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## Research Article

### It's All Because of the Classics: Yesterday's Today's Inspiration Cinderella Wore A Modern Dress

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The Classics remain to be an inspiration for modern works of art. One typical example is the Classic fairy tale Cinderella which has been retold and reimagined in various ways but has maintained its Classic flavor that blends well with its modern recipes. In our highly digitized world, the Classics are depicted in a modern format called the visual novel. This study tackled Victor Shklovsky's defamiliarization to show the familiar and unfamiliar in a modern recommunicated version of Cinderella known as Cinders, a visual novel digital platform demonstrating how this contemporary work of art is inspired by the Classics. Likewise, this paper is hinged on Stephen Jay Greenblatt's New Historicism framework to investigate the historical developments of a Classic tale like Cinderella evolving into its eponym Cinders who wears the modern dress of a visual novel in conformity with the Millennial fashion of digitized fairy tale writing's format, platform, and presentation. The use of Karl Marx's and Friedrich Engel's Cultural Materialism in this study proves how perspectives about material wealth are being differently viewed by key characters as they vigorously pursue their personal goals. Melding with these literary frameworks is the researcher's improvisation of three (3) guiding stars as the compass that helped uncover Cinders's Classic spark, Classic vestiges, and Millennial or Contemporary Differences from its Classic inspirer Cinderella. Finally, this undertaking discussed the contrasts between book reading of a Classic work including the digital reading and playing of a Classic reincarnated version to cap this researcher's scholarly journey.

**Keywords:** *Classic spark, Classic vestiges, Contemporary work of art, Visual novel, Millennial differences*

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## Introduction

Traces of the Classics are seemingly recognizable in new works of art particularly in their reincarnated or recommunicated versions. Thus, when one encounters “interesting characters” in one’s favorite drama, movie or TV show or any new medium capable of storytelling, it is not a far cry to notice the bearings of the Classics. Classic roots, somehow, cannot be completely camouflaged.

Gillian Straub in the Web article “*A case to keep the classics*” avers that the Classics usually surmount the test of acceptance and longevity even if when they are pitted with their modern counterparts. Straub poses this rhetorical question relative to the worth of the Classics vis-à-vis their literary competitors --- *If people are more engaged in popular literature of the day rather than dusty old classics, what value do the classics have?*

The Classics according to Gillian Straub cannot be equated with popularity or being top placer on the reading chart. This goes to show that not because it is a Classic, people will automatically have a favorable immediate acceptance of it. Inevitably, the Classics compete for readers’ attention and other personal precipitating factors. But Straub attributes the somewhat dawdling acceptance and appreciation of a Classic to its protracted production process thus obtaining its real score for readers’ impact will also take time (“A case to keep the classics,” 2018). Reading delayed is not necessarily appreciation denied. This researcher presupposes that the Classic’s perpetuating and generational existence is a legacy of time bequeathed for posterity’s sake. The extent to which the Classics continue to spur creative works cannot be totally ignored.

One could say that a Classic almost always becomes the inspirer of the modern or contemporary work of art. This proves the effectual and hovering influence of a Classic even in the modern era. It has become the fodder or the raw material for producing notable works of art hence influencing the title of this paper *It's All Because Of The Classics: Yesterday's Today's Inspiration Cinderella Wore A Modern Dress*.

Sometimes an idea could be at the mercy of time just like any technology that is prone to obsolescence. But, as we can see, a Classic and

an aging human body are incomparable. A Classic may get old but it does not necessarily age. As this researcher puts it, “*An idea could tragically age. But a Classic one is a different matter.*”

Any work that achieves the status of a Classic has elements in it that are so basic, so universal, so descriptive of the human drama, that cultures no matter how new somehow continually find that intangible connection with it.

The timelessness of the Classics is evident in the strings of retellings of a popular fairy tale known as the *Cinderella* which has led this researcher to examine its other movie remakes which are substantially representative of *Cinderella* and which are reflective of the historical developments of this main character as she evolves from generation to generation of renewed thinking. The historical track of this generationally-renowned lady is of paramount importance in tracking down the developments that come naturally with time and milieu.

Based on Stephen Jay Greenblatt’s **New Historicism**, it behooves that all works of art must be looked into their historical viewpoints and how values and cultures differ with time should be one of their major concerns (Habib, 2011). Since the subtitle of this paper is *Cinderella Wore a Modern Dress*, a **New Historicism** approach has been used as an adjunct framework to further investigate what Cinderella wears as a modern dress and how such new garb influences her values and lifestyle including her self-presentation or image and her relations to other pivotal characters in the story.

After a literary perusal, it can be inferred that the modern dress is a metaphor for any form of communication that is new and relevant in a particular time. It is also the digital format called visual novel that clothes *Cinderella*’s modern counterpart *Cinders* which is the actual material used in this study. *Cinders* as its sound suggests is the eponym of *Cinderella*.

Moreover, this researcher has vicariously witnessed how Cinderella’s metaphorical attire has changed from her oldest dress in Charles Perrault’s *The Little Glass Slipper* in which Cinderella’s otherworldly patience and kindness supernaturally endow her with both inner and outer beauty (“The Little Glass Slipper”) to her modern dress in *Cinders*, the visual novel format of *Cinderella* (“Cinders”) in which

Cinders's depiction defies her Classic counterpart through her new digitized image as being someone equipped for the battle for her much avowed strong womanhood, personal emancipation, and deserved birthright, among others.

Introducing visual novel as an alternative genre (*through this paper*) for studying and re-studying Classic literature attempts to break the conventional notions about how literature can be enjoyed and appreciated as a work of art. Fortunately, the advent of visual novel lends a new way of reading and delighting in Classic literature.

Of Japanese origin, a visual novel is a hybrid of reading and playing. It has the element of

"choose your own" hence, the term **interactive fiction** suits it. In addition, it falls under the umbrella of a **video game**. The latitude of choosing plot movement through a route is what gives visual novel its narrative flexibility which distinguishes it from the conventional narrative structure of a storybook (What is a visual novel?). As a digitized form of literature, visual novel tends to rely on its plot and characterization rather than on its action scenes. Since it has non-linear story branching plots with several endings, the narrative digitized experience of its reader/player could be likely its key selling point ("Visual Novel TV Tropes").



Fig. 1. The visual novel is a unique way of engaging readers/players in the narrative flow through its built-in decision points presented as routes from: *Cinders*

Supporting this paper's claim on visual novel a.k.a. video game as a learning platform is Bacalja's citing of a report of the Australian Journal of Language and Literacy (AJLL) in its 2010 edition of the Australian Research Council project entitled *Literacy in the Digital World of the twenty first century: Learning from computer games* in which the study of English from the digital perspective is strongly called for. This means computer games are potentially noteworthy materials for critical thinking and

introspection. Also, it might come as a big surprise that novelists are being inspired by video games (Alverson 30). For instance, the well-known author of children's books Matthew J. Kirby, who is into serial young adult novel writing, has been enormously inspired by the *Assassin's Creed*. Kirby wrote the *Assassin's Creed: The Descendant*. According to Kirby. "The book has all the game's core elements of action, parkour and combat." Truly, the graphic novel meets the video game in an auspicious literary

encounter that could lead to not only a co-existence between these two (2) genres but could also create a fusion of reading and playing hence a win-win situation for literary enthusiasts who can now enjoy concurrently being readers and players instead of being mere readers only.

Bayeck in her study entitled *Exploring African Student Video Game Play: A Connected Learning Theory Perspective* reveals the (Squire, Devane and Durga, 2008) finding that game playing compels students to walk an extra mile in searching other resources in order to make sense of the game's story line. In other words, they look for other "comprehension aids or tools" that would help facilitate their understanding of the game (Bayeck 34). Therefore, games can pander to high-order thinking. It is the metacognitive challenge of a convoluted game that attracts students to spend their money on games according to a study of (Gee, 2005) which is also supported in Bayeck's research article. Ergo, there is learning taking place in the video game space which enriches education in an unorthodox way.

Nonetheless, this paper's aspirations go beyond the intention of simply proving that the visual novel (or video game) like *Cinders* is a new way of learning, re-learning and enjoying the Classics such as *Cinderella* as evidenced by the aforementioned analogous research articles. But most importantly the fulcrum of this academic pursuit is to defend this researcher's thesis that the Classics are today's inspiration for new works of art. And it has been found out that existing related studies fall short of this researcher's academic expectations as these materials have not delved into the literary and heritage value of the Classics in stimulating the creation of new works of art. One good undeniable illustration is whenever a remake of *Cinderella* is upcoming, public awareness about it is usually geared towards making advertising plugs or publicity stunts and deplorably not on its literary worth as a Classic but on its commercial value. Thus, this paper somehow serves as an apology for the indisputable influence of the Classics for motivating a plethora of cinematic remakes. Such assortment of *Cinderella* versions is intended to prove its narrative dynamism, presentation flexibility, and its

enduring appeal (Renaë, "How Cinderella has changed").

Revisiting the tale of *Cinderella* from its simplistic romanticized original version to its multifarious versions showcased in the form of remakes has brought this researcher to the realization that human societies' view of material wealth from then to now has changed. Thus, as Cinderella changes her metaphorical dress to signify how she develops with the changing times, there are also corresponding changes in her viewpoints pertaining to material wealth. Her modern dress demands a paradigm shift in her re-packaging as she contends with contemporary and hard-pressing realities of her time. What has facilitated this researcher's understanding of this somewhat radical depiction of Cinderella in her digitized format or visual novel version is the **Theory of Cultural Materialism** by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels who has posited that human societies tend to put a premium on material wealth and this materialistic propensity is attributed to the interplay of three (3) levels of social systems --- Infrastructure, Structure and Superstructure ("Cultural Materialism"). These three (3) levels provide a universal template in studying and understanding the human materialistic aspirations and show an increment in human needs which usually start with how basic needs are being fulfilled hence called the **infrastructure** and then there is also a need to be part of the society's economic, social, and political organization thus called the structure and then ultimately the highest human materialistic pursuit in this pecking order is the superstructure which includes ideology and symbolism.

It is the belief of this researcher that this materialism is not to be taken literally as a tangible material wealth because what could make a person feel affluent is when he/she privileges himself/herself with the freedom of expression in an opportune setting and when such calculated temerity has taken someone in authority and in power by intelligent and somewhat intimidated surprise (*Cinders*).

CINDERS: I know exactly what you mean, Your Highness. Being raised in a place filled with deceit and spite I learned very well the value of masks. When threatened people would rather

forget who they are than risk being hurt. And if their surroundings require it, they will lose themselves forever, only to survive. We are all slaves to convention --- from a servant to the lord. PRINCE BASILE: I must admit I find that dictum terrifying. That all of us are mere actors on some stage set for us.

While it may appear interesting to study the volatility of *Cinderella's* story and character through *Cinders* as we put her under the literary microscope of New Historicism and Cultural Materialism, it is even more arresting to note that *Cinderella's* Classic narrative flavor can be imbued with the literary recipe of defamiliarization that makes *Cinders's* Prince Basile familiarly reek of *Cinderella's* original creator and simultaneously sounds like a different Basile purposely re-created to be *Cinders's* romantic partner in this visual novel. Thus, the use of Victor Shklovsky's defamiliarization in his **Russian Formalism theory** does justice in making the familiar look unfamiliar or strange and "*to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception*" (Holland & Piero 317). Coupled with this literary theory is John Crowe Ransom's **New Criticism** which underscores the close reading and aesthetic approach to a literary genre, poetry, for instance, as a self contained object (289). This therefore means that the intention of the author is irrelevant and should not be used for evaluating the work (299).

To be able to arrive at the crux of this study, that is, contemporary works of art are inspired by the Classics, Russian Formalism has been utilized as the overarching literary theory. This however does not relegate the importance and relevance of New Historicism and Cultural Materialism in this scholarly endeavor.

This study primarily aims to show the influences of the Classics in inspiring, liberating, and limiting new works of art. Hence, this research objective leads us to following literary questions :

1. What are the elements in the visual novel that reflect Classic Spark and Classic Vestiges?

2. What are the essential and specific differences between the Classic work and its Contemporary counterpart?

## Methods

### **Research Procedure**

Examining a contemporary work of art as to the extent of its Classic inspiration is like having a déjà vu experience. It is like encountering the Classic again. It is like re-inhabiting the literary world you once found yourself into. One of the goals of this study is to view the bearings of the Classic influences and their specific differences from their Contemporary counterparts through an amalgamation of four (4) literary frameworks.

**One** is through the use of Victor Shklovsky's **defamiliarization** in his Russian Formalism theory, specific elements denoting duality of familiarity and unfamiliarity have been identified thus establishing the fact that Contemporary or Millennial works of art have Classic remnants in them (Holland & Piero 317). **Two** is through the use of John Crowe's **Russian Formalism**, specific elements indicating Classic inspiration in them have been recognized as close reading and aesthetic approach have made them obtainable (289). **Three** is through the use of Stephen Greenblatt's **New Historicism**, specific elements reflecting historical changes in the character and presentation of Cinderella through her Contemporary counterpart *Cinders* have been identified thus establishing the fact that Cinderella needs to wear a modern dress and accordingly differentiating this famous fairy tale character through changes caused upon her by time and milieu. Four is through the use of Karl Marx's and Friedrich Engels' **Cultural Materialism**, specific elements signifying *Cinders's* and her co-characters' materialistic aspirations that basically start on their infrastructure level then to the structure level and finally to the superstructure level have been identified to establish that these characters are governed by certain needs and desires that explain their interaction with culture and environment ("Cultural Materialism").

Likewise, these four (4) combined literary frameworks have aided this researcher concretize her research compass in the form of three

(3) **guiding stars**, namely: 1) Classic Spark, 2) Classic Vestiges, and 3) Millennial or Contemporary Differences. The term “guiding stars” has been used as an operative term specific to this study.

Next essential step is delineating these three (3) guiding stars that dovetail to this study’s principal aim: What are the influences of the Classic in inspiring, liberating, and limiting new works of art ?

The three (3) guiding stars are operationally defined as follows:

1. **Classic Spark** refers to the nostalgic creative force that inspires new rendition.
2. **Classic Vestiges** refer to concrete residues or elements of the past that value the continuance of the literary survival of the Classic work.
3. **Millennial or Contemporary Differences** refer to the contrast between the Classic story of Charles Perrault’s *Cinderella* or the *Little Glass Slipper* and its Contemporary by-product *Cinders*.

Therefore, the application of the four (4) literary frameworks can be implemented as follows:

1. Recognize the infusion of defamiliarized elements in the story to show Classic influence.
2. Distinguish each of the three (3) guiding stars by doing a close reading of Perrault’s *Cinderella* and the visual novel *Cinders*.
3. Establish the historical developments of *Cinderella*.
4. Establish the doctrine of materialism to describe the materialistic aspect inherent in the story and its relation to changing time and milieu.

Using Shklovsky’s defamiliarization, Crowe’s Russian Formalism, Greenblatt’s New Historicism and Marx’s and Engel’s Cultural Materialism, the analysis of the visual novel *Cinders* entails the following steps:

1. Trace the historical track of *Cinderella* in multi-media remakes.
2. Identify the elements comprising the Classic Spark.
3. Identify the elements comprising the Classic Vestiges.
4. Contrast the Classic elements from their Millennial or Contemporary counterparts.

5. Evaluate this research journey between *Cinderella* and *Cinders* using a self-created yardstick.

## Result and Discussion

The reading and playing of the visual novel (or video game) *Cinders* necessitates going back to its very Classic root which is Perrault’s *Cinderella*. This tandem of the Classic *Cinderella* and its Contemporary counterpart *Cinders* rationalizes the major premise of this study --- *Yesterday (or the Classics) is today’s inspiration*. And the subtitle *Cinderella wore a modern dress* assumes that whenever Cinderella faces the mirror of time she is compelled to keep up with the vogue of fairy tale writing. Apparently, to prove this transition of *Cinderella* this researcher has to trace her historical track by watching remakes that substantially represent her. And due attention has been given to only those new renditions which could be considered as “pure Cinderella formula” which is from *Elegantly Rich to Ironically Poor to Majestically Rich*.

Knitting together all the metaphorical dresses Cinderella has worn reveals contrasts from each of the recomunicated versions of this fairy tale. First, Cinderella wears the “**Oldest Dress**” in Charles Perrault’s *The Little Glass Slipper* where she is introduced as the remarkable forerunner of stories that celebrates the patient endurance of girls or women in very trying circumstances. Her incredible display of strength and somewhat “otherworldly patience” add beauty to an already amazing story which is probably an epitome of every girl’s dream. Second, Cinderella parades with her “**Modern Business Dress**” in *Steven Salgado’s Cinderella :The Enchanted Beginning* which depicts her as Cinderella Perrault who is the daughter and the only heiress of the business tycoon Perrault. Her father’s death causes her to be unexpectedly placed under the control and vigilance of her extended family. Third, in the Korean television series *Full House*, Ji-eun dons her “**Soap Opera**” dress and relives the *Cinderella* story by working as a house helper in her own house as her desperate solution to recover her deceased parents’ house from the famous showbiz celebrity Young-gae who mistreats her with constant vexation. Nonetheless,

the restoration of Ji-eun's house symbolizes the other mate of the proverbial Cinderella's glass slipper which ushers her to a potential marital union with Young-gae (*Full House*). Fourth, a reconfigured Cinderella shows up in *Hiroshi Sasagawa's Cinderella Monogatari* where Cinderella changes her sartorial image through her "**Anime Dress**" and gets involved in off-the-wall adventures with the Prince while being clueless of his undercover identity as a commoner. Fifth, *Charles S. Dubin's* Broadway musical *Rodgers and Hammerstein* clothes Cinderella in her "**Theatrical Dress**" which situates this fairy tale lady in a serendipity with her future Prince and romantically juxtaposes this Classic duo in finely orchestrated musical scenes. Sixth, *Walt Disney* features Cinderella in her "**Disney Dress**" which allows us to see her musical and magical moments with her talking animal friends. Her every move is watched by her stepmother's feline security officer Lucifer and her unappealing stepsisters. And seventh, *Walter Lang's The Little Princess* presents an English-bred little girl named Sarah walking her way in her "**Little Girl Dress**" to Miss Minchin's boarding school first as a "nobility" but eventually gets denigrated to a servant girl when her father Captain Crewe is reported dead and financially broke. Later, this diminutive girl's dogged determination leads her to the truth about her father's still being alive and the two are heartwarmingly reunited. Walter Lang metaphorizes Captain Crewe as Sarah's Prince for they have just each other to live happily ever after.

Beaconing the research path of this study are the three (3) guiding stars : Classic Spark, Classic Vestiges, and Millennial Differences. Each of these stars reveals concretely the elements that make them up.

The **CLASSIC SPARK** justifies the nostalgic creative force in *Cinders* that inspires this new rendition of *Cinderella*. The **spark of the old**

**successful formula of rags- to- riches motif** has not lost its tried and tested narrative flavor among the general audience even in these modern times. Obviously, *Cinders'* creator Tom Grochowiak demonstrates prowess in surpassing the banality of such a theme by his glaring radical depiction of one of the stepsisters named Sophia whose characterization veers away from Perrault's stepsisters who are known as allies with their mother in fomenting all sorts of misery on Cinderella. Indeed, the fire of these female conspirators seems to be inextinguishable even in this digitized experimental version. Sophia nevertheless ignites the Classic flame of a stepsister in this digitized retelling but her totally divergent personality makes her an interesting character because she discloses to *Cinders* the root of her bitterness. Such unwarranted openness is usually perceived as indicative of weakness and antithetical to the Classic trait of a Cinderella adversary.

When we were children, we lived out in the countryside. Our house wasn't as nice as this one. Our father was a military man. He got himself killed in some war, and that left Mother a widow. Don't be. I hardly saw the man. When he was around, he was like a complete stranger, not a proper father at all. His death meant nothing to us (*Cinders*).

The tension of curiosity over the defamiliarized characters of Basile and Perrault is an illuminant to the **Classic embers of Cinderella's original authors** that have been revived in *Cinders*. Perrault is defamiliarized as Prince Basile's trusted vanguard of peace for the monarchy's subjects. And Prince Basile is defamiliarized as not only His Royal Highness but also the spousal target of the young ladies raring to be the Queen and aspiring to have the affluence that comes with royal image. Hence, their names both sound familiar and unfamiliar.





Fig. 2. Prince Basile (left) and Perrault (right) are illustrations of defamiliarization from: Cinderella

An old movie like Ingmar Bergman's *Cries and Whispers* that displays the Classic Spark of cinematic colors evocative of conflicts has been inspirational in re-living highly-charged emotions in *Cinderella*. Scarlet red, the thematic color background in *Cries and Whispers*, is replicated in a personal soliloquy of Cinderella inside her late father's red-themed defunct office and li-

brary. In this particular scene, Cinderella vehemently insinuates underhanded stewardship of her deceased father's asset. "This is clear enough. In case of father's death, the house is to pass unto Carmosa. But should something happen to her, I'm the next in line. This is not as good as I hoped, but still can turn out to be extremely useful" (*Cinderella*).



Fig. 3. Bergman's *Cries and Whispers* thematic red tone is the inspiration in Cinderella's father's defunct office and library from: Cinderella



Anachronism is a literary fuel used to fire the **Classic Spark of time transposition** in which the 16<sup>th</sup> century Kurosawa's samurais have been infused into the 21<sup>st</sup> century character of *Cinders's* Perrault whose role is reminiscent of the samurais' guiding dictum of protecting people above all else (Ebert, "The Seven

Samurai"). He is dubbed by various epithets in the story such as the First Sword of the Kingdom, Veteran of the Renegade War, Good Old Perrault, and Brave Captain of the Royal Guard that are presumably intended to stress his masculine strength in handling his risky military assignment (Cinders).



Fig. 4. Kurosawa's samurai principle of fighting lawlessness is personified in one male character in *Cinders* from : *Chicago Tribune*



Fig. 5. Perrault, the peacekeeper, is the embodiment of Kurosawa's samurai concept from: *Cinders*

Cinderella may be detestable to modern or contemporary thinkers for her **oversimplified depiction of a woman**, but this is the same Classic Spark that continually lights the fire for her re-invention in a new work of art. The pathos of her female characterization is nevertheless found in Cinders visible through the prism of women emancipation and empowerment.

Her worldview about women is largely influenced by her bibliophile attitude. She reads books with critical awareness of disadvantaged women in particular. *"And a silly book, too. Some adolescent pretty girl and numb as a freshly cut flower, shows divine humility and courage while suffering oppression from her abusive family"*(Cinders)



Fig. 6. A re-invented Cinderella, Cinders, is this visual novel's principal character from: Cinders

The Classic *Cinderella* barely mentions about Cinderella's relationship with her father. But the memory of having a father still resonates this somewhat melancholic nostalgia in the persona of Cinders who keeps fond memories of her late father. *"We always went to the lake-the Magical Lake as he called it --- and left a loaf of bread under the old tree."* Though vaguely & meagerly ascribed to in Perrault's Classic tale, Cinderella's father seems to be a fascinating subject in its digitized remake *Cinders*. The **Classic Spark of a male parent** is re-ignited in Cinders' yearning remembrance of her father's infantile treatment of her, among others. *"Good old folk. He used to tell me stories about the Old Folk even when I was too old to believe them anymore. I miss him so much"*(Cinders).

The Otherworldly element of a **fairy godmother** serves as the tinder to light this Classic Spark. Cinders pays homage to the fairies in

their water habitat. *"Gotta pay tribute to the fairies, you never know when you may need their help"* (Cinders). Just as the fairy godmother in the Classic *Cinderella* augurs a favorable future for her earthly female ward, the Fairy of the Lake bequeaths Cinders's mother's last will which suggests that Cinders must subject herself to their spiritual and moral guidance if she desires a guaranteed future. *"You forgot, but we did not. We honor the Concord with your Mother. We have come because you are in need. We have come because we remember. We offer aid but it has a price. Your mother knew it well---be careful for it may cost you dearly. It's in your blood. Soon, you will be facing a grave choice. We are here. We are offering aid"* (Cinders).

**Endings** usually put a closure of relief to the readers of *Cinderella*. *"She was taken to the young prince, dressed as she was. He thought she was more charming than before, and, a few days after, married her."* Definitely, Cinders does

have an ending but it seems that this Classic Spark has lit a volley of endings in this modern digitized fairy tale version. Astonishingly, *Cinders's* developer Tom Grochowiak has come up with multiple endings to keep the *Cinderella* followers riveted on the digital wonders of this new fairy tale format. "Well, it's the central element of "choose your own adventure" games, and it goes back to our initial idea of a well-known fairytale that you can completely twist around with your decision. We actually came up with all the endings and their variants before the general script was written. This way we could figure out the best/coolest/most subverted outcomes to the original story, and then come up with interesting ways to get there" (Grochowiak).

The extent to which the Classics inspire new works of art can be incalculable. Only the future can tell. And as we look unto the years to come, new thinking will emerge. What most consider as the Classic "musts" in the *Cinderella* fairy tale, might perhaps continue to be stitched in the plot tapestry of the new, upcoming fairy tales which undeniably rekindle the old sentiments of *Cinderella* in them. These literary residues allow the perpetuation and reinvigoration of a Classic work of art hence called **CLASSIC VESTIGES**. And since they are deserving of continuance due to their timelessness and heritage value, it must be noted that there are considerable takeaways that reveal robust scholarly findings.

A retrievable **residual Classic element is the cinders** which serves as a semiotics of hope in this digitized, present-age story. Though disparagingly suggestive of the nothingness that Cinders faces in her new life with her stepmother and stepsisters, the cinders stands for this protagonist's lit-up sanctuary where she can still see the light of hope and direction during her moments of introspection, planning, and goal setting. Her reading routines are made possible because of this cinders's lighting function. Presumably, the moods evoked by the cinders tend to lullaby Cinders to a much-deserved nocturnal sleep after the day's toil. *Although I don't feel so frisky now I could use more beauty sleep. I shouldn't have burned a midnight oil over a book last night*(Cinders). Ergo, without the **Classic**

**artifact of cinders**, there can be no Cinderella and its Cinders's counterpart. Maintaining the root word "cinders" for these individual female protagonist names signifies its innate heritage value despite looming new paradigms.

The **Classic Vestige of the evil stepmother** appears to be not a possible target for inclusion in the Contemporary digital recycle bin. Stepmother like Lady Carmosa continues to be a source of major conflict in this *Cinderella's* new version. For instance, this narrative cannot proceed without this personified Classic bitter pill being forcibly prescribed to suppress the symptoms of rights and power struggles of the stepdaughter Cinders. "I am the rightful owner of this house. And as unfortunate, as it maybe, your father---bless his soul eternal---is dead. No mother would put an orphan before her own children" (Cinders).

