Rites of Passage: Transformation of Female Characters in Musical Adaptation 'Into the Woods'

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Abstract

Hutcheon (2006) considers adaptations not just a way of showing or telling stories but a mode of interaction as well. Adaptations offer something different and new and hence, their success does not depend solely on retaining fidelity to the original. The current study intends to show how the musical movie, Into the Woods offers this 'something' new by showing the transformation of its female characters as compared to other Disney versions. The data consists of the musical adaptation Into the Woods and since the movie is a combination of different fairy tales, the original story and different versions of those fairy tales are taken into consideration for analysis. Adaptation theory serves as a theoretical framework for the study whereas Campbell's (1949) Rites of Passage provides methodology to the studies. The data has been analyzed through three components of the Rites of Passage i.e. separation or departure, trials and victories of initiation and return and integration with society. The findings reveal how female characters in the movie transform themselves in the course of the film: from dependent to independent, submissive to domineering and from indecisive beings to bold and strong females.

Keyword: *Fairy Tales, Adaptation, Female Protagonists, Transformation*

Introduction

Fairy tales which are also called "wonder tales" infuse contemporary culture in different media. They are considered to arouse a feeling of amazement and hence, spell bound their receivers i.e. readers and audience. Charles (2010) considers them ability to transfer its salience of issue to audience. McCombs and a tool to bridge the gap between man and nature. These fairy tales

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have actually progressed from oral storytelling genre to printed form and then they are adapted to silver screen. They have originated from a wide range of folk tales which undergo many transformations implemented or imposed either by society or state. In all the fairy tales, enough prominence is given to feminine beauty and females have also been used to maintain a link between good and evil, beauty and ugliness (Nanda, 2014, p. 246). The current study takes into consideration the musical adaptation Into the Woods which is a combination of different fairy tales i.e. The Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, Rapunzel and Jack and the Bean Stalk. The purpose of this research is to evaluate the portrayal of female characters in the movie as compared to their representation in original versions of the fairytales and examine the process of transformation the female characters undergo.

The fairy tales were initially adapted in Europe, from oral tales to written literature in the 16th century and at that time they were not considered and included in kids' literature. The basic objective of kids' literature was to induce linguistic, psychological and socio-cultural aspects into the teaching process of young learners (Mohamed, 2007). This objective was not filled by the fairytales; however, they have become a popular genre all over the world irrespective of socio-cultural and political boundaries. They not only maintain their hold on everyday social life but also provide an imaginative outlet for social change. These fairy tale adaptations can be approached as socializing narratives which target not only the gender stereotypes and other related behaviors but also offer an alternative to them (Warner, 2014).

Adaptations are generally considered more successful than the original work because the producers "know that literary texts … are good candidates for filmmaking because their stories have already proven to be enjoyable to many people" (Desmond & Hawkes, 2006, p. 16) Like sequels and spinoffs, the musical adaptations are also another way of creating a "franchise" by taking one "property" and converting it into another medium e.g. book to film, or film to book. They not only retain the already existing audience waiting for adaptations but create new consumers as well (David & Richard, 1999, p. 45).

Hutcheon (2006) considers films "to be the most inclusive and synthesizing of performance forms" but, on the other hand, gives equal importance to dramas, musical shows and dance works since all these genres have their own "composite conventions" regarding semantics, syntax and grammar (p. 35). She takes adaptations as "(re-)interpretation" and (re-)creation as adaptations not always reflect fidelity to the original work but they are "appropriated" according to some perspective to be fit for the big screen (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 8).

The present research aims to investigate those social patterns which bring transformation in female characters through the course of the musical Into the Woods. The movie revolves around female characters, hence, the study has evaluated different situations presented in the film where these female characters act differently as compared to their roles depicted in original fairy tales. It has evaluated not only the dialogues uttered by the female characters in the movie but also different actions

taken by them which reflect their process of transformation. The research has focused on one main question:

The study is significant as it has revealed what type of modifications and deviations may take place in an adaptation when it is derived from its original work. It has observed the portrayal of female characters to evaluate the typical stereotypes attached to them as being indecisive and weak beings.

Literature Review

Adaptation can be "the transformation of printed works to another medium" (Kranz & Mellerski, 2008) and adaptations from page to screen have been a popular phenomenon as "literary texts … are good candidates for filmmaking because their stories have already proven to be enjoyable to many people" (Desmond & Hawkes, 2006). Whether a literary text is classical or contemporary, if it is liked by the majority, there are more chances of it being adapted into a movie or any other genre because it is expected that they would retain their support or popularity even after being converted into adaptations.

