince long before the Ball. She even saves him in a battle and they kiss in the forest. Later she suggests him to build a university. She is invited to the Ball, but her mother tries to stop her locking her into the kitchen. This time there is no fairy godmother to help her, but there comes Leonardo da Vinci to open the door and give her a dress to go to the Ball. The dialogue between Cinderella and da Vinci is very important for the message of this last version. She complains to him that she is just a servant, and he says that he is just a bastard. Then he gives her a pair of white wings to add them to her white dress. She goes to the Ball, but her stepmother embarrasses her by telling the Prince who she really is. As a result he rejects her and she runs away, still losing one shoe, and the classic Ball scene completely disappears from the movie. And I think this happens because the Ball is not important anymore. Till now this was the

place where her beauty and graciousness made him love her. But this time he is already in love with her and not only because of these two qualities. He is conquered by her way of speaking, by her smartness, by her self-education. However he rejects her because of his prejudices that forbid a Prince marry a servant no matter her qualities and his feelings for her. And that's why the fairy godmother is replaced here by da Vinci. He represents the one enlightened mind of the time, an important personality free of the prejudices concerning the origins. And he gives the shoe to the Prince and convinces him to believe in his feelings not in the theories. So he goes to find her but he learns from the good stepsister that Cinderella has been sold to an ugly merchant. He wants to rescue her and ask her to marry him. Instead our young girl manages to handle the sword and, just like Xena – the warrior princess, beats the merchant and escapes him. Finally the Prince finds her, declares his love, gives her the shoe, and asks her to marry him. And, according to a certain voice at the end of the story, they live happily ever after, and that is the true.

So, as we can see from this analysis, we could apply here Susan Bordo's discussion of Michel Foucault's theory concerning the power relations in the modern society. In her article "Feminism, Foucault and the politics of the body", she refers to the standards of beauty that define the dimensions of the women physical freedom and underlines the relationship between physical freedom and psychological development, intellectual possibility and creative potential. As she says at a certain point, traditionally speaking, the female was seen as a *body* while the man was seen as *the mind*. So, the main quality of a woman in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was to keep being beautiful and docile. And this was the case of all the former versions of "Cinderella". She conquered Prince Charming only with her beauty and graciousness and goodness, even if she was also a very self-motivated young lady. Quite the opposite, in this last movie-version, she is much more than the beautiful and the 'passive' object in the story. She is not obedient, either in

relationship with her stepfamily, or with the Prince. On the contrary, she is the strong one, and she is also an intellectual. She knows exactly what she wants and she does everything to get there. Even if the Prince is the authority, since he is the son of the man who rules the Kingdom, and she loves him and marries him, he is the one who apologizes in front of her, and she is the one who is able to defend him physically, and the one who dares to fight the cruel authority of her stepmother. The movie-director still keeps the 'beauty' theme, a compulsory feminine element since the Chinese written version of the story. So, in my opinion, the message of this last movie could be the feminist version of: "Imagine...[...] a society without roots, without memories, without prejudices (Toqueville 1)". Which means that the American society doesn't necessary care about some important European problems: first the origins – so anybody can transgress the social hierarchy; second the gender – in the American society a woman is not only body and soul, but also mind and education, and she is also perfectly capable of defending herself even by force when needed.

I conclude by remarking once again the different ways in which a fairytale like "Cinderella" can survive through the centuries and can be adapted to the modern times. The Chinese "Yen-Shen" was written for the Chinese readers in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Perrault's "Cinderella" or "Cendillon ou ta Petite Pantoufle de Verre" was written for the French people one hundred years before the French Revolution. Grimm's "Aschenputtel" was written for the German people in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Walt Disney's animated motion picture was produced for the young American public in 1950, so he used beautiful colors, songs, and motion. The 1981 *Cinderella* was released at the beginning of the 'Return of the Myths' era saying again that the



dream can become reality. The 1997 Americanized version emphasized the Ball scene in order to present us an harmonious combination between the movie as romance and entertainment on the one side, and the artistic expression of the revision of the American Dream, using an Afro-centric selection of the actors, on the other side. And, finally, the 1998 version was made to analyze the way in which a woman can traverse the way from rags-to-riches in the Postmodern American society.

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