Ambition, greed, money, and control are **Classic Vestiges** that continually govern the attitudes of a typical stepmother such as Lady Carmosa. "She used her looks to attract a man of higher status" (Cinders). She is not a far cry from the run-of-the-mill *Cinderella* stepmother. Aware of her two daughters' (*Gloria and Sophia*) feet of clay in comparison to Cinders's intellectual and physical assets, Lady Carmosa insists that her two (2) daughters are both "royal wife materials" for Prince Basile. Whoever between Gloria and Sophia gets to be finally chosen as the Queen is still a "winner takes it all" feat. A **stepmother's standoffish attitude** toward her stepdaughter due to selfish reasons has become a Classic ire. "I see lady. Would you like me to hide in the wardrobe or pretend I'm a statue when the guests come? Or maybe a statue would pose too much of a competition for your charming and intelligent daughters?"(Cinders).

The root of all woes in a *Cinderella*-like story such as *Cinders* is always the marriage for convenience that becomes the foremost motive of any *Cinderella* stepmother. Truly, *Cinders* has the **Classic bearing** of this "**quick rich**" **scheme** that is usually masterminded by the second wife cum second mother. "Oh just be honest! I know your life has been miserable ever since your father married our lovely Mother" (Cinders). And any barriers that could possibly threaten this dream for lasting opulence must be dealt with without delay. So therefore the

first roadblock to this Classic stepmother's full usurpation of inheritance from her departed husband is always her stepdaughter.

Nonetheless, matriarchy usually paves the fairy tale terrain which perhaps explains why men are pictured as incapable of single parenting when confronted with the demise of their partners. Nevertheless, this well-entrenched male character flaw is bound to be carried out even in new versions which foster Classic loyalty to this **"widowed husband" Classic Vestige**. Single parenthood is something that the fathers in *Cinders* and *Cinderella*, respectively are not ready to face by themselves. The widower relinquishes his authority by kowtowing to his new wife. *The poor girl bore it all patiently, and dared not tell her father, who would have scolded her; for his wife governed him entirely* ("The Little Glass Slipper"). Perhaps, such inferior male depiction is meant to show how miserably inadequate a father or a widower thinks of himself for he falls short of the expectations for effective parenting and co-parenting. The Classic Vestige of full exercise of single parenthood by Lady Carmosa is a scourge upon her stepdaughter's orphanhood. *"No not like it matters, anyway. My duties now consist only of doing household chores for my stepmother"* (Cinders).

**Magic** is a **Classic Vestige with ethereal inspiration** on this narrative's female protagonist's ambitions and goals. While hard work does pay off in Cinderella's and Cinders's normal lives, both of them must have realized that their personal objectives are at the mercy of time. Henceforth, supernatural reinforcement presents itself when time puts a pressure on their decision-makings which can make or

break their destinies if not guided by the invisible hands of their mystical allies. The Fairy in *Cinders* first makes her appearance in Cinders's dream as a foreshadowing of her continual unseen support in her life. *"We know you. You don't know us, but you know of us"* (Cinders).

A **royal ball** has become one of the **Classic imperatives** in a *Cinderella*-inspired fairy tale including this subject visual novel or video game. It is usually considered an auspicious time for the lovely female "hopefuls" to display their determination and assets to win the Prince's attention. The royal ball can be considered the crucible for the aspiring Queen. In this modern *Cinderella* story, the Prince embarks into a shortlisting process borne out of his thoughtful criteria-setting. And the royal dance gives him that one-on-one chance to check if a woman meets his matrimonial standards. Cinders's appearance in the royal ball is The Fairy's suggestion. The Fairy emboldens Cinders and builds up her confidence that she can be the Queen in just one week. And this can only happen if she will use her charm, devise a plan, assess her skill and chase her destiny. *"So the truth is this Ball may be my only chance to significantly change my life. I MUST succeed"* (Cinders). Such a statement hints Cinders's intention to dramatically ameliorate her life condition. Also, the **Classic Vestige of a stymieing stepmother** is palpable in this new *Cinderella* version. Lady Carmosa's condescending comments of her stepdaughter are tactically intended to make Cinders think of herself as an outsider in the royal turf. *Will I be going to the ball as well, member of the family that I am? Don't be absurd. Royal affairs aren't your arena* (Cinders).





Fig. 7. The royal dance of fated couple Cinders and Prince Basile is the Classic icebreaker in most Cinderella retellings from: *Cinders*

**Does the shoe fit?** Is reminiscent of any reimagined *Cinderella* story which only shows that this Classic Vestige cannot be cast out in the contemporary oblivion files. The **Classic glass slippers** are usually expected to complete this fairy tale princess's ensemble. They are regarded as her I.D. card but not obviously pinned on her dress but worn on her feet instead. This royal-bound footwear has served the major tracer for Cinders's and Cinderella's exact whereabouts at the time of the Royal Ball and thereafter. These glass slippers usually determine the Classic pathway where they might ultimately lead its authentic owner to.

The **male persona of the Prince** provides the romantic Classic ingredient in *Cinders*. He is the reason why both Cinderella and Cinders have to be aesthetically at their best. He is stereotypically depicted as being lovestruck at the first sight of this phenomenal lady. Despite the modernized characterization of this fated royal wife, the Prince remains to be awestruck by her though in a different degree. *"I must admit you're an intriguing woman, my lady. Very different from the rest of the people who came here today"* (Cinders).

No matter what it may cost Cinderella and her female cohorts, a **happy ending** is a **Classic Vestige** that perpetuates even in

modern retellings. Emancipation from a fettered life is the Classic end goal. Ladies as splendidly rare as Cinderella and Cinders deserve a "happy ending" regardless of how they individually define this generational catchphrase. Cinderella becomes the most eligible woman for the Prince's heart. *"She was taken to the young prince, dressed as she was. He thought she was more charming than before, and, a few days after, married her."* ("The Little Glass Slipper"). On the other side of this Classic ending is one of its multiple digitized endings though a shocking one. This maybe a happy ending for Cinders but not necessarily for those who have gotten used to the widely-accepted definition of the so-called happy ending. Cinders is at the helm of her noble house after her murder of her stepmother. She capitalizes on her successful impression management during the Grand Ball thus restoring her family's high-society reputation in the Kingdom. Unlike the conventional expectation for this single lady to have her love partner for life, Cinders never meets Mr. Love. Eventually, she enters into a practical decision of marrying the heir of a noble house. It is a marriage that combines their wealth and power. The royal couple manages to coexist on the mutual agreement of respect. Albeit happy



as a couple, their relationship is merely skin deep and platonic (Cinders).

Therefore, the **Classic Vestiges** are evidences of the lingering presence of the *Cinderella* staple and conventional elements in any re-incarnated version of it. They are indisputably recognizable residues of the Classic *Cinderella*. Re-presenting them in today's platforms liberates new works of art because they help jump start any writer's creative juices. Some Classics have already enjoyed a prior acceptance and a new work based on it has a high likelihood of being accepted, too.

What is the extent of the **narrative divergence** of this visual novel *Cinders* from its Classic counterpart *Cinderella* that proves their contrasts? Such differences are couched in the phrase **Millennial Differences** to distinctively set them apart from their Classic source or inspiration. Chiefly, the **digital platform** visual novel gives opportunities for an extensive scope of these differentiations between the Classic *Cinderella* and its digital counterpart *Cinders*. It is fairly logical that a new fairy tale platform befits its exploration to complete the presentation of this fresh digital offering. Henceforth, the term "visual novel" starkly shows its contrasts from its fairy tale twin. The plot moves from route to route in a visual novel in which the playing and reading are exercised by the participant as opposed to a fairy tale that moves in a linear fashion that the reader has to come along with.

Prominently featured in this visual novel is the **depiction of its female protagonist** who is remotely dissimilar from the traditional *Cinderella* who possesses the gentleness and nicety of a well-bred daughter pleasantly helpful to her two (2) stepsisters in their prepping up for the Royal Party and also in ensuring their welfare even after she gets married to the Prince. *"Indeed, she even offered her services to fix their hair, which they very willingly accepted. Cinderella, who was no less good than beautiful, gave her two sisters lodgings in the palace, and that very same day matched them with two great lords of the court"* ("The Little Glass Slipper"). However, *Cinders* is shown as someone who is more mindful of herself particularly her "escape plan". *"I'm afraid you're right Ghede.*

*Carmosa is my main obstacle and I won't go any further without removing her first"* (Cinders).

**Characterization of pivotal male characters** tends to result in a fairly interesting **narrative chasm** because of the patriarchal underpinnings for the Classic male figures in *Cinderella* in which the commendatory regard for the men is highly based on their acquired wealth while Prince Basile in *Cinders* is someone who can be adulated for his perceptiveness and straightforwardness in his views about the monarchy and the aspiring Queen. *"The monarchy is weak, without a king, and the nobles around me are plotting to advance themselves. They grow their daughters like prized spaniels in the hopes that I'll be taken by a pretty face"* (Cinders).

The **proverbial glass slipper** has its stamp of the **Millennial Difference** because of how it is contrastively regarded in its Classic and Contemporary portrayals. While it is a sacred artifact in *Cinderella*, it is however something that becomes a source of foot discomfort to *Cinders* who throws it away due to its ill fit after it has served its sartorial purpose. *"I'll just head back home—I got what I wanted right? Besides these shoes are killing me. What are they made of? Blasted thing, it's the left one that almost got my skin. Let's see if I can send you flying the wall, shall we? There! And stay there!"* (Cinders).

**Upon whose hands do the fates of Cinderella and Cinders depend?** In the case of the former it is determined by the author while in the latter it is determined by the players and readers, concurrently who decide on this famous lady's narrative path based on their visual novel navigation. In a visual novel, the female lead's fate is fluid due to the players'/readers' **narrative autonomy** which is exercised at their own pleasure because this modern genre somehow bestows the privilege of co-authorship in the plot movement. The feature of a "route" acts as a decision point in the visual novel in which the players cum readers take chances in the possible outcomes of their decision-makings. While there may be "narrative risks" which can subvert the fates of the characters or somewhat place them at a disadvantaged condition, there is a concomitant power that they are able to enjoy as a perk for being digitally engaged.

The **tone of the story** puts a **Millennial boundary** between the old and the new *Cinderella* editions. While it behooves that a quixotic view of life seems to be working well for the Classic recipe, such starry-eyedness may not entirely suit the modern taste and stimulate the appetite of the contemporary fairy tale followers. On the flipside, Cinders's independent thinking and head-on approach to a situation are proofs of the story's predominant realistic or close-to-life tone. *"I think that sometimes we have to deal with the unknown and take the risk. If Mum was brave enough to take the plunge, I am too. I will pay the price"* (Cinders).

Curiously, notions about beauty have been changing from one generation of *Cinderella* fictionalizing hence these chronologically-evolving **beauty paradigms** reveal **Millennial Differences**. Classically speaking, beauty both inside and out is a prized asset; an undeniable magnet; an attention-getting attribute; and a nagging threat to a fellow woman's ambitious desire to be noticed first by a common love target. These are what make Cinderella a **"wife material"** and a **"fairy godmother's protégé."** *"She could not bear the good qualities of this pretty girl, and the less because they made her own daughters appear the more odious"* ("The Little Glass Slipper"). However, contemporarily speaking, beauty with brains is a more valued possession, a good conversationalist's weaponry to dominate the royal stage, a competitive advantage in this dog-eat-dog world and an unshakeable remnant of the Prince's sifting of his shortlisted spousal choices. These are what set Cinders apart from Cinderella in the "beauty category" and what likewise make her the most likely **"target of the Prince's critical mind"** and a **"fairy's bet for royal ascension"** (Cinders).

