

## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

#### A. Background of the Study

Many young girls believe that some day they would have a “happily ever after” life. They assume that poor girls having physical beauty but who are miserable in their early life would have a happy life in the future. They believe that they are the future “Cinderella”. They have their mind set when they were children that some day in the future, they would marry their “prince charming” and live in a beautiful palace and say “goodbye” or “farewell” to the things, called “miseries”. They think that Cinderella really exists in this world like any other legends (such as the dragon from China, the Genie from Arab, etc).

Cinderella is one of the most popular fairy tales and it might be the one which has so many versions written in many languages. According to Anna Birgita Rooth, who tried to trace and mapped them geographically to identify clusters and common themes, there are 1000 versions with different details and themes. The story becomes a legend or myth and it is adored from century to century by children all around the world especially girls. The story has drawn scholarly interest for hundreds of years and is perhaps the best-studied tale in folklore's history (Dundes, 1.) Walt Disney made a film to visualise this particular story which is directly a representative of Charles Perrault's version, (which uses the fairy godmother, pumpkin carriage, and the glass slippers). This story was recorded in 1697 and published in France under the title "Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passe," or "Tales of Times Past." This version was the first to appear in

published form in Europe, and as such, was one of the best known. Another commonly known recorded version is the Brothers Grimm's "Ashcenputtel," published in Germany in 1812."(Jensen. Online. 1). Of course, Walt Disney was very good in dealing with the visualisation, portraying a dream for the girls that they have nowadays.

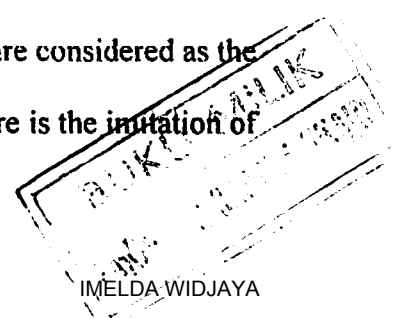
The 'simplified' version of the story causes misinterpretation. This version has given the young women dreams that every girl with physical beauty is usually fortunate because she can marry a "prince-charming" in the future. The story changes the real message, and makes different perception about the real message from the real version. The different messages between these stories of course affect the message and the essence of the story.

Many young girls adore this tale and believe that they could be the present "Cinderella". So they tend to have an easy way to achieve something. They prefer to wait for a miracle or let somebody to help them rather than to try to gain what they want by their own effort. The girls nowadays prefer to have everything ready instantly for them rather than to do something difficult, which may cause them to think slightly harder than they wanted to.

For example, a poor but good looking village girl usually prefers to be the second wife of an old man who is very rich so that they can enjoy the 'easy' life. Due to the change of the message given in the present, that is the simplified version of Cinderella from the original one, readers especially young girls have different perception about the hardship and struggle that Cinderella encountered before she was chosen by the handsome prince. Perrault, on the other hand, was encouraging the young aristocratic ladies to be more realistic. Or if they are

willing to work, they prefer to be “TKI” or “TKW” (the Indonesian work force that work abroad by obtaining high wages with lack of skills.). Some of the village girls even dream to work in a big city and intend to marry their masters. Meanwhile, some girls in the city prefer to work as streetwalkers rather than to find work, which they think will cause stress because of the hard ships and responsibility. Still others prefer to become the second wives because of the classic old reason : get better financial life. They don’t want to face a ‘minor’ problem such as run out of money for the sake of hiring a babysitter or for being restrained from their shopping.

The Cinderella story seems to affect these girls very much. The myth that Cinderella has a ‘perfect’ happily life ever after has made them wonder why are they unable to have what Cinderella had. Stephanie Difilippo stated that, “ My opinion : Cinderella’s happiness is not about fitting the glass slippers”, that the first question any true fairy-tale follower asked herself was, “What does Cindy have that I don’t?”. This, then makes them have their mind set to exemplify Cinderella. The electronic cinema entitled “Wah....Cantiknya” (broadcasted every Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. on SCTV), “Meniti Cinta” (broadcasted Tuesdays at 8:00 p.m. on RCTI), electronic cinemas “Dewi Fortuna”,(broadcasted Thursdays at 8:00 p.m. on SCTV) are good examples of Cinderella myth. The last example which is very close to the story of Cinderella is “Kasih” which is broadcasted by SCTV every Saturday 8:30 p.m. From these examples above, we know that our society is very much affected by the myth that the films become first rate since they are the favourites of so many females. And these stories are considered as the measurement of the ideal lifestyle. Abrams stated that literature is the imitation of



life (Abrams 8). As we all know, that the heroines (who are portrayed by the actresses) are very beautiful, having fair complexion, some of them have Eurasian feature, elegant, etc; and no wonder people have become more and more affected by the Cinderella myth.

