The Tales of Black Children:

The Evolution of Self Image and Cultural Value

By Heaven Russell

July 2022

Faculty Advisor: Adam Green

Preceptor: Kyla Bourne

Abstract

This thesis explores how the narratives presented in fairy tales influence black children and how they navigate fantasy and imagination while developing their self-image, world view and definitions of value. This paper interacts with data ranging from the 1940s to the 2010s in order to see the shift in ideas of diversity and the inclusion of fairy tales and fantasy in educational settings over time. The methods used to gather data were semi-structured informal interviews with librarians, retired and active teachers, daycare workers, parents, etc. and content analysis of various stories and movies, most of which had fairy tale elements in them. After analyzing the data, the conclusion reached was that language and imagery are two of the most significant ways that narratives are presented and then absorbed by the audience. The interview respondents highlighted these two aspects continuously in their narrations of memories and experiences about fairy tales, diversity and childhood fantasy exploration both from their own childhood and their observations of children as adults. It became clear that representation needs to be present in literature and media. While it has improved over the years, there is still plenty of room for improvement.

Introduction

Fairy tales have been around for centuries. Stemming from oral and literary traditions of storytelling, this genre of story can be found in cultures all over the world. Many cultures have fairy tales that resemble each other because of the nature of storytelling and how fairy tales came to exist as a type of story (Zipes, 2013). For this paper, I will be focusing on how the narratives presented in these stories play a role in how black children navigate fantasy and imagination while interacting with others and developing a sense of self. I will be focusing on black children in Chicago during the 1970s-2010s in order to see how education, fantasy, and equity interact

with each other as the push for racial equality continues to grow during this time period. My research question is how did the narratives present in fairy tales influence how black children develop their self-image, definitions of value, and worldview in Chicago during the 1970s to 2010s. There is literature that discusses the lack of diversity in children's literature and the mainstream presentation of fairy tales in the 1950s-1970s (Hurley, 2005, pg. 224)(Sims, 1983, pg. 650). However, I am interested in how that lack of diversity affected black children and whether or not things have changed enough moving into the 2010s to shift how black children have been affected. The 2000s into 2010s have had a boom of literature and media that have presented people of color in more positive and inclusive ways but has it been enough for black children to feel represented and seen in what they are interacting with? These are some of the thoughts that I will be exploring in this paper.

Fairy tales can be defined in different ways and include various things depending on the scholar and discipline that the research is based in. For this paper, I will be using the definition of the fairy tale by Jack Zipes, a scholar known for his work with fairy tales. Zipes defines the fairy tale as "the symbiotic relationship of oral and literary currents" (2012, pg. 3). Fairy tales are a combination of oral and literary traditions that come together to make this genre of story. Zipes explains the genre of fairy tales as one that, "borrowed and used motifs, themes, characters, expressions, and styles from other narrative forms and genres (2012, pg. 14). While fairy tales can be presented in both oral and written forms, the genre of the fairy tale is its own separate thing influenced by the other genres and narrative forms.

While fairy tales have not always been intended for children, there has been a strong presence of fairy tales in the media and literature created for children for many centuries. In cinema alone, there has been a presence of fairy tales since the 19th century (Zipes, 2011). In

books, especially those intended for children, fairy tales are often used because it allows children to explore and imagine as they learn lessons that can be applied to the real world. In the scholarly literature, it has been argued that fairy tales and their visual film adaptations play a role in shaping the self-image and belief systems of children and that it could have more negative implications for children of color who could internalize white privilege from the images in the stories (Hurley, 2005, pg. 221).

Fairy tales have such influence partially because of something called the narrative structure. The narrative structure is essentially describing the balance between recognition and novelty in a storytelling structure (Tiffin, 2009, pg. 3). For example, the genre of the detective story is one with a known structure that each detective story works from while trying to bring in new elements to that individual story. While it is something that applies to many genres and not only fairy tales, recognition through narrative structure is very prominent in fairy tales. The narrative structure is a powerful tradition in the history of fairy tales that continues to be recreated and rediscovered as fairy tales are continuously adapted and retold (Tiffin, 2009, pg. 3). So narratives presented in fairy tales can be a powerful tool that is effective in its use which shows how important fairy tales can be in a child's education and development. While it has been established that fairy tales can potentially affect black children in negative ways, there is less research on the implications of that potential internalization of white privilege in black children. The children are presented with these ways to explore their imagination and fantasy life, but when the fantasy life you are presented with does not always reflect something you can connect with, how does that affect black children? Then when the narratives presented are more diversified and the child is given more access to a fantasy that they can see themselves in, how does that change the child's worldview? In this paper, I will argue that from the 1970s to the

2010s, the increased inclusion of characters of color in children's literature and media positively influenced the worldview, definitions of value, and self-image of black children. Through mainstream presentations of fairy tales that may have been presented to black children, increased presentations of diversity allow the child to have a deeper connection with the stories and the possibilities that they hold for them to explore.

As expressed previously, fairy tales have been shown to influence black children's self-image and worldview, but there is still space for further exploration into how black children interact with the narratives presented in the tales and how their navigation of fantasy plays a role in their development of perspective and self-image. To give an example, Disney fairy tale films provide a visual representation of fairy tales that children buy into and translate into beliefs "about status in particular group membership in relation to the notions of good, bad, pretty, and ugly as reflected in the films" (Hurley, 2005, pg. 222). These definitions that they gather and use from the movies can affect them even more if these definitions do not provide 'good' and 'valuable' examples of what a child can relate to. A study conducted in the 1990s relating to these topics showed that most children see "white" as good and happily ever after, partially due to the definitions and ideas that fairytales present to them that have created a value system that the children internalize (Hurley, 2005, pg. 223).

This topic is important to research because stories and narratives have shaped the history and culture of the black community for generations. So it is imperative to understand the impact of the stories that are being presented to black children and how it is affecting their development. By learning more about the impact of the stories being presented to black children, black history will be enriched with more understanding of how and why stories are so important and how they have affected the black children of the past which can also further inform our present and future.

The field of fairytales and folktales studies would also be enhanced with this knowledge by further understanding how influential fairy tales can be. Their continual prominence and usage in popular culture are often studied and understanding more about how fairy tales function in educational spaces adds another aspect to how fairy tales are presented.

Literature Review:

This topic grows out of the literature that explores fairy tales and their role and influence when it comes to education, media, and presenting narratives. In my reading of the literature, I have seen a recurring argument about the power of stories. When looking at fairy tales specifically, the fairy tale allows the reader to use their imagination and gives them the ability to experience trials and tribulations along with a way to overcome them (Singhal, 2013, pg. 1). For children it allows them to explore both the fantastical and real-world through their imagination (Dewar, 2019). Fairy tales and however they are presented, either through books, games, and movies let children figure out their world and give them a lens to do it.

While every presentation of fairy tales has its strengths and purposes, animated films have been argued to be a new "'teaching machine' that has a very persuasive role as a producer of culture" (Giroux, 2004, pg. 164). The films according to this argument, "inspire at least as much cultural authority and legitimacy for teaching specific roles, values, and ideals as more traditional sites of learning such as public schools, religious institutions, and the family" (Giroux, 2004, pg. 164). This argument could indicate that presentation does matter when it comes to children and what they learn from. The "educational relevance of animated films" was argued for by explaining that, "Children's films provide high-tech, visual space where adventure and pleasure meet in a fantasy world of possibilities and a commercial sphere of consumerism and commodification" (Giroux, 2004, pg. 165). Other arguments in favor of using popular media in

classrooms say that since the media and stories have such an influence on students when they are outside of school, we should be using that media in school to help connect the students to what they are learning (Witkin, 1994, pg. 31). For younger children who are even more immersed in the fantasy realm, the use of fairy tales in educational spaces makes even more sense.

Disney is the main source of fairy tale visual adaptations that are discussed in scholarly works about fairy tales and media. It has been argued in multiple works that Disney exercises a lot of influence on popular culture and "has profound potential to shape how we think, learn and live" (Garlin & Sandlin, 2016, pg. 1). Their representation of race, family values, gender, and more "shapes everyday life practices and identity formations" (Garlin & Sandlin, 2016, pg. 2). Disney advertises their image as "an icon of American culture" and it is "consistently reinforced through the penetration of the Disney empire into every aspect of social life" (Giroux, 2004, pg. 166). This literature also uses similar language to the scholarship mentioned previously that argues that fairy tales and their visual film adaptations play a role in shaping the self-image of children and internalizing white privilege (Hurley, 2005, pg. 221). These scholars argue that Disney teaches its audience specific ways of understanding ourselves, others, and the world (Garlin & Sandlin, 2016, pg. 2). Other scholars argue the same points about Disney's "commanding cultural authority" by arguing that, "Disney inscribes itself in a commanding way on the lives of children and powerfully shapes the way America's cultural landscape is imagined (Giroux, 2004, pg. 168)." The argument is also taken further to argue that "Disneyland is more 'real' than fantasy because it now provides the image on which America constructs itself" (Giroux, 2004, pg. 167).

While the influence of Disney may be constantly researched, there is still knowledge to be gained about how that influence may change based on the race and background of the

audience, the environment that the viewer is in, and the time in society that the tale is both made and viewed in. Most of the research relating to Disney and race focuses on how race is presented in the Disney films and how they "both mask and reinforce institutional White hegemony" (Garlin & Sandlin, 2016, pg. 67). This can be seen in how "color-blind ideologies and middle-class American values of individualism" are reinforced while also having a very limited amount of black human representation and often "reducing non-white characters to animals" (Garlin & Sandlin, 2016, pg. 68-69). Sebastian the Caribbean crab from *The Little Mermaid* and the animals of the *Lion King* are great examples of this given in these works. Scholars often discuss how "there is a long history of racism associated with Disney's work" with other examples such as the "denigrating images of people of color in films such as *Song of the South (1946)* and *The Jungle Book (1967)"*(Giroux, 2004, pg. 173). However, there is not as much research about how the race of the audience could further affect how these presentations are viewed and internalized. While there is research in film and media studies about race and how it affects movie viewing, production, and more, there is less about how these aspects come into play with fairy tales and children specifically. Books like *Reel to Real* by Bell Hooks discuss how race and racism present themselves in film, how those frames affect the way audiences interact with films, and more. Then specifically relating to fairy tales, books like *The Enchanted Screen: the unknown history of fairy-tale films* by Jack Zipes and *Fairy tale and film: old tales with a new spin* by Sue Short discuss how fairy tales are adapted into films and the different ways that this is often accomplished. All of these scholars focus on different intersections of film, audience, race, and fairy tales, but there is not as much research that looks at all of these aspects together. This is necessary to research because these aspects are important when it comes to movies and what audience is being catered to through the movie. For most Disney movies, the

intended audience is children and family-friendly settings. In the movies, the fairy tale presentations are going to be viewed by children, so it is important to understand more about what aspects beyond making something child friendly is important when it comes to the media that children consume and are influenced by. In this paper, I will dive further into these aspects and see the influence of the presentation of fairy tales and their adaptations, like Disney movies, on black children.

Childhood development and early childhood education literature are also very relevant to this topic. In the literature about childhood education, what sources children learn from, and how children learn, cultural pedagogy was an idea that came up. This idea poses that "education takes solace in a variety of social sites including but not limited to schooling" (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004, pg. 15). This relates to the scholarship that I reviewed earlier that argued that fairy tales and popular media should be used in school settings because it connects students to what they are learning and because they are going to learn something from those things outside of school regardless (Witkin, 1994, pg. 31).

Another concept that I came across relating to childhood development and education was "kinderculture". In the book titled *Kinderculture,* it is explained that kinderculture is "the corporate children's consumer culture" (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004, pg. 11). The kinderculture, "commodifies cultural objects and turns them into things to purchase rather than objects to contemplate" (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004, pg. 11). The idea of consumerism and commodification was referenced earlier in the section of the review about the influence of animated films on children. Kinderculture has been studied previously and fairy tales were named as an example of traditional forms of kinder culture that "granted scholars insights into

hard-to-reach domains of child consciousness" (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004, pg. 19). This literature shows another example of how ingrained fairy tales in children's culture and education.

Staying on the subject of childhood development and education, there is also literature that specifically looks at black children when it comes to their development and education. Scholars argue that African American children have cultural and social differences that can have an influence on their education and how they develop. It has been argued by some that the linguistic skills and cultural strengths of children should be utilized in formal educational settings. Specifically when it comes to Black children, "if Black communications speakers have the inner resources to survive in our schools, there is no question of their potential to thrive, given teachers who recognize their intellectual potential and know how to build on their strengths" (Meier, 2008, pg. 5). These scholars see the value in utilizing the strengths of the children's differences to best serve the children and help them thrive in the learning environment. However, the scholars acknowledge that "neither the literacy curriculum nor anything else about most schools has been designed with the aim of fostering African American achievement" (Meier, 2008, pg. 5). The scholarship from different fields all agree that education is an important factor in the socialization and development in children. While this may be an obvious point to most people, it is always helpful to have research and evidence to back up what seems like an obvious point.

It has been argued that specifically for Black children, "after the family, the major socializing agent of Black children's identity is the schools" (Mandara, 2002, pg. 81). With this idea in mind, it is important to think about all of the elements that are included in this school environment. As expressed earlier in this review, there is an argument for using more media in schools, and one reason why could be the increased amount of diversity that could be presented.