Fairy tale adaptations are pervasive in contemporary prevalent culture; however, Bacchilega (2013) assumes that the behaviors, voices and traditions pleated into recent fairy tales are given less importance by many readers and even intellectuals. She offers a "fairy-tale web" to refer to a broad network of reading and writing practices and reveals how colonialism, capitalism and gender stereotypes have influenced contemporary adaptations which have brought prominent change in the 21st century fairy tales. She has focused only literary and cinematic adaptations and

draws the links between fairy tales and the social plans they project (ibid).

The old traditional adaptation studies were inappropriate for evaluating the adaptations of fairy tales "whose origins are lost in the collective imagination of the oral tradition" (Beckett, 2002). This triggered the dire need for replacing the term 'adaptation' of written texts into movie with a new one. Hutcheon (2006), in this regard, suggested 'retelling' instead of 'adaptation' which indicated that all adaptations have the element of intertextuality and "intertextual dialogism" is the process which guarantees the existence of adaptations (Stam, 2005).

Furthermore, the notion of fidelity in adaptations has been an inevitable subject for discussion and adaptations are considered inferior for being disloyal to the original text. This debate elevates the position of literary works and lowers the status of adaptations by considering them "second-order creation" (Venuti, 2007). Stam (2005) argues that adaptations are "different and original due to the change of medium… it is questionable whether strict fidelity is even possible" (pp. 3-4). He further refers to the films as a "multitrack medium" which include music, script, effects and some more components and hence, fidelity is "undesirable". He further takes adaptation as a reading of the original text and the more readings a novel takes, there are more chances of adaptations as well (Stam, 2005).

As far as the fairy tales are concerned, 'retelling' not 'adaptation' is more appropriate word because adaptations vary from literary texts in a way that they have no exact origin and they do not have an author actually. The concept of 'fidelity' also does

not sustain with fairy tales because from the very beginning, they do not possess the 'originality' which is a characteristic of literary texts. They are actually "bits of other stories, had bits added to it, lost other bits, got mixed up with other stories" (Carter, 1990).

It is observed that "in the context of the general cannibalism of intertextuality, the postmodernist text is 'carnivore incarnate' and one of its favorite preys is the fairy tale" (Vauthier, 1993). This post-modern phenomenon, related to fairy tales, considers every medium as a 'text' consisting of different techniques like metafiction, parody and fragmentation, which make a text post-modern (Zipes, 1993).

Metafiction is a technique used in post-modern literature which refers to the fiction and "includes within itself a commentary on its own narrative and/or linguistic identity" (Hutcheon, 1980, p. 1). This can be considered as a self-reflexive text because of its comments on whatever is produced which can be termed as "narcissistic" (ibid). The purpose of this technique is to evaluate, criticize and alter the story in a modified way.

In postmodern texts, fragmentation is considered an "exhilarating liberating phenomenon, symptomatic of our escape from the catastrophic embrace of fixed systems of belief" (Barry, 2002, p. 84). It is a kind of technique in which the truth or reality is twisted and hence, great stories have no place in postmodern time and have lost their conventional understanding. This fragmentation can be seen in language, framing, characters and narration etc. of the stories.

Parody is also central to postmodern literature and Hutcheon (1991) differentiates it from nostalgia and asserts that

"it is always critical … through a double process of installing and ironizing, parody signals how present representations come from past notes" (p. 93). This technique adds creation and evaluation to the text. Waugh (1984) also declares that the function of parody is 'double-edged' as this technique is adopted "either as destructive or as critically evaluative and breaking out into creative possibilities" (Waugh, 1984, p. 64).

Most of the retellings of fairy tales are made up of parody, fragmentation and metafiction e.g. Snow White (1965), The Company of Wolves (1979) etc. Inclusive of these techniques, the element of 'transformation' of characters is also prevalent in adaptations. Rank (1914) discusses three basic types which determine the birth of a hero i.e. adapted type, neurotic type and productive type. By adapted type he means those people who obey authority and are duty bound. Neurotic type refers to those who are always worried for being different, and productive type talks about those who maintain a balance between the first two types and are real human beings.

Theoretical Framework

The parameters of adaptation proposed by Hutcheon (2006) provide theoretical underpinning for the current study. She determines three categories of adaptation which are "an acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works; a creative and an interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging; an extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work" (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 8). She sees adaptation both as a process and as a product which is the ultimate result.

Desmond and Hawkes (2006) also affirm that an adaptation may be considered as 'close', 'intermediate' or 'loose' during the course of adaptation. By close adaptation they mean the exact copy of the original work whereas intermediate adaptation "retains the core of the structure of the narrative while significantly reinterpreting… the source text" (pp. 2-3). The third type i.e. loose adaptation, is the one in which original text is taken as raw material and a completely new work is created.

The word 'adaptation' offers a multiplicity of meanings and can be applied in numerous ways and most of the meanings refer to the process of alteration to fit to another purpose or function. The basic purpose of adaptations as discussed by Hutcheon (2006) is not only the survival of a text rather it should also flourish in ways which were not offered in the original form. She prefers adaptations not just as repetitions but with a replication. The current movie is also an adaptation which offers replication not only in its form i.e. musical adaptation but also in the transformation of characters which was missing in the fairy tales.

Hutcheon (2006) proclaims that films are not merely adaptations these days rather they are transformed into musical adaptations and the basic reason behind these 'musicalized' adaptations is determined economically. The movies, which are adaptations, offer popularity and huge reader ship which helps the producers attracting the audience for an increased viewership like the musical comedy The Producers or the animated musical The Lion King. These stories, before converting into movies had had enough recognition in their written form that the Broadway

producers who offered these musicals had a sort of relief regarding the viewership to earn more money (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 5).

Into the Woods is the musical adaptation of fairy tales which is the repetition of these tales but with replication. It offers an insight into the lives of the characters and reveals how they transform themselves during the course of the film. The fairy tales are considered only for children hence, the musical adaptation selected for the research has such sparks in it which made it popular among young generation as well. It is not merely an adaptation rather it.

RQ 1. How do the female characters in the musical Into the Woods vary from their original roles as they go through the process of transformation?

Methodology

The data for the current study consists of musical adaptation Into the Woods which is a mixture of four fairy tales i.e. Cinderella, Rapunzel, Jack and the Bean Stalk and The Red Riding Hood. These fairy tales had different stage presentations before converting into a film. The movie is conceived by James Lapine whereas Stephen Sondheim has the credit for its lyrics and music. Before converting into a movie, these fairy tales had so many versions in which female characters were portrayed stereotypically i.e. submissive, emotionally weak and indecisive. The current study offers a comparison in the projection of the female characters with other versions of the same fairy tales.

Considering Campbell's Rites of the Passage, this study selects a musical adaptation Into the Woods to evaluate how the

female characters transform themselves while passing through the three stages i.e. separation or departure, trials and victories of initiation and return and integration with society (Campbell, 1949).

Separation or Departure

This is the first stage which converts a common person into a hero. This separation or departure is from known to unknown. The protagonist receives a call for adventure. Initially, because of the inner weakness he refuses to depart but then with supernatural aid, he takes a start and jumps into the valley of challenges (Campbell, 1949). The present research examines how different female characters accept the challenge, face the fear of the unknown, depriving themselves of the worldly riches and so transform themselves into strong females rejecting the stereotypical image of women.

Trials and Victories of Initiation.

When the hero enters the second stage he has to travel long on the road of turmoil and trials. It happens in fairy tales only where the hero gets strength and motivation when he meets some supernatural being who is exalted to the status of a god or goddess (Campbell, 1949). In this research, this stage occurs when the female characters face problems into the woods and then one of them acts like a goddess and helps others to come out of the problematic situations and they ultimately get benefitted.

Return and Integration with Society

The last stage brings the hero back to the society where he initially refuses to return. But as he gets strength to overcome all difficulties and is rescued from them, he finally returns to his

destination. He gets hold of the both worlds i.e. the inner world and the extrinsic world and lives freely without any constraint (Campbell, 1949). This last stage appears in the movie when the female characters after resolving their issues get strength from outside and transform themselves into strong females. The decisions they take are quite contrary to the old fairy tales and a new image of woman is created through Into the Woods.

Data Analysis

The story involves a baker and his wife who are childless and to have a baby they need to get the ingredients demanded by the witch. They travel toward the forest where they meet all the characters i.e. Cinderella, Rapunzel, Jack and Little Red Riding Hood who are there on a quest to fulfil a wish. The story revolves around the dreams and wishes of each character.

The movie begins with the description of surroundings through voice over, and then through a prologue the wishes of all the characters are revealed. The study has concentrated only on the transformation of female characters hence, their dialogues and actions remain the focus of analysis. The dialogues taken from the movie are italicized. Among the female characters, Cinderella is introduced to the audience first who expresses her wish:

I wish…

More than anything…

More than life…

More than jewels…

The king is giving a festival.

I wish to go to the festival…

And the ball…

More than anything…

I wish to go to the festival…

I wish…　　　　　　　　　　　　　(Scene 1, Prologue)

The very lines of this musical reflect Cinderella's priorities in life. She has been shown busy in doing household chores but wishes something beyond her approach i.e. to go to the festival. This is obviously the first step towards entering the stage of separation or departure from her tough routine life to a life of comfort and merry-making.

Baker's wife is also introduced through the same prologue who also gives voice to her only wish

I wish…

More than life…

More than riches…

I wish we had a child…

I want a child…

I wish we might have a child…

I wish…　　　　　　　　　　　　　(Scene 1, Prologue)

Baker and his wife are living a comfortable life but their life is not perfect as they have no kid. Baker's wife wants a child and that is her only wish even at the expanse of riches and even life which signals her entrance into the stage of departure. This stage begins with a challenge and fear of unknown and as soon as this challenge is accepted the fear of the unknown also diminishes.

Cinderella's step-mother interrupts her day-dreaming when she inquires her:

You wish to go the festival?　　　　　(Scene 1, Prologue)

The way she treats Cinderella truly depicts what status is given to her in the house. Her step-sisters are also just a reflection

of their mother as they too treat her in the same humiliating manner:

Lucinda: The festival?

Florinda: The King's festival?   (Scene 1, Prologue)

They all make fun of her, enjoy her miserable condition and tease her by repeating the same sentence:

The festival? The king's festival?   (Scene 1, Prologue)

They make fun of Cinderella's appearance, her nails and her dress. In fact their mocking attitude is the challenge which Cinderella accepts in the beginning where she is portrayed as a weak and submissive character. Later, the movie reveals how she transforms herself into a strong lady.

Jack's mother is the next female character who is "at her wit's end" as she desires:

"I wish my son were not a fool

I wish my house was not a mess

I wish the cow was full of milk

I wish the walls were full of gold

I wish a lot of thing…"   (Scene 1, Prologue)

She has been projected as a mother who is much concerned about her son since she makes her first wish about him followed by many other related to money. She is portrayed as a woman who remains busy in thinking how to generate money. She loves her son like all the mothers do but keeps on snubbing him because of his foolishness.

Little red riding hood makes her appearance as "a hungry little girl". Though she is a little girl but surprisingly she does not wish anything for her:

Into the woods

To bring some bread

To granny who

Is sick in bed   (Scene 1, Prologue)

She has, through these lines, reflected her love for her granny. She can sacrifice anything for her and that is the challenge which she initially takes. She is out in the forest to go to her granny which is the first stage of separation which beginning with an adventure. To her, the journey through the woods is not more than an adventure:

The way is clear, the light is good

I have no fear, Nor no one should

The woods are just trees

The trees are just woods   (Scene 1, Prologue)

The aforementioned lines reflect how she gives herself a boost while she is at the first stage of 'separation'. She tries to overcome the fear of unknown which is a prominent feature of this initial stage.

The movie again captures Cinderella who seeks help from the birds to pick up the lentils which her step mother throws on the ground to tease her. These birds help her in the movie and, in fact, they become her strength and support her in the course of her adventure. The true nature of Cinderella is depicted through the soliloquies to strengthen herself to overcome the hurdles:

Mother said be good/ Father said be nice

That was always their advice

So be nice Cinderella

Good Cinderella

Nice good, good nice…   (Scene 1, Prologue)

Hence, the real adventure starts as the witch makes her first appearance in the film in Baker's cottage. She reveals the secret behind the barrenness of Baker's wife and with that the story takes a new turn as the demands the witch makes bring all the characters together and make them depend on each other to fulfill their desires. The witch asks Baker's wife to go into the woods to bring her:

The cow as white as milk

The cape as red as blood

The hair as yellow as corn

The slipper as pure as gold   (Scene 1, Prologue)

      The second stage of 'trials and the victories of initiation' starts when the Baker's wife decides to go with her husband in the search of the things mentioned by the witch. The petrsonified woods become that 'belly of the whale' where all the female characters go and when they return to their homes they find themselves transformed. Cinderella also decides "Into the woods... I have to take the journey" (Scene 1, Prologue). She meets her mother there who makes her realize what she demanded at that time was not what she demanded at the end:

Do you know what you wish?

Are you certain what you wish? (Scene 2, Cinderella at the Grave)

      Baker's wife faces a conflict between her inner self and extrinsic self as she buys the cow from Jack. She seems to convince her husband and to herself when she says:

Do we want a child or not?

(Scene 2, I Guess This Is Goodbye/ May be They're Magic)

She appears to be a little selfish here as she pays less for the cow which depicts that trials are not only in the outer world but they can be in the inner world as well.

Rapunzel is the last female character introduced to us quite lately in the film. The witch has placed her in a tower where only she herself can go with the help of Rapunzel's long hair. Rapunzel, in the beginning, is shown quite attached to the witch as she considers her to be her mother. The moment she realizes that the witch is not her mother, she steps into the first stage of 'departure' or 'separation' from present life to a new life about which she herself does not know.

As the movie proceeds, Little Red Riding Hood is shown as an innocent girl who is not clever enough to recognize the wolf in the guise of her granny:

My grandmother you are looking very strange.

(Scene 2, Baker's Reprise)

As the little girl moves on an adventure, the transformation of her character also unveils with the advancement of the story. In the beginning, she tends to ignore the advices made by her mother and enjoys the beauty of nature into the woods but, later on, she repents for what she did earlier and converts herself into a different person. The process of her transformation begins as soon as she is relieved by the Baker who appears to be Apotheosis for her. The first change in her personality appears when she says:

And I know things now / Many valuable things

That I hadn't known before

Do not put your faith / In a cape and a hood (Scene 2, Baker's Reprise)

The little girl realizes that the things which were initially more valuable for her, have gradually lost their importance. Hence, she gives her red cape to Baker which he wanted to take earlier but was badly refused. She also understands that trials are not hurdles but actually lead to second stage of 'victories of initiation'. She gets herself transformed into a bold and brave girl as she reminds herself of her granny's words:

"*Don't be scared… Just be prepared…*"   (Scene 2, Baker's Reprise)

There is a visible change in the character of Baker's wife when somehow she manages to collect three out of four things demanded by the witch. After facing problems in the woods, she reconciles with her husband and admits:

"*We have changed. We are strangers*

I am meeting you in the woods…

Let's hope the changes last… beyond lies"   (Scene 3, It Takes Two)

But this is just the beginning and as the story proceeds she is presented as a more transformed lady than what she actually was. Cinderella is projected as the protagonist female whose process of transformation starts when she returns from the palace the third night. She rejects the stereotypical notion of women for being indecisive when she takes a bold step and decides:

"*Better run along home/ And avoid the collision*

Though at home they don't care

I'll be better off there

Where there is nothing to choose

So there is nothing to lose"   (Scene 4, On the Steps of the Palace)

The festival, which was in the beginning very important to her, even 'more than anything', loses its value when she realizes her own social position and prefers to stay at home. Although she

makes a decision at her own, still she has the 'fear of the unknown' regarding the attitude of her step mother and step sisters. She seems to be in the first stage until the prince comes to her and acts as Apotheosis for her. She leaves the palace but quite intelligently leaves her one shoe behind so that she could know how much the prince was serious about her.

"You'll just leave him a clue

For example, a shoe.

And then see what he'll do"   (Scene 4, On the Steps of the Palace)

She transforms into a bold and strong lady who can decide at her own: leaves her house, and marries the prince.

The next character going through transformation process is Rapunzel who is banished from the palace by the witch to a far off place. Although she was brought up as an over protected and over cared child yet she resolves to lead an independent life. She turns out to be a strong woman after crossing the first stage of 'departure' from the palace, from a comfortable life into the woods. Somehow, the prince finds her and both get married. Baker's wife also gives birth to a child as the demands of the witch are fulfilled. The things appear to be in the favor of these female characters when the story takes a twist and Cinderella appears to be a 'goddess' for the rest of the characters. She turns out to be the most sensible female character. The Little Red riding Hood also goes through the process of transformation and turns out to be a responsible and brave girl who 'races past the witch and brandishes her knife' to kill the female giant (Into the Woods). Cinderella, as the protagonist of the movie, takes every step wisely and rightly. To her woods don't matter in making

decisions. As the story progresses, she also becomes more and more mature and practical. When the birds inform her of the Prince's unfaithfulness, she ignores it and replies assertively:

"That doesn't matter now! What's important is that we find a way to defeat the giant. (Scene 4, On the Steps of the Palace)

She gets the 'ultimate boon' which is the last element of second stage in the course of 'victories of initiation' by getting control over her emotions and sensational feelings. She not only takes bold decisions for herself but also encourages others in the same way, even Baker's son when she says:

"Your father's being very brave. We're going to be very brave too. (Scene 5, Finale Part V)

For Cinderella, bravery is not just to fight with the physical objects but also to fight with internal feelings like lust, greed and jealousy etc. Her wisdom and practicality finds its peak when she makes her final decision and 'crosses the return threshold':

"My father's house was a nightmare. Your house was a dream. Now I want something in-between." (Scene 5, Finale Part III)

Cinderella appears to be the 'master of two worlds' as she not only gets control over her personal life but of social life as well. She comes out of the woods victorious; taking all the members with her; treating them like one family; supporting them and encouraging them:

"You are not alone. Believe me.

No one is alone… (Act II, No One is Alone Part II)

Discussion

The musical adaptation Into the Woods is a repetition of fairy tales with replication since it projects the transformation of female

characters which was missing in the original and Disney versions. The writer James Lapine himself admitted, "I just felt I could not be faithful so much as just be true to what the original was…there was a little bending here and there" (Hammond, 2015). The characters diverge from Otto's adapted type to productive type (Rank, 1914) and reach the 'ultimate boon' presented by Campbell (2008). The transformation of female characters go through the proper procedure offered by "Rites of Passage" (Campbell J. , 2008).

Separation or Departure

All the female characters, during the course of transformation, go through this first stage. The departures are from family and home which lead them all into the woods which are representative of the dream world. It seems to be unknown and mysterious; an appropriate synonym for the unconscious. Hence, the separation is not only physical but mental as well. The female characters get separation from their negative thoughts, weak and submissive nature and turn out to be bold and confident women. All of them face hurdles into the woods but those hurdles and obstacles make them strong. This adaptation is different from the original tales as in the fairy tales everything becomes perfect at the end and all seem to live happily ever after; however, in the movie the fate of the characters remains unknown. They seem to have developed themselves internally but still there is no clue to their future.

Trials and the Victories of Initiation

Trials make the female characters strong and decisive and with their decision-making power, they get victories. Cinderella's decision to leave the riches of the prince, Rapunzel's decision to

leave her mother (the witch) and Little Red Riding Hood's decision to take care of the child and go with Baker, are the initiative steps which transform these females into independent females. These characters were portrayed as 'adapted type' in the original version; however, in Into the Woods they have been converted into 'productive type' worthy to be called the real human beings. They also reject the stereotypical notion about women for being meek and vacillating and prove themselves to be assertive and resolute.

Return and Integration with Society

In the original versions of these fairy tales, the female characters do not return to their actual selves and live a different life, undoubtedly, comfortable and joyful. Into the Woods offer them a freedom to live and makes them master of two worlds. The female characters not only exhibit improvement in their personal lives but in their social lives as well. The last song of the movie "No One is Alone" truly depicts how characters get interconnected with each other by the end of the film which gives a ray of hope. They feel for each other and support each other which converts them into one family.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the adaptations of any kind make the original work rediscovered since they are easily and more readily acceptable for the audience and can gain instant fame. This adaptation appears to be a change from classical to post modern version of fairy tales where real world is preferred to utopia. The transformation of female characters is also a part of postmodern concept where females are given enough opportunities and are

treated equal to men. The female characters in Into the Woods do not remain confined to the film only rather they are present around us. The movie also presents a conflict between conscious and unconscious, between known and unknown which is resolved through wisdom and perseverance. Contrary to the fairy tales, more importance is given to the personalities and traits of the character than to physical beauty only.

Generally, fairy tales play an inspirational role for the kids and help them resolve their issues as they grow up. However, this adaptation is not meant for children only but adults may also resonate with it. Its ending with a hopeful note suggests that one can change himself/herself with the changing world. It has offered an opportunity to everyone to adapt himself to inconsistent and changing situations while maintaining an instinctual morality.

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