It is obvious that Cinderella story has affected the mind not only about the 'ideal' lifestyle after one's marriage but also about gender perception that develops in the society nowadays. The Cinderella story becomes a myth, a legend and one of the most favourite folktales and somehow this story creates a somewhat strong perception about femininity and masculinity. Although there are quite a lot of women who agree with the idea of feminism that appears in the last century but most of the women still believe in this myth and legend about how women should act and behave.

Brockway views that according to Frye, myths are stories, usually, about gods and other supernatural beings. Levi Straus considers that they are usually strongly structured and their meaning is only discerned by linguistic analysis. Freud, on the other hand, regards myths as public dreams which, like private dreams, emerge from the unconscious mind. Jung states that indeed, they often reveal the archetypes of the collective unconscious. Cassier views that they are symbolic and metaphorical. Campbell states that myth orient people to the metaphysical dimension explain the origins and nature of the cosmos, validate social issues, and, on the psychological plane, address themselves to the innermost depths of the psyche. (Online.1)

From the critics above, we learn that somehow the myth or legend or folktale has really affected the people's mind because it is meant to be just that. Only the society never realises about this phenomenon.

In this thesis, the writer wants to analyse about gender perception, which is caused by many reasons and one of them is the Cinderella story.

People tend to underestimate the essence and the importance of this story, which can help their children learn a few things about life. People usually underestimate the story because they think it is children's story, which has no deep meaning. In fact, there are some symbols in this story, which might not be noticed by the common people. Just like any other literary work, this story symbolises something or natural stage in human life, such as falling in love, struggle, hardship, envy, etc.

#### **B. Statement of the Problem**

Based on the background above, the writer tries to formulate some problems to be analysed.

1. How does Cinderella myth influence young girls' perception about gender and their future life (especially their marriage life) ?
2. What major aspect influences the perception ?
3. How does the aspect influence the perception?

#### **C. Objective of the Study**

In order to answer the problems mentioned before, the objective of the study is :

1. To know how Cinderella myth has influenced the young girls' perception about gender and their future lives (especially their marriage).
2. To know the major aspect that influences the perception
3. To know how the aspect influence the perception.

#### D. Significance of the Study

The writer expects that with this thesis, the writer could help other young girls especially who dream to be a "Cinderella" to get a better view and clear concept of the Cinderella myth that deals with the gender perception so that they will have a clear and correct perception (again) about Cinderella story and myth. Furthermore, the writer wants everybody to know the importance and the essence of children literature so that they would not underestimate the stories, especially Cinderella story.

#### E. Scope and Limitation

The writer realises that her ability to analyse is limited so she decides to restrict her work. The Cinderella story is limited to the one, which brings out into view the fairy godmother and pumpkin carriage including the glass slippers, specifically Charles Perrault's version. Furthermore, the writer wants to focus on the stereotyping that concerns with the Cinderella complex: the passive attitude of young girls and people's assumption about a woman's role in the family and society.

## F. Theoretical Background

To achieve the objective of the study, the writer uses a theory, which is relevant to this story that is Iser's reception theory since the writer is trying to connect the story and the reader's perception after reading fairy tale. Iser's reception theory views that:

Reception theory examines the reader's role in literature, and in such fairly novel development ....The process of reading, for reception theory is always a dynamic one, a complex movement and unfolding through time. (Eagleton 64, 67)

So as to give further analysis, the writer will also use the psychological approach together with Collete Dowling's "Cinderella Complex" and "Cinderella Syndrome" theories.

For further details, the writer will use Gadamer's hermeneutics theory since the writer will interpret some symbols according to the data that she has found.

Furthermore, realising that the literary work is never apart from the author's intention, the writer will also take some facts or critics about the author's intention about why he/she has such kind of intention. Here, the writer will use the historical approach since it is connected with the history when Charles Perrault wrote the tale in the time of King Louis XIV of France.

## G. Method of the Study.

The technique of data analysis is a qualitative descriptive analysis method using the library research technique. The writer also uses the questioner as a

means of obtaining a valid data about the perception as the representation of the youngsters that is built by the society.

In collecting the data and information, which are related to the study, the writer first uses the library research to find the story and the history of the story. Then the writer also looks for other books, which can help the writer to give detailed analysis. Here, the writer also finds some references from the Internet to gain the latest and actual study connected with this research.

#### H. Definition of Key Terms.

The key terms used in the writer's analysis are :

- Cinderella Complex** : a condition, which the girls usually act passively toward some problems that occurs in their life.
- Cinderella Syndrome** : a condition where the society assumes that the males are stronger than the females and treats the females as subordinate of the males
- Prince charming** : the King's son, who is handsome and rich. But in this thesis, the term symbolises an ideal man to be one's husband.
- Gender perception** : is an assumption about the role of what men and women should do to fulfil the society's perception about their role (male and female). In this thesis, the gender perception is merely about being active and passive concerning a decision about one's life, whether the person is male or female.



## CHAPTER II

# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK