

The Fairy's Castle and the Factory System: Re-imagining 'Jorinda and Jorindel' as a Critique of Capitalist Alienation

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the Grimm Brothers' tale "Jorinda and Jorindel" as a symbolic allegory of capitalist exploitation and worker alienation in Europe during the Industrial Revolution. The gloomy forest, the fairy's castle, the maidens and the cages are all metaphorical for industrial ownership, means of production, and dehumanization of the proletariat, respectively, through a Marxist theoretical lens. Theftmatic and symbolic literary analysis is used to show how the fairy symbolises the bourgeoisie who are very rich, but very lonely and alienated, then pass on the alienation to the working class through systems of control and exploitation. The study identifies that Jorinda's becoming a singing bird represents the loss of identity, voice and agency of the worker in the factory system and Jorindel's paralysis as the powerlessness of loved ones and the collaboration of workers. Informed by the theoretical work of Marx, Lukács, Zipes, Tatar, and others, this analysis places the fairy tale as a cultural artifact in the context of a critique of the utilitarian values that underlie the industrial capitalism of the day. The relevance of this study goes in the past and into the present world where alienation, self-identity problems and extreme profit driven economy overlook humanity and human welfare. The study can help readers to identify and resist the dehumanizing aspects of contemporary industrial and post-industrial capitalism by interpreting the symbolic nature of the ancient story, offering a critical perspective that supports the return to a vital humanity, empathy, and community health.

Introduction

The start of the tale defines the deprivation of the fairy itself where the author states the scenery of the "gloomy forest" but she was not devoid of the material wealth as she owns the castle. The fairy represents the capitalist and a cruel capitalist or industrialist as these stories have their authorial background in Europe where industrialism was booming day by day so literature and its necessity of publication. Author, representative of the society, to describe the social transformations and pain felt by the working-class i.e. majority of the society. Grimms' wrote ancient tales into a bookish form. The study emphasizes on the lacking of the rich as well as the working-class but the one who is owner of the means of production or in other words capitalist has more impact on the society.

Research Objectives

1. To analyse "Jorinda and Jorindel" in a Marxist theoretical approach as an allegory in the symbolic context of capitalist exploitation and worker alienation in the Industrial Revolution.
2. To explore the metaphorical associations of the forest, castle, cages and the bird the industry inflicts on its workers.

3. To connect the themes of alienation, identity loss and profit-driven exploitation that pervade the story to the present day in today's capitalist world.

Research Questions

1. What does "Jorinda and Jorindel" metaphorically represent about the capitalist exploitation and worker alienation in the Industrial Revolution?
2. How does the setting, characters, and the plot elements serve as a metaphor for industrial ownership, means of production, and dehumanization of the proletariat?
3. In an industrial and post-industrial capitalist society, how are the themes of alienation, loss of identity and dehumanization relevant today?

Theoretical framework

Marxist literary theory is used to study this tale primarily, which offers the fundamental framework for the interpretation of socio-economic dynamics in the fairy tale. At the heart of this is the notion of alienation, Karl Marx's term for the separation of the worker from what he produces, how it is made, his fellow workers, and finally his "species-being". This is the lens through which the story of "Jorinda and Jorindel" is analyzed, with the fairy's castle a metaphor for the "means of production" and the ensnared maids (birds) a symbol for the proletariat, who are deprived of their identity and agency. The analysis is carried forward on this basis and adds the Marxist notion of class struggle and ideology. Theories such as György Lukács's concept of "reification" serve as a basis for interpretation of the study, as the birds are reified as an array of singing objects in the story, while the worker is reified as a mere object or instrument in capitalism. In addition, the framework builds upon the critical analyses of others, such as the works of critical scholars Zipes, Tatar, and Farmer, all of whom have examined the socio-political aspects of fairy tales. Their interpretations help to understand these narratives as cultural objects that reproduce, reinforce, or challenge the dominant ideologies of their day, including the "utilitarian purpose" of an expanding capitalist society. This theoretical approach can be used to systematically decipher the symbolic language of the fable and relate it to the real-world social and historical process of industrialization and capitalism.

4. Research Methodology

This research paper uses a qualitative approach, with the method of this research being a thematic and symbolic literary analysis. The study is intended to be an interpretation of the text 'Jorinda and Jorindel' as a 'cultural and socio-economic document'. The process starts with a close reading of the original story; in the original, the elements of the story: the setting (gloomy forest, and the castle), the characters (the fairy, Jorinda, Jorindel), and the plot (the transformation and capture), and specific symbols (the cages, the birdsong) are identified. This is a close reading that provides the basis for a more symbolic interpretation.

At the heart of the methodology is a systematic symbolic decoding, consisting of the study of each narrative element in relation to the theme of the industrial era for its possible allegorical meaning. The castle thus becomes a metaphor for industrial ownership and control, the women becoming birds an icon of their loss of identity and humanity, and the cages a metaphor for the confining and dehumanizing nature of the factory context. This is not just a guess, but is backed up by secondary historical and theoretical sources. Comparative analysis is used in the research, looking at the theme of the story and relating it to documented historical occurrences of the Industrial Revolution as well as the writings of sociologists and

philosophers at the time – such as Marx and Engels. This allows for placing the symbolic reading in the history here. The study also presents a synthesis of scholarly opinions, incorporating the opinions of well-known fairy-tale scholars (Zipes, Tatar, Nodelman, etc.) and Marxist theorists (Lukács, etc.) to create a comprehensive and interdisciplinary argument. Finally, this approach enables the study to go beyond a superficial study of the tale to uncover its commentary on power, class and suffering in an industrializing society.

Significance of the study

In today's world where the people are in race of achieving more and more materials in an industrial society, it is necessary for the people to study grimm's fairy tales so that they can deviate their attention from the boring and alienating work. They remain so busy in their daily job routines that they forget about their well-being and their families. Not only those who work under the capitalism forget about themselves but also those for whom he works. They enjoy the fruit of their hard-work just like the fairy used to enjoy the songs of the birds. They couldn't imagine themselves as a caged bird. They continue to sing and the fairy i.e. capitalists use to enjoy the melody. The workers remain alienated from what they produce, from the means of production, from the species being and from the fellow workers. Through this symbolic study they would be able to imagine different scenarios. The house members remain only concerned about what they earn and this enjoyment does not shake them to take step in favor of their loved ones. But this study is a wakeup call for both the working-class as well as their well-wishers that unity is strength and they can mitigate alienation by considering themselves worthy of love.

Literature review

The time when these tales were published was kind of utilitarianism i.e. The benefit of less was the priority on the sufferings of the more as Zipes (1979) writes that "golden age" directly challenged the rationalistic, utilitarian purpose that was being enforced to support the growing capitalist and industrial society. The suffering mode transformed. The old ways of atrocity was changing into new one. The society was shifting from one stance to the other. Feudal system was shifting towards capitalist as opined that later, literary fairy tales such as 'Beauty and the Beast' show how the superficially bestial aristocracy is morally superior to the 'crass, vulgar values of the emerging bourgeoisie' (Nodelman, 1983). The way of cruelty and injustice just changed as, "The change in social structure from feudalism to capitalism only changed the forms of exploitation" (Shodhganga, 2020). The landlords became owners of the means of production. In all this, all focused on the working-class and their lives but being humans, the feelings are same in those with money and in those who lack it Tatar (2003) writes that he tales affirm "the arbitrariness of suffering that strikes people irrespective of what their personal merits may be." They also suffer from alienation. They have to act according to what audience they are talking to which is a difficult process.

Societies are full of different people with specific attitudes and so not mentioning every face of the fairy, author indirectly points out the demands of society. Authors have to face difficulties to portray according to the society as well so their characters as Tomé, M. da C., & Bastos, G. (2013) asserts that direct shaping of character and gender roles, without presenting alternatives, "points out" the specific patriarchal demands of the society the authors inhabited. They cannot then fit in the society in their originality. They cannot act according to the society and due to their isolation and alienation, people don't like to visit them as no other fairy is mentioned living

in the castle. This is also seen in other stories as well as, Castles can be "desolate" and isolated, and elfin/aristocratic societies are portrayed as "decayed and corrupt," isolated from the working-class world (Moules, 2022). They have to change themselves temporarily to fit in the society and to please themselves. Characters who succeed do so by adopting qualities like diligence, industry, patience, and obedience (Zipes, 1997). Happiness in society is related to be surrounded by the people of any status but after building industries by the industrialists, they forget to be real and what they were. Lee (2013) writes that just chasing profits in the development of civilization is but a vain dream... the cause of humanity and reflection loss. Such people cannot focus on what is in their surroundings living as well as the non-living as also mentioned in the research paper by Ahmad (2025) that Hedda and her father who were the bourgeoisie and their identity and nature caused the changes in the society." "They were selfish enough to make impacts in the society. Such hard work does not only make them proud but also surrounded by their people only who don't deny them rather tell them that they are very good people or somehow amuse them. The profit is based on the suffering on the proletariats. Fairytale is used to portray the real suffering of the working-class in literary ways as Ahmad (2026) read, "the golden bird and apples are read as capital, the distant kings as alienated bourgeoisie, obsessed with accumulation, and the dangerous adventure of the sons of the gardener as proletarian experience of forced labour and ideological interpellation. They are suppressed and alienated and so they only have ability to do what they become and not having their identity like opined that this process of reification means that the proletariat is reduced to a "fact" or a "fixed magnitude," stripped of their humanity and process-like essence (Lukács, 1971). The visitors represented the well-wishers of the workers. Like as in the story, they were partners of the maidens. The number of cages meticulously match with the average number of employees in an industrial unit. Every line of the story represents and match the industrialization and its effects in a unique way. The story describes the ups and downs of the capitalist life.

To be alone was their requirement in the story apparently and in reality, to work is the requirement of the working-class. If they don't want to be that, the factory system snatch their identity from them as Farmer (1972) opined, Because it is, of course, the ultimate story about loss of identity – to become one nightingale among so many, all of them alike." They work while putting their identity on stake but their primary motive was to work for their own benefit but they neglect themselves and start working for the welfare of the factory as workers who once made products have become products (Eichhorn, 2024). Irony of industrial system is that people wander in search of livelihood, they shift to other cities and in some cases to the other countries in search of livelihood and focus too much on the livelihood that they forget to live their life well and going home like The Industrial Revolution made workers out of the populace, wages out of labour, and cities into centres of commerce... cities have become communities of strangers. Those from rural or impoverished areas, especially the youthful, see images and stories of a better and exciting life in the city. Ironically, those in the cities, especially the non-youthful, experience stress." (Malaysian Insight, 2020, March 13) same as mentioned in the story that they wandered long way Jorinda and Jorindel forget the way that leads to the home. He cannot meet his colleagues as one work in one segment of the factory and other in the other and if this is not the case then there is a difference in the timing of the shifts. According to Ahasan et al. (2002), Shift work is associated with negative aspects of disturbing their family, conjugal and social lives, curtailed leisure activities, created difficulties in meeting their friends. They cannot

phone at their homes and police or law enforcement agencies do not work for them as fairy had the word of the man that he would not visit the castle always. They are deprived people and they want the others see suffering for identity and social life. The concept of "social death" describes how marginalized individuals are "not recognised as worthy of reciprocal recognition from employers" and are framed "as being at the bottom of, or outside, the social order." (Tracey, 2021) opines that a man need empathy for him more than the sympathy. Loneliness damages mental health. That's why they use their powers to end their suffering and building their company. This is what Marx termed as alienation for the species-being." The description of the surroundings like the setting sun and the birds singing which is the symbol of proletariats' own surroundings which was very sad as in a poem it is stated, How cheerless to me is the dinsome mill, / With its rayless dust and gloom; / Mair dear to my heart is the wimplin' rill, / And the banks where the wild flowers bloom." (Pyott, 1869). As long as any deprived industrialist sees what his factory lacks, he appoints him at the desired place. (Marx & Engels, 1848) wrote about this," Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the overlooker, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself." They looked towards the sun as if she or the worker symbolically would not be able to see the sun after that. The singing or chirping of beautiful birds is the symbolical representation of this in this fairytale. She sang, "The ring-dove sang from the willow spray Well-a-day! Well a-day! He mourn'd for the fate of his darling mate, Well-a-day" Fairy screamed, in the form of an owl, "Tu whu! Tu whu! To whu!" Jorindel could not move: he stood there like a stone, and could neither weep nor speak, nor move hand or foot. He knew that the Bourgeoisie causes the alienation not only to the workers but their loved ones. They use whatever they can to stop their loved ones for the empathy they have to offer as fairy didn't do what he asked her to do." "All the story, as is studied, is between the lines. Serenity is written to represent capitalism and alienation. This is human psychology that he can give what he has, so this is normal but this is what should not be.

Discussion

1. Symbolism of Setting and Characters

The building of castle is closely related to the industry as it resembles to the factory in it's structure which has also many wings for various specific purposes. The story's lines even create analogy between the industrialization period and the details of the sceneries ancient tale. The forest and the setting of the story depict that the fact that trees were cut down by the industrialists to build factories. Industries alienated their owners by being away from humanity in normal life rather remain busy with the fellow humans in the pursuit of wealth and then they snatched the freedom of the working-class as if the castle would not be in the gloomy forest, she would not be there hiding from her fellow fairies and humanity would not suffer. She caters her sufferings buy the singing of birds as shown in the story that the deprivation of fairy caused the deprivations of the proletariat which are the symbolically represented by the people especially the maidens who visit the jungle. The old woman is the pure depiction of the days they spent to build their industries. The people in material pursuit don't see their ager and their physical abilities, they continue to build that what they are after as in this case the factories

2. The Bourgeoisie and Alienation

It happens sometimes when one has what he wants materially can own but as a reciprocity has to be alienated in a way. The fairy has the castle but she had to live hiding from the others.

Continuously living in isolation in the empire they build alienate them from the society. The alienation builds frustration in the fairy or the bourgeoisie after a life-long journey and then she transferred this alienation to the working-class. The race in achieving as much as one can is the cause of all this because it is studied that the fairy became old in that castle i.e. building industry and so she then started catching the maidens in the cage so that they could work for her because it is so that the work in reality causes happiness or amusement for the industrialists. The work of the working-class causes the industrialists to earn money and in return alienate the working-class from the species-being. Proletariats cannot benefit from themselves materially. They know that they are in cage of nine to five but the owner of the means of production build the scenario around them such that they start connecting their happiness with what they are forced to do so as the singing of birds is apparently a warm gesture and scene.

3. The Working-Class Experience

The working-class work for themselves or to put something in the table which is symbolically represented by the wandering of the couple in search of bread and butter i.e. to cater themselves is studied this way. The couple visited forest to enjoy themselves and to cater themselves but their identity changed. The walking of Jorinda and Jorindel in the forest is the requirement of themselves. they went here with their consent and happiness but they didn't know the consequences because they tried to be vigilant as they could but at that time it was difficult to establish businesses by the working-class rather they had to willingly or unwillingly work under the shade of the bourgeoisie. Two characters are deliberately mentioned by the author in the particular space in the book index. It's very next story is the travelling musicians which emphasizes on the unity. The author writes it that way to emphasize the necessity of work in proletariats' life and to show that workers' welfare is necessary for the worker's mental health and physical security as Jorindel said, we must take care that we must not go too near to the fairy's castle. In the industrial system it is obvious to be sad as in the tale they didn't know why they were sad, but they were. As soon as they come near the walls of the castle, they knew what they did.

4. Loss of Identity and Alienation of Workers

The identity is one of the most valuables that a worker loose in industry. Jorinda became a bird and Jorindel couldn't do anything there first. They then cannot explain to their loved ones that what happens with them like her song ended with "jug, jug." People outside the factory cannot witness what is happening with them inside because they can only observe, rather than feeling. There comes difference between nine to five person and the one with freedom. Once they both were free but Jorinda became bird and couldn't tell what happened to her. Bird and man has a lot of difference but man admires eagle just because of his manifestations. The bird she became was of low confidence and courage and she could fly as well but she didn't. She was made to believe that the fairy could do some remedy. This whole was due to the fairy living their who herself was of very low self-esteem that she was with no identity and had no confidence that she cannot change her attitude in front of his even workers. Working under such boss clarifies the working-class that they would have to suffer to put something on the table same as the protagonists knew that they would have to go through the hardships.

5. The Bourgeoisie's Manipulation and Control

They fear that their industry must not be revealed to the external agencies or the labor welfares so that they can have lifelong enjoyment. Capitalists cannot tolerate the union of the laborers

who work for their betterment or any external agency working for the betterment of the proletariats. They are well aware that unity is strength and if the working-class unites, they would not let us suppress them. They are often given workloads so that they cannot even think of the revolt and their well-wishers are bound in some paperwork as the fairy had word of the male not to come there again as she was in-charge in the forest. They step ahead to suppress all the unions and welfares. The bourgeoisie treat them themselves so that they may not be able to speak for them again.

They have this talent in themselves because the more they assess the talent, the more they would earn and then would be more amused and entertained. The fairy in the tale knew that the maidens can sing or chirp well as they have this talent as "There were seven hundred of these cages hanging in the castle." Capitalists are very much aware and can assess people's talent. Their lives revolves around what they built and how have to run that they knew that very greatly. They don't compromise in bringing talent to their industry and where to use them.

6. The Psychological Impact on Workers

Remaining unexposed to the sun in itself causes depression and anxiety. The nine to five loop does not let working-class free. Unions were very active before the workers started working under strong supervision of the managers as literally Jorinda was enjoying her life until in the shade of the fairy. Until then, Jorindel was his shield but as soon as they entered the supervision of fairy, the song ended up in jug jug sound. the supervision system in the factories caused the working-class to be separated from their well-wishers. They don't allow them to be free at any time even after going home and in today's world, the workers receive phone calls after the shift to complete the task to please the factory owner. They become mentally absent or literally alienated from the society in which they live, from their own people and eventually themselves and their identity. They are forced to think only of the industry and not being able to build one for himself. They pay them just to eat and wear, not anything more than that because they know that if they have much more, they would leave them as all the birds could be in a single cage and enjoy more than singing but she kept all the birds in different cages. The birds didn't communicate with each other. Their independence was snatched from them. Industrialists need the working-class for themselves not for their own selves and their family. They don't think of that rather the fairy had word of the Jorindel. They play safe i.e. politically by having the word.

7. Physical Suffering and Exploitation

Working-class don't only suffer mentally but physically as well as protagonists' color become pale and they shivered. Moreover, as soon as the time came that the fairy had to take Jorinda in the castle she became a beautiful bird. She changed physically and become alienated from herself and couldn't communicate herself. Like the people working in the mines suffer from asthma and certain diseases and they don't complain because they know that their survival depends on that. People who do fishing to earn livelihood cannot go home at specific time like the Jorinda who saw first no source of going home. They remain in the seas for a number of days or even months. They put their lives in danger and some of them were killed by the employers.

8. The Helplessness of Workers and Their Loved Ones

When a worker sees the negativity of industrialist coming towards them they cry for their well-wisher and indirectly call them but they remain unable to help them as "Jorindel turned to see the reason..." Though they are alienated but being human they know what can harm them and what is good for them so they try their level best to come out to live their lives in a happy way. In

doing so, they face hardships and so they feel alienated. Bourgeoisie make the people just to see their loved ones suffering and cannot do anything for them. This is deprivation and alienation in itself for those who don't even directly work under the influence of the industrialists. What bourgeoisie do, affects them indirectly. They are made to believe that they are living their lives normally but in actual fact, the proletariats and their loved ones know the pain internally. Their lives become difficult and cannot live their lives in their own homes as Jorindel "could not go back to his own home."

9. The Bourgeoisie's Lost Social Worth

The psychological behavior of industrialists is such that they have lost all their authentic social worth so they snatch the other's because everyone want that he should be accompanied by his mates so if they have no clear identity for the social world and he strictly surrounds with the people with lost identity. The whole tale revolves round this matter as the fairy had no specific identity for meeting the people. She disguises herself to be acceptable and in return she accompanied herself with those with no identity because a bird cannot explain herself to even the fairy and fairy kept almost seven hundred of the cages. Theor presence worked for her because to mitigate alienation, she adopted that way which was not fruitful. The birds just sang and do what they could do that benefitted the fairy. Loneliness is an enemy for any living being as seen in the story that the Jorinda and Jorindel were both with each other and the fairy surrounded herself in the gloomy forest with the birds. Tale elaborates that only the feeling of someone's presence is not enough but the presence by heart means a lot. A company can only surves with difficulty in which workers work just to please the factory owner but when they do the work by heart the industry flourishes with innovations and novelty. But the industrial society is so frustrating and boring that It becomes normal for the industrialists as welkl as the working-class to portray themselves what they are not. It is not easy for the industrialists, being human, to disguise themselves always. What they do with those who approach them makes them hateful in the society just as the fairy. They have to hide themselves from the people because they know that they are not considered lovable in the society.

10. The Symbolism of the Transformation

After snatching identity of the working-class, they also stop their helping hands as "he stood fixed as a stone, and could neither weep, nor speak..." Alienation is of different pain for both the Jorinda and Jorindel. Jorinda couldn't explain herself and Jorindel couldn't do anything for her. This is a psychological toll of capitalism. The men who are so atrocious that they don't know how to treat others are just like the fairy in the tale because they are very self-centered and they don't care about the feelings of the others like the physical appearance of the fairy is its proof. Her nose extended to her chin and so couldn't smell the world even around her more than herself.

The description of nose and chin is very literary technique to show they cannot use even their senses to meet he world, they smell even themselves rather than the one in front of them rather they use only professional ways to allocate and treat the people in society and in their industry. They forget that people need love not only the atrocity for work. They can work better with love.

Conclusion

To conclude, the literary analysis of the Grims' tale about Jorinda and Jorindel is a complex and influential allegory of the alienation and exploitation of industrial capitalism. The gloomy forest, the terrible castle and the imprisoned birds are symbolic of the forces that dehumanized

European society. The tragedy of losing her voice and human form is a strong illustration of alienation - as used in Marxism, the denial of the working class their identity, autonomy and humanity in the factory system. Similarly, the paralysis of Jorindel is the powerlessness of loved ones and the overall repression of workers' unity and resistance. Indeed, the study makes it quite clear that the characters are not "fairy-tale" beings, but rather archetypes of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and the relationship between them is indicative of their unequal power in the capitalist class structure. Rich, isolated and manipulative, the fairy represents alienation of the capitalist who must detach himself from society, and must have no decency in the matter of human dignity, otherwise he would not be able to earn money.

The overall message of the story is that it is warning message, posits the analysis. This research is a powerful reminder that the psychological and social problems of industrialism—the loss of identity, the breaking up of community, the drive for profit over people—are not long-forgotten problems, but ongoing ones. The story "Jorinda and Jorindel" is an invitation for readers in the present to acknowledge the danger of alienation in their lives, and to appreciate the joys of human fellowship and empathy and community health.

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