ARGUMENT PAPER ASSIGNMENT, FIRST YEAR WRITING

This semester, we have considered original fairy tales and their adaptations, and how these stories have changed over time.

In Hans Christian Andersen’s original “The Little Mermaid,” the mermaid must cut out her tongue, ultimately does not achieve her goal, and loses her love to another woman. Then, she basically commits suicide by releasing herself into the ocean in the form of sea foam. But in Disney’s *The Little Mermaid*, Ariel simply signs a contract, has her voice trapped in sea shell, and acheieves her goal of wooing Prince Eric when Skuttle the seagull knocks the sea witch’s sea shell necklace to unleash Ariel’s voice. Why these changes? What does this say about the societies in which they were written and the difference in targeted audiences?

Consider Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Snow Queen.” In this tale, the Snow Queen is purely evil, and has cast an awful spell over her kingdom. A mirror has broken, the pieces of which lodge in the eyes of all who live there, causing them to see awful things. In *Frozen*, the Snow Queen, Elsa, is a redeemable and sympathetic character—almost not even really a villain at all. And here, we have the inclusion of her sister, Anna, and how the true love of the sisters conquers all hate and evil. Previously, the messages of Disney’s reinterpreted fairy tales has been true love between man and woman conquers all—but lately, we have tropes that include true love between family members: sisters in *Frozen*, or even godmother/goddaughter type figures in *Maleficent*. Why? Why have these images and messages changed?

Over the course of the semester, we have also discussed reoccurring themes in these original fairy tales. Shoes, for example, appear quite frequently and have similar meanings. Numbers such as three, seven, and twelve reappear often. What does this mean? What are these reoccurrences telling us?

Choose a story from either Brothers Grimm or Hans Christian Andersen. What do you find interesting about this tale? If it’s been adapted, consider the changes that have been made. Why do you think these changes were incorporated? What was the society like then, and what is it like now? Are there themes or images that appear in your chosen story you’ve seen in others? What do you think these images mean? What are they trying to convey? Make an argument for your chosen tale. Send me your thesis statement for approval.