When using multiple forms of media, there is bound to be more exposure to diversity than there could be sticking to only one form of media. Fairy tales are something that can be translated across many forms of media, so their relevancy and presence in the school curriculums can almost always be found in some way, shape, or form. Fairy tales can be considered part of the literacy curriculum that traditionally has not been designed with a diverse point of view, however, that can change and that change is starting to be seen more frequently.

While the push for diversity has been increasing over time, there is still a need for improvement. In 2002 the Toddler Infant Experiences Study (TIES) was conducted to look at the "socioemotional development of young Black children and the child-rearing behaviors…and goals of their parents" (Peters, 2002, pg. 59). In this study, interviews were conducted with the parents of these children and one of the topics covered were the parent's thoughts on education. The study found that while the parents expressed the importance of a good education for their children, "some parents viewed obtaining a good education as somewhat problematic for Blacks. 'I have to get her a good education... but I'm finding it to be a hard problem when so many teachers don't really care about little Black kids these days'" (Peters, 2002, pg. 65). While this sentiment was expressed in the early 2000s, the same sentiment is being expressed in more contemporary literature. This shows that even if the curriculums are improving, the issues may not be completely resolved.

One prominent concept in this paper is the self-image and definitions of value that Black children develop. Since the school setting is where a lot of socialization for Black children happens, this is also one area where these ideas are being developed. In the TIES study, "Parents mentioned that is important that their children "be positive about themselves" (Peters, 2002, pg. 63). Being positive about oneself is another way of describing one's self-image. Black parents

want their children to have a positive self-image. It was expressed that, "Pride and self-respect often are seen as having a practical value for Black children. As one mother pointed out, "I'd like them to have enough pride, because if you have enough pride or self-confidence in yourself, you'll let a lot of things roll off your back" (Peters, 2002, pg. 63).

In sociological literature, there has been a debate on if narratives can be both the object and mode of analysis and what the nature of a story and storytelling is in relation to narratives (Polletta, 1998, pg. 439). For fairy tales, the connection between storytelling and narratives has had less speculation. There are specific narratives that are presented through fairy tales and storytelling is a big component in the history of this genre of stories. In Sociology, narratives have been discussed as a "social act and form of explanation" and storytelling has been described as a "social process" (Davis, 2012, pg. 3). In these descriptions, both narratives and storytelling have a social element to them. Scholars seem to be grappling with where narratives fit into the conversation of storytelling, social interactions, and the connection between stories and reality. One possible explanation is that narratives are a way to explain an event or story and storytelling is a method where you can use narrative to tell that story. Narratives have a role in storytelling and a connection to stories that is important to continue researching, especially concerning the education of children, because these are things that they interact with and learn from constantly in both intentional and unintentional ways. In this paper, I discuss the connection between narratives, storytelling, and reality because it can further the understanding of how black children navigate fantasy to understand reality.

Methodology:

In order to support my argument, I conducted semi-structured informal interviews and content analysis as my sources of data and evidence. I chose to use both methods, as opposed to only one or the other, to try and gain the fullest understanding of the influence of fairy tale narratives on black children from the 1970s to the 2010s. For the interviews, I interviewed librarians, retired and active teachers, daycare workers, parents, and those involved with children in an educational or developmental capacity. I recruited this sample through multiple methods. I reached out to multiple Chicago Public Libraries and inquired about their children's librarians and children's programming specialists. I also reached out to different Chicago daycare centers and asked if there was anyone interested in being interviewed. Additionally, I reached out to educators and people with childhood development experience in other cities that were recommended to me by people I know in Chicago. This allowed me to get a big enough sample population for this thesis.

To collect the data needed to answer the research question, I conducted 10 in-depth interviews. The interviews lasted anywhere from 45 min to 1 hour and 30 minutes. The length of the interviews depended on how much the respondent wanted to share and how long their answers were. Most of the interviews were over the phone, so I was unable to see the respondent's facial expressions and physical responses to both the questions and their answers. However, I was able to hear the inflections in their voice and their verbal reactions to the questions which provided some indications that I was able to document and reference when relevant.

Demographically I targeted those who were African American, preferably lived in Chicago, and were retired, worked in relation to childcare during the time frame, or grew up during that time. Initially, I planned to focus on just those who were retired, but it was difficult to

get an adequate sample size in the time frame that I had to conduct this research. This led to me expanding my target demographic to those who were either retired, grew up during the time frame, or worked during the time, but aren't retired yet. Expanding my target demographic turned out to be better for answering my research question than my initial plan. This new target population gave a fuller picture of how fairy tales were being used in educational spaces, how black children interacted with them, and whether they influenced them or not.

The respondents also varied in age and time spent in their current careers. Some of the respondents were retired while others were still currently working. Their ages ranged from the mid-30s to early-80s. This allowed me to gather data about different generations when inquiring about the different experiences that the respondents had while growing up. The socioeconomic status of the respondents was also varied. Some respondents were well off while some were on the lower end of the middle class. While there was a lack of representation in my sample from the lower socioeconomic class, most of the respondents grew up in the lower socioeconomic class so the representation will still show just not in the more contemporary side of the research data. They also work with children whose families are on the lower end of the socioeconomic status, so that could also be seen in the data about children's interactions with fairy tales.

Although some of my target demographic elements were expanded, all the respondents fit my target criteria of being African American which allowed me to gather information about the experiences of black children from both an experienced and observed standpoint. I was able to gather data about growing up as an African American child in the United States from as early as the 1940s. I was also able to gather information about the United States schooling system and the various children's learning curriculums from the 1950s to the 2010s. The majority of my respondents grew up and worked in the Chicago area, but others were from Philadelphia, Ohio,

and North Carolina. These respondents were from more than just Chicago for multiple reasons. One of the main reasons was because of a lack of Chicago respondents given the time constraints of this research project. However, this constraint turned out to enrich the data because it gave insight onto whether the data from Chicago respondents were specific only to Chicago or if some more general experiences and trends could be tracked.

Informal interviews allowed the respondents to be as comfortable as possible while discussing their personal experiences. I chose to format them in a semi-structured manner to give my respondents as many opportunities as possible to provide the information they want to give me that pertains to my research topic and interview questions. This matters because when someone is more comfortable in a situation or setting, they may be more willing to open up about their experiences. I asked these people about their own childhood experiences with fairy tales and fantasy, what they have seen in their careers with children and how the children interact with fantasy, imagination, and the worldview that these stories provide.

I wanted to examine whether these respondents had noticed a change in the children's literature and media and their interpretation of how this change was displayed in the black child's development of their self-image, definitions of value, and worldview. This research method allowed me to hear personal experiences and get the input of those who directly interact with children every day and sees what affects them. This will help answer my research question by providing some real-life experiences of how children interact with fairy tales and what things they take away from the narratives in those stories. A potential weakness of this method is that the respondents will be sharing their memories of childhood. However, those memories and feelings could not be as accurate as possible because I am asking the respondents to try and remember their feelings and experiences from decades ago. Since I am asking about specific

experiences and memories that most respondents verbally said they hadn't thought about in a long time, hopefully, the responses are as close to being accurate as possible, but this is a weakness that I acknowledge in this research method.

The content analysis that I conducted was of specific fairy tales, children's stories, and media. Part of my interviews included asking about which stories the respondents remember from their childhood along with what stories they've seen children gravitate towards. I then took the stories that were mentioned the most and analyzed them. I took note of the imagery and language being used in the stories to examine what kinds of narratives were being presented through them. This will add to my core interview data by providing evidence of what the respondents are saying about their experiences with fairy tales and fantasy in their childhood and from what they have seen in their careers. These stories and movies are coming from what they bring up, so I believe that looking further into what the narratives are in the literature and media they reference will deepen my understanding of what the respondents are sharing and what it can mean for black children in educational spaces.

The non-fairy tale stories that I studied were "The Wonderful Tar Baby" by Joel Chandler Harris, "Friends and Neighbors" by John A. Obrien, and Nikki and Deja by Karen English. The movies that I chose to analyze were Disney's *Cinderella, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Pocahontas,* and *The Princess and the Fro*g. I chose *Cinderella* and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* to focus on because they were the two most mentioned Disney movies that respondents remembered watching growing up. Whenever Disney was brought up in the interviews these two seemed to be representations of what Disney was for the respondents growing up. I chose *Pocahontas* and *The Princess and the Frog* because those were the two movies that were mentioned whenever the respondent brought up Disney's progress in terms of representation in

their movies. I decided to include the Disney movies instead of children's books about Cinderella and Snow White because the movies were what represented Disney and these characters in what the respondents remembered from their childhood. Instead, I chose to look at the original fairy tale versions of these stories. Not only to see the differences between the movies and the fairy tales but because some respondents mentioned reading the more gruesome fairy tales growing up as well as the Disney versions. This allowed me to see the source material that Disney was working from, see what narratives came from the fairy tales themselves, and then see what narratives Disney kept, added, or adjusted to fit their Disney image.

I looked at both books and movies because some of the stories that were brought up had a visual adaptation as well as a written one. As explained previously, scholars have argued the importance of seeing movies as more than just entertainment because children also learn from them whether that is the goal of the film or not (Giroux, 2004). The content analysis aimed to see what narratives and values are being presented in these stories. By seeing what is being presented in the stories, it becomes easier to try and understand how those narratives are influencing children. I would not be able to get a complete understanding if I tried to study the influence of the narratives without really knowing what the narratives are.

Analysis and Discussion

The definition of fairy tales

One of the first questions that I asked each respondent was "How would you define a fairy tale?" Every respondent had a different definition that they provided as an answer to this question. Some of the responses included descriptions like "not true", "anything with folklore", "stories of fantasy, pretend and happy endings", "originally for adults" and "may or may not

have been created due to some fact or legend". While the answers varied, there were some recurring themes among the multiple definitions that I was given. The idea of a fairy tale being an imaginary story was something that came across in all of the provided definitions. Some respondents mentioned that as a child they knew that the stories were not something that they could achieve even if they did like to engage with them. Multiple respondents mentioned that they knew that a prince charming on a horse was not going to come to save them. This was interesting because this indicated some of the narratives fairy tales presented that have stuck with these people through their childhood. The saved princess narrative was something that multiple respondents claimed to not be able to fully immerse themselves in. Some said it was because they knew the world would not be like that for them. Not everyone mentioned this with explicit reference to race, but some did. A respondent that grew up in the 1960s talked about how she never saw a princess that looked like her and she knew that she was not going to be rescued or whisked off to a castle because these stories were not a reality. She said that they knew that they [Black people] weren't viewed as important and even though the Civil Rights Movement was going on, that this was the way the world was and they could do nothing to change it.

One answer that was significantly different from the rest came from a respondent who grew up in the 1990s. In his answer, one of the things he mentioned was superheroes and marvel as an aspect of what he considers to be fairy tales. His definition of fairy tales was anything that has to do with folklore and can be either the story itself or the style of storytelling. Within that definition, one of the things he talked about was how modern fairy tales can be made with new characters because the "rhyming and styling" is something you can duplicate to make it a fairy tale or make the story into a fairy tale style. This is another description of the narrative structure that I explained earlier which comes from Jessica Tiffin's *Marvelous Geometry.* The style and

structure of fairy tales are notable and one of the ways that a fairy tale can be adapted but still be recognizable (Tiffin, 2009, pg. 3). One of the examples the respondent gave to explain his definition of fairy tales was of superheroes because in those stories the protagonist faces challenges along their journey and overcomes those challenges. *Black Panther* was one superhero film that came up in another interview. This respondent was talking about how as a child he would put himself into the story, but wasn't immersing himself as "himself" because the characters weren't black. He talked about how if he was Superman, "I was white because I had to be" but in play scenarios the little white boy was Superman because he was white. Then he brought up how in today's society with movies and stories like *Black Panther*, black children have people they can look at and relate to in the media and literature they interact with. He said, "My grandchildren can now be a superhero and not have to be white".

Diversity in Children's Literature and Media

An interesting thought that came out of the interviews were responses to the questions "what does diversity in children's literature mean to you" and "please tell me a story of a time when you felt represented in the books or media that you have engaged with if you can think of one." I am putting these two questions together because some responses to these two questions were very similar to each other. Multiple respondents said that they have never felt represented in the books or media even into adulthood while others stated that they felt themselves finally represented during their adulthood. Diversity to the respondents means seeing a significant amount of representation, and non-white people and they want to see more of that. Several respondents brought up at least one positive example of the representation they want to be more widespread which shows that while there is progress it still needs to be bigger and better.

<u>*The Wonderful Tar Baby* and *Nikki and Deja*</u>

The first book's content I am analyzing is *The Wonderful Tar Baby*. This book has a long history that is present in oral traditions and folk tales (Martyris, 2017). Like many fairy tales and folklore, there are many variations and versions from all over the globe. The story features the characters Br'er Fox, Br'er Rabbit, Uncle Remus, and Tar Baby. While no one has been able to successfully track down the story's origins, Uncle Remus, Br'er Rabbit, and Br'er Fox are characters that were popularized by Joel Chandler Harris, an American folklorist and journalist ("Uncle Remus and the Tar Baby"). Harris was especially known for his character Uncle Remus, who was the main character and narrator in a collection of African American folktales that Harris compiled and adapted ("Uncle Remus and the Tar Baby"). Uncle Remus is depicted as an African American man with a grey beard, dressed in simple clothes and occasionally a hat ("Uncle Remus and the Tar Baby"). Uncle Remus speaks with a deep twang that is often written with missing letters and apostrophes for emphasis. In *The Wonderful Tar Baby*, Uncle Remus is telling the story of Br'er Rabbit, Br'er Fox, and the Tar baby to a young boy. In one line Uncle Remus says, "`Mawnin'!' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee - `nice wedder dis mawnin',' sezee" (Harris, 1881). This is just one example of how Uncle Remus speaks in his stories. Depicted as the happy-go-lucky man seemingly content with his life, most likely as a slave, the character of Uncle Remus is rooted in racist and stereotypical beliefs. Harris, the creator of Uncle Remus, claimed that he wanted to persuade white people to feel sympathetic to African American people through his characters ("Uncle Remus and the Tar Baby"). His way of doing that was by creating a character and using stories that would "gently persuade" white people that African Americans should have rights ("Uncle Remus and the Tar Baby"). However, this seemingly

progressive and tolerant goal that Harris had was laced with inconsistencies within his beliefs and actions. Scholars argue that while he may have been "interested in fostering tolerance", "his fiction often appears nostalgic of the Antebellum South" ("Uncle Remus and the Tar Baby"). This can be seen in the way Uncle Remus dresses and speaks as described previously.

The reason why I chose this specific book in the Uncle Remus franchise to analyze was that it was a book brought up by a participant. This particular respondent is a man who grew up in the late 1960s and was always outside playing as a kid. He did not read a whole lot and wasn't a big fan of the tv. When I asked if there were any books from his childhood that he remembered, The wonderful tar baby was the first and only book that came to his mind. He said, "the only book I remember was one about Uncle Remus and a tar baby". We proceeded to search for the book online and found the book he was talking about was *The Wonderful Tar Baby*. He was amazed and appalled that this was the only book that he could think of from his childhood. I found that to be very interesting and began to inquire about what he remembered from reading the book. He talked about how he didn't connect the dots on how racist and bad the book truly was "as a naive kid", but looking at it again it is clear how racist the book is. Since he didn't realize how racist the book was as a kid, he did not feel that the book affected him in any way, yet it is interesting how that book was the only one that came to mind from childhood. I found that to be a very powerful example of how stories and narratives from childhood can stick with you even if you don't realize it. While the respondent may not have felt that he was affected by the book as a child, the book stayed with him in his memories and subconscious for years and he never knew until now. I believe that is an example of being affected even if it is not in the most obvious way. While he may not have connected the dots, I would argue that there was something

there that kept the story in his mind all those years. So, I decided to analyze the story to see what narratives and ideas were being presented in the book.

The story is about Br'er Fox trying to trick Br'er Rabbit. Br'er fox created a tar baby out of "tar and turkentime" and put it on the street that Br'er Rabbit would later pass (Harris, 1881). Br'er Rabbit got upset with the tar baby because he thought the tar baby was being rude for not responding to his greeting. Br'er Rabbit ends up getting stuck to the tar baby after he tries to attack the tar baby. Br'er Fox then comes out of his hiding spot and laughs at the predicament Br'er Rabbit got himself in. The little boy that Uncle Remus was telling the story to then asks if Br'er Fox ate Br'er Rabbit and Uncle Remus says there is speculation about whether a judge came and looses the rabbit but we'll never know (Harris, 1881).

While the story itself may sound okay on the surface, many problematic images and narratives are presented in this story. The speech pattern of Uncle Remus is one very powerful stereotype that is being presented in this story. Per the example from earlier in this analysis, Uncle Remus is depicted as speaking with words, spelling patterns, and phrases that are not typically considered standard speaking patterns. Some of the language was difficult to understand and figure out even with context. While African Americans are historically known to have different vernaculars and ways of speaking, Uncle Remus is an exaggeration of those different language attributes (Meier, 2008). Harris may have been trying to create tolerance and persuade white people that black people have rights, but this story is not supporting that narrative in any way. In addition to the issues surrounding Uncle Remus himself, the tar baby is another image that is present in this story with a less-than-positive connotation. Tar baby has a negative connotation because African Americans have historically been called racist and colorist words that often have to do with dark, black, tar, monkey, etc. (Martyris, 2017). So while the story may

not have explicitly said the tar baby is a representative of a black child, the imagery

accompanying the story in addition to the usage of the word tar baby says enough. The images of

the tar baby in the story looked like it could be a little black doll or child and it is not hard to see.

In some depictions of the tar baby, it has more of an animal look to it, but even with that imagery,

the message is still the same, if not worse (Martyris, 2017). Connections between black people

and animals were constantly made throughout history, so a more animalistic depiction of tar baby

just fits right in with this rhetoric.

It could be argued that because the story is for children, these racist images and narratives

could not be noticed or missed, but that negates the point that racist images and narratives

shouldn't be present in the first place. Whether children consciously recognize racism and are

affected negatively by it or not, those things should have no place in literature, especially

children's literature. Some children may connect the dots while others may not, but they should

not have the opportunity or need to do so in the first place. The racism in *The Wonderful Tar

Baby* is not being presented as a teaching point against racism, so it is not good.

The second story that I will be analyzing is *Nikki and Deja* written by Karen English and

illustrated by Laura Freeman. I chose this book to analyze because one respondent brought this

book up as an example of the progress that has occurred in the diversity and representation in

children's literature. The story follows two black girls named Nikki and Deja through different

scenarios in their lives. One of the first chapters focuses on Nikki attempting to help Deja do her

hair before they walk to the store. Deja says she can't walk to the store with Nikki because her

hair isn't combed. This story automatically shows its representation and diversity within the first

paragraph with this initial interaction between the two girls. Hair is a big part of the African

American community and many people who have that knowledge or experience would

immediately understand the situation that Deja is in. This is powerful because little black children can immediately imagine themselves in the story and relate to the character. For white children seeing diversity exposes them to other people who don't look like them while for non-white children, it just gives them a chance to see themselves in what they are interacting with.

In the story after Deja explains why she can't go to the store without her hair done, Nikki convinces her to let her do her hair. Nikki then struggles with doing Deja's hair after realizing that she doesn't know much more than how to comb hair. She does her best and does mess it up, but everything turns out okay. They decide instead to just play outside instead because according to Deja, "I don't need my hair combed for that" (English, 2007, pg. 12). This was just the first chapter in the multi-chaptered book, but it is the main one I will be focusing on for this content analysis.

I will be using this book as a direct comparison to *The Wonderful Tar Baby* story. I will be comparing the imagery and use of language in the two stories because they both feature black characters. The representation of black people in the two books are complete opposites. Nikki and Deja look like little black girls that you could see on the street, which is a powerful attribute. Their illustrations don't try to follow any specific stereotypes or try to do anything other than showing little black girls in different situations. Meanwhile, Uncle Remus has a stereotypical look of what a black man in the Antebellum South would be, especially one portrayed in the media. In the versions of *The Wonderful Tar Baby* that I saw, Uncle Remus was not pictured in the story, but his image is still associated because it is a part of Uncle Remus' stories.

The language being used in both stories are also vastly different. As explained earlier, the language in *The Wonderful Tar Baby* is less than complimentary to the black community and

some of the ways they speak. In comparison, the language used in Nikki and Deja manages to capture an example of black culture without being racist or stereotypical. The author gets across their point and the experiences of Deja and Nikki with their hair trials, friend struggles, and more without any issues.

The use of fairy tales in children's learning curriculums

This question led to some data that I did not expect to receive. One respondent that I talked to was the Director of a Chicago location of a prestigious daycare center. She discussed how in her school Disney movies and stories have been banned from being used in their curriculums for the children. I found this to be so interesting because Disney's presence is almost always present in the spaces and environments that are targeted toward children. So to find out that their materials were banned from a children's learning environment was very captivating. After inquiring about the reason behind this ban, one of the main reasons that the Director mentioned was the organization wanted to provide children with narratives of diversity and representation and Disney has not always presented those narratives. While she did admit that Disney has been improving over the years, the school has had the ban in place for about 10 years. They wanted to make sure that the children engaged with more than just what Disney provided, even if Disney has been improving. This was interesting because the Disney image is a family-friendly one that is essentially supposed to be palatable and appropriate for any setting, but this organization decided to remove Disney from its learning curriculums.

While some schools choose to remove Disney from their learning curriculums, other schools choose to embrace Disney in their learning curriculums. One participant who grew up in a small town in North Carolina during the 1940s talked about how the school took them on field

trips to watch Disney movies at the drive-in movie theaters. According to the respondent they did this because there were, "no other social activities or outlets so the school provided it". Some of the movies that they went to see were Cinderella and Snow White and the seven dwarfs. This is an example of how the school promoted and even provided a way for the students to encounter Disney and other age-appropriate films. Even though the movies were shown outside of the classroom, as we have established previously through other literature, children learn from more environments than just the classroom and home. The school curated their field trips to the movies so this can be considered part of their learning curriculum.

While Disney is not the only source of fairy tales available for schools to use in their learning curriculums, it is often considered if there are going to be fairy tales utilized in the curriculum. When participants thought about their exposure to fairy tales and fantasy in childhood, Disney was one of the first things they thought about. In school settings, outside of school settings, regardless of if they read books or watched tv as a kid, Disney still managed to become a prominent source of Fairy tales in their memories.

Cinderella and _Snow White and the seven dwarfs_

Next, I will be analyzing _Cinderella_ and _Snow White, and the Seven Dwarfs_. I am analyzing them together because these are two of the most popular Disney movies and fairy tales that scholars use in their research. Since there is so much literature on the two already, I will just briefly go through some of the narratives that are presented in both the Disney movies and original fairy tales before diving further into the data from the interviews relating to the princesses. There are many versions of the _Cinderella_ and _Snow White_ tales, but the ones I will be focusing on are the ones written by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm. The Disney

Cinderella was based on the tale by Charles Perrault and the Disney *Snow White and the seven dwarfs* was based on the tale by the Brothers Grimm (Tatar, 2017, pg. 148)(Perrault, 1697). The Perrault version of *Cinderella* is so different from the later written Brothers Grimm version. Perrault's story had the elements of the slipper, the fairy godmother, and the pumpkin which are elements that are prominent in the Disney film (Perrault, 1697). However the Brothers Grimm version does not have a fairy godmother, but instead a magical tree, and the gory actions of the stepsisters mutilating their feet to try and fit into the slipper (Tatar, 2017, pg. 148).

One important narrative that comes across in the fairy tale of *Snow White* is that a beautiful person can have an ugly inside. In other words, you can be pretty on the outside but be evil and envious on the inside. There is both inner and outer beauty and one does not automatically have them both. The Queen was one of the fairest people in the land, but she was so envious of Snow White that she became such an ugly person on the inside that she tried to kill Snow White. Beauty Standards and the importance of beauty are more narratives that are presented in *Snow White*. Snow White is constantly described as beautiful and the fairest of them all because she was, "as white as snow, as red as blood and as black as ebony" (Tatar, 2017, pg. 95). She was constantly saved from desperate situations because she was considered to be so beautiful. Envy of her beauty was so strong from the queen that she couldn't live knowing that Snow White was considered prettier than her. One narrative in both stories is that beauty needs to be on both the inside and outside for a happy ending. Cinderella and Snow White were both physically beautiful girls as well as internally nice and sweet people (Hand, 1937)(Luske, Jackson & Geronimi, 1950). Even with people conspiring against them and treating them horribly that didn't change who they were. While this is a beautiful message, there are still narratives about a specific image of beauty embedded within it. Cinderella and Snow White are

both pale white girls with small figures (Hand, 1937)(Luske, Jackson & Geronimi, 1950). This sends a message about what is considered beautiful and that narrative can be internalized, or perpetuated by those who believe in the messages. Our society over the years has been working on understanding that beauty is not a one size fits all, but there are still underlying messages such as this one that are still lingering in our society. Diversity and representation in media and literature can help combat those narratives and provide more realistic and positive messages that a wider audience can relate to.

The narratives in stories like *Cinderella* and *Snow White* are so powerful that they are usually one of the first things people think about when they hear the words "fairy tale". In almost every interview I conducted, Cinderella and Snow White were mentioned at some point by the respondents. When explaining their childhood relationship with fairy tales and fantasy, one respondent mentioned that she knew Prince Charming was not going to come and save her and that she wasn't going to be swept away. Cinderella and Snow White are peak examples of the perfect girl who ended up with a happy ending despite the schemes of others plotting against her. These characters were also examples of beauty standards and what was considered beautiful, which is another powerful narrative that society is still wrestling with today. One respondent that I interviewed was a mixed woman who had a white mother. When the respondent was a teen she decided to buy a black doll for herself and when her mother saw it, she asked why she bought such an ugly doll and proceeded to buy her a white doll for Christmas that year. This respondent brought up this memory as an example of why this research is so important, especially for black children. While I may not be looking at dolls specifically, fairy tales are presented through toys and games as well. Princess dolls, games and dress-up costumes just to name a few examples are all involved in how fairy tales are being presented and what they are showing to children. Fairy

tales are more than just stories and movies, they are also being promoted in all of the merch, toys, and games for kids related to the stories and movies. So this doll example is just another setting where the narratives and standards from the fairy tales and movies are being presented. It is important to acknowledge that the gaming and toy industry has its agenda and narratives that they push through their products, but some of those narratives can be seen as crossovers from the books and media that children also heavily encounter. Examples being the Disney stores and toys that are based on their movies, shows, and characters.

Beauty standards are something that can affect children very early on even if we do not always recognize them as such. One respondent that I interviewed was a 1st generation Nigerian American woman who grew up in the late 70s. She had experienced ostracization in both white and black spaces for being from outside of the United States and not being able to fully fit in with either group. One story she shared from the many she had about her journey to appreciate her beauty and looks was from when she was a child. She was in a majority white school environment and she experienced blatant racism and bullying from an early age. An example of this was when she would wear braids and the other kids would call her Medusa. Due to this, she shared that eventually, she started covering her hair with a white shawl she sometimes brought to school when they were on the playground. She did this to give herself the pretty flowing hair that would blow in the wind as she ran. She said in those moments she felt white. This is yet another powerful example that shows how strong narratives can influence children. The respondent went on to say that while she never felt explicitly negative about her looks and self, she also didn't fully learn how to embrace it until college. So while the comments and narratives did not make her feel completely negative about herself, they still influenced her enough to make her want to be white for a little while even if it was just pretend.

School environments and demographics are more important factors in how black children are influenced by different narratives and ideals. When you are in an environment where you are statistically the minority, it is more likely that the narratives presented in the curriculum will represent the majority rather than the minority. This was true for most of the interviewees. Over half of them were in schooling environments that were majority white and they were in the minority. Only one respondent explicitly stated that they were in an all-black school and that was a respondent who was going to grade school when schools were still segregated. The narratives presented through the books and media were still mostly white in her curriculum. The schooling environment and demographic can affect how the narratives were perpetuated through their interactions with their peers, teachers, etc. Some of the respondents felt the lack of representation was stronger because they were reminded by the other kids. Not all children recognize the lack of diversity enough for it to be influential while other children have the recognition thrust on them when other children point it out.

Friends and Neighbors

Friends and Neighbors is a book by Reverend John A. Obrien that was published in 1942. On Amazon, it is part of the Cathedral Readers: Curriculum Foundation Series. To be part of the foundation of a curriculum implies that the author and publishing company consider it to be a pretty good book for children. This book was brought up by a respondent who went to a segregated school of all black students. However, this was one of the books that were brought up when I asked what books from childhood she remembered. The book features several little stories featuring a set of children. While the book does not describe what the children look like

with words, the images accompanying the words in the book provide a visual representation. The children were all white and all of the adults and background characters were also white.

The language in the story is what can be expected from a children's book. It follows the children through different situations that they find themselves in. In one chapter, a little boy put an apple in his pocket, but then couldn't get it out when he was sitting at his desk. Another chapter featured another boy going to a farm for the first time and experiencing feeding and petting the various animals. The narratives that come from the language in the book align with many children's books. Stories about children doing different things and the situations themselves aren't necessarily the problem. This book does have different religious aspects, but that makes sense considering the book was written by a Reverend.

I argue that it is the language and imagery that has the most potential to isolate or connect the reader to the story. In my interviews, there was a story shared by one of my respondents that relates to this idea of children being so ready to use their imaginations. One respondent shared that her experience with feeling isolated and removed from the children's books she was reading was only amplified by her peers. Their racism and bullying would make her not want to read the same books they were reading and talking about. Being compared to characters and animals, like Curious George is just one example of this. So this led to her pushing herself to read at a higher and more advanced level so that she could read books without any pictures in them. This allowed her to be able to use her imagination to picture what the characters looked like. It removed the element of having to feel left out of the books that she was reading.

Pocahontas and *The Princess and the frog*

In this section, I will be analyzing *Pocahontas* and *The Princess and the Frog*. I am analyzing these two movies in the same section because they were both mentioned as examples of some of the progress Disney has made with the representation and diversity in their movie franchise, specifically in the princess lineup. *Pocahontas* was the first Disney princess of color with her own movie (Gabriel & Goldberg, 1995). While *Aladdin* was released before *Pocahontas* and Jasmine was a princess of color, *Pocahontas* was the first one with her own movie (Gabriel & Goldberg, 1995). This was very significant because it started giving a glimpse into what would continue to happen later on in the Disney franchise with movies like *Mulan, The Princess and the Frog*, and more. *Pocahontas* may not be the most historically accurate film, but in terms of seeing someone on the screen who is of color, it meant a lot. One respondent who grew up in the 1990s talked about this movie being one of her favorite movies as a kid because Pocahontas was not white. While she enjoyed the other princesses and their movies, this was the one that stuck with her.

The language of the film was very interesting and could be easily discussed in a paper of its own, but from an overarching perspective, the language provided many narratives. It was interesting to hear the difference in how the Englishmen would talk about the Native American people using terms like "savage", "uncivilized", and "filthy heathens" from the beginning while the Native American people started off using terms like "guests" and "pale visitors" until they also started calling the Englishmen "savage" and "beasts" after they killed Kocoum (Gabriel & Goldberg, 1995). There was also a language barrier between the two groups of people that was noticeable to the audience between Pocahontas and John Smith until Grandmother Willow granted them the ability to understand each other (Gabriel & Goldberg, 1995). The language in the film focused on the two groups talking about each other more than venturing off the page to

present specific narratives to the audience other than the negativity of the mindset of colonization.

The imagery in *Pocahontas* is something that can be argued for or against in terms of representation and positive narratives. The film does have an overall positive message, but the lack of historical accuracy for some is upsetting because it doesn't show what really happened. To some historical accuracy is important and should be shown even if it is not happy and positive because it is realistic. One respondent brought up in one of his answers that if we are going to learn about history then we should learn about all of it and all of the people in it. On the other hand, others could argue that historical fiction is not always accurate nor does it need to be. The film is intended for children and focuses on a love story among star-crossed lovers, so historical accuracy does not seem to be on the top of the agenda of the film. I cannot speak for how accurate the film is in terms of properly and respectfully representing Native American people, but from the general perspective of seeing people of color on the screen, the film has that clearly shown.

The Princess and the Frog was the first Black princess in the Disney franchise (Musker & Clements, 2009). This movie was a big deal for the black community and was a memorable moment in history. The movie featured the city of New Orleans and had a wide range of representations in the form of characters, music, background, and more. It was a film that was mentioned by many respondents when I asked what they see in today's media and literature intended for children compared to when they were growing up. They would talk about how this movie provides a black princess and story that represents some black culture in the Disney franchise.

While many positive things can be and have been said about this film, other aspects are necessary to address. One of the main ones is the fact that Tiana and Naveen are frogs for the majority of the movie. We only see Tiana and Naveen as humans for the first 20 minutes or so of the film and then the final minutes of the story (Musker & Clements, 2009). This is not necessarily a bad thing because it follows the basic plot of the tale of *The Frog prince* where a prince was turned into a frog by a villain (Tatar, 2017, pg. 55). In the fairy tale, the princess promises the frog that he can be her companion if he helps save her ball, but she tries not to keep that promise after he delivers his end of the bargain. Her father forces her to follow through on her promise, and when they find out the frog is actually a Prince under a spell, "At her father's bidding, he became her companion and husband" (Tatar, 2017, pg. 58).

Since this movie is based on that story, it makes sense for the characters to be frogs for a significant part of the movie. However, there have been complaints that this means that Tiana is not able to be a fully present black Main character/Princess for most of the movie. One respondent brought up how while it is still a wonderful movie, "it sucks that the black one is the one who is an animal for most of her movie". People being represented as animals in the Disney franchise is one of the points brought up earlier in the literature review. Scholars have discussed how for a long time non-white representation in Disney movies came in the form of animals, often with accents. Sebastian the Caribbean crab is a great example of this (Garlin & Sandlin, 2016, pg. 68-69). Tiana and Naveen being frogs may not be the same situation, but it is reminiscent of that past. While this does not take away from the significance of this movie, it is something that comes up when thinking about *The Princess and the frog*.

The imagery and language in *The Princess and the Frog* were some of its strong points in terms of representation and diversity. The accents that the people had made sense in the city that

they were in, and there was a wide range of people shown throughout the film. There was a representation of New Orleans culture with the cuisine, the music, the magic and mystique of the city, and much more. Even if everyone may not have direct experience with the culture of New Orleans, just seeing something that feels not centered around whiteness is comforting.

<u>Conclusion</u>

In conclusion, throughout this paper, I argued that from the 1970s to the 2010s there was an increase in diversity and representation in literature and media which had a positive impact on the development of black children. I focused on more mainstream sources of fairy tales like Disney movies, the original fairy tales, and children's books to see what narratives have been presented to the children. Through the interview data and content analysis of the highlighted movies and stories, I argue that language and imagery are two of the most prominent ways that narratives present themselves to an audience. Those were the two aspects that respondents highlighted most often when talking about representation and inclusivity in literature and media, what it means, their experiences with it, and what they want to see in the future. Regardless of whether children always recognize inclusivity or lack of, representation needs to be present. Even if they don't immediately recognize it, when they do it helps them feel seen and represented in what they are interacting with.

Further research can be conducted on how alternative sources of fairy tales and stories can affect children. This research ended up focusing more on popular fairy tales and stories, but within cultures, some other stories and tales also have the potential to affect children. Future research on this topic could dive into those alternative sources and see how they compare to mainstream sources. Additionally, more interviews with childcare professionals, parents, and

educators could be conducted to continue this research. This would allow for more data to look at how fairy tales influence black children.

References

Coogler, R. (Director). (2018). *Black Panther* [Film]. Walt Disney Pictures.

Davis, J. E. (ed.). (2012). *Stories of change: Narrative and social movements*. SUNY Press.

Dewar, G. (2019). The benefits of fantasy fiction and imaginative play. https://parentingscience.com/benefits-of-fantasy-fiction/.

English, K. (2007). *Nikki and Deja* (L. Freeman, Illus.). Harper Collins.

Gabriel, M. & Goldberg, E. (Directors). (1995). *Pocahontas* [Film]. Walt Disney Pictures.

Garlen, J. C., & Sandlin, J. A. (eds.)(2016). *Teaching with Disney*. New York: Peter Lang.

Giroux, H.A. (2004). "Is Disney Good for Your Kids? How Corporate Media Shape Youth Identity in the Digital Age" in Steinberg, S.R. & Kincheloe, J.R. (eds.). *Kinderculture: the corporate construction of childhood*. Westview Press.

Hand, D. (Director). (1937). *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* [Film]. Walt Disney Pictures.

Harris, J.C. (1881). *The Wonderful Tar Baby Story*.
https://xroads.virginia.edu/~ug97/remus/tar-baby.html.

Hooks, B. (1996). *Reel to Real: Race, sex, and class at the movies*. Routledge.

Hurley, D. L. (2005). Seeing white: Children of color and the Disney fairy tale princess. The Journal of Negro Education, 221-232.

Luske, H., Jackson, W. & Geronimi C. (Directors). (1950). *Cinderella* [Film]. Walt Disney Pictures.

Mandara, C.B.M.J. (2002). "Racial Identity Development in African American Children: Cognitive and Experiential Antecedents" in McAdoo, H.P. (ed.). *Black children: social, educational, and parental environments*. Sage Publications.

Martyris, N. (2017, May 11). 'Tar Baby': A Folk Tale About Food Rights, Rooted In The Inequalities Of Slavery.
https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2017/05/11/527459106/tar-baby-a-folktale-about-food-rights-rooted-in-the-inequalities-of-slavery

Meier, T. R. (2008). *Black communications and learning to read: Building on children's linguistic and cultural strengths*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Musker, J. & Clements, R. (Directors). (2009). The *Princess and the Frog* [Film]. Walt Disney Pictures.

Obrien, J.A. (1942). *Friends and Neighbors* (M.S. Hurford, Illus.). Scott Foresman and Company.

Peters, M.F. (2002). "Racial Socialization of Young Black Children" in McAdoo, H.P. (ed.). *Black children: social, educational, and parental environments*. Sage Publications.

Perrault, C. (1697). *Cinderella; or, The Little Glass Slipper*.
https://sites.pitt.edu/~dash/perrault06.html

Polletta, F. (1998). Contending stories: Narrative in social movements. Qualitative Sociology, 21(4), 419-446.

Short, S. (2014). *Fairy tale and film: Old tales with a new spin*. Springer.

Sims, R. (1983). What Has Happened to the "All-White" World of Children's Books? The Phi Delta Kappan, 64(9), 650–653. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20386841

Singhal, A. (2013). Introduction: Fairy tales to digital games: the rising tide of entertainment education. Critical Arts, 27(1), 1-8. https://doi.org/10.1080/02560046.2013.766971

Steinberg, S.R. & Kincheloe, J.R. (eds.)(2004). *Kinderculture: the corporate construction of childhood.* Westview Press.

Tatar, M. (ed.)(2017). *The Classic Fairy Tales (Second International Student Edition)(Norton Critical Editions)*. WW Norton & Company.

Tiffin, J. (2009). *Marvelous geometry: narrative and metafiction in modern fairy tale*. Wayne State University Press.

"Uncle Remus and the Tar Baby". Childlit.unl.edu.
http://childlit.unl.edu/topics/edi.uncleremus.html.

Witkin, M. (1994). A defense of using pop media in the middle-school classroom. The English Journal, 83(1), 30-33.

Zipes, J. (2011). *The enchanted screen: The unknown history of fairy-tale films*. Routledge.

Zipes, J. (2012). *The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre.* Princeton University Press.

Zipes, J. (2013). *Why fairy tales stick: The evolution and relevance of a genre.* Routledge.