CINDERS: "I must have read a few books but I'm not a politician. I can speak generally on injustices that require mending or errors which need to be corrected. I believe the Kingdom would benefit from reforms and a more modern style of government."

PRINCE BASILE: "Isn't that a polite way of saying that the monarchy is obsolete?"

CINDERS: "Not necessarily. An enlightened ruler may balance novelty and freedom with stability and tradition. As long as he keeps those who could threaten him either too satisfied or too afraid to rise up against him."

PRINCE BASILE: "Against him or her, I would add."

CINDERS: "Yes. Gender plays no role in such matters. At least we have equity."

PRINCE BASILE: "I must admit you're an intriguing woman, my lady. Very different from the rest of the people who came here today."

**Conflicts** are what usually gravitate the attention in any *Cinderella* retelling which further prove their **narrative dissimilarities** from one another. The kneejerk rift between Cinderella and her wicked stepmother and the latter's female progenies has become a mundane expectation among their followers. But *Cinders* offers more than the usual conflicts which we can consider to have more inimical implications on how its lead character would be able to safeguard herself from the threats, struggles, and dangers challenging her self-empowerment efforts. Matters like family inheritance, royal ambition, emancipation goal, and truth exposure, among others remarkably attest to its contrasts with *Cinderella's*. And its very creator Tom Grochowiak has intentionally garbed Cinders with attitudes that make her notably disparate. *"This was the core idea: the game is about growing up as modern women. Just presented in a fairytale setting, to make it easier to talk about sensible subject. We despised the original Cinderella's message of "be a good girl and withstand every abuse and you'll find a rich husband", and wanted to twist things around to show different sides of the story and the more complex reality of struggling between freedom and society's expectations that modern women have to face"* (Grochowiak).

The **demeanor of Cinderella and Cinders** during the Ball, respectively lends this Classic tale an intriguing charm. While the Classic Cinderella has the politesse of a royal princess and a determined anonymity during the royal event, nonetheless Cinders's bearing is an attention-drawer. Emotions tend to rise when

she is strutting on the royal foyer. Her stepsister Gloria cannot deny this. "*Mother, look! There's some commotion in the ballroom. I think someone important has arrived*" (Cinders). Her unforeseen appearance in the royal ball inflicts a vexing effect on her stepmother Lady Carmosa.

Lady Carmosa: Cinders?!

Cinders: Carmosa. Girls. Are you enjoying the Ball? I certainly am.

Lady Carmosa: Brazen little brat! How dare you come here, show off in front of the Prince like some harlot, and steal his attention away from my daughters! (Cinders).

Dissimilitude in female conduct and thinking are noticeably attributable to the changing times. Cinders, unlike Cinderella, is a go getter and banks on her compelling physicality and wit enough to make her absence yearningly felt. Certainly, it is the Prince's order to have her hunted down. "*Good evening, Lady Carmosa. Ladies. I'm looking for Cinders. Do you know where I could find her?*" (Cinders).

The **idea of privacy** is equivocally presented in both the Classic and present-time version of *Cinderella*. Self-disclosure to a stranger is not Cinderella's cup of tea. She is the type who would rather recoil in tears rather than resort to a "tell-all" scheme. Thanks to her fairy godmother's wheedling! She trustingly opens up. "*I wish I could. I wish I could.*" She was not able to speak the rest, being interrupted by her tears and sobbing. This godmother of hers, who was a fairy, said to her, "*You wish that you could go to the ball; is it not so?*" "*Yes,*" cried Cinderella, with a great sigh. "*Well,*" said her godmother, "*be but a good girl, and I will contrive that you shall go*" ("The Little Glass Slipper"). Cinders, however, shows a counterpoint of privacy, that is, frankness leads to one's liberation. The truth about herself might exonerate her from her extended family's clutches if she will act on it (Cinders).

Prince Basile: That is strange, I've never heard of a noble house with three daughters and no father. I recall one family of a widow with two daughters, though.

Cinders: Car-- I mean, Stepmother doesn't see me as one of her daughters.

She allows me to stay in her house under one condition: I work as a servant for bed and board.

Judging from the **aforsaid Millennial Differences**, *Cinderella* has the high potential of narrative adaptability hence making way for reconceived versions of it. This does not mean writers have to go back to the drawing board whenever the gravity of a Classic fairy tale recreation tends to pull them towards this artistic direction. However, re-writing the Classics to suit a new platform could consequently raise the question --- **To what extent do the Classics limit new works of art?**

Apparently, the Classics limit the writer's creative vision within the bounds of the *Cinderella* universe. It can be seen that it is not actually a harmful limitation. For example, if you are uncertain to chart your way in the waters of creative imagination, at least someone like *Cinderella* can give you a hand. If you find yourself trapped within a writer's block, at least someone like *Cinderella* can also give you a hand. Having an adventure with her could mean that all things you could experience will have the stamp of *Cinderella* but at least it is a limitation that leads to some liberation.

At the end of this visual novel journey, one cannot help but delve into an immediate but mindful contrastive analysis of how one literary experience differs from the other. How does the conventional reading of *Cinderella* distinguish itself from playing it in the modern age? Obviously, without the force of curiosity one would not have known the "good from the better" and the "more from the much more." And for this distinction to be established, this writer has one key word to set particular elements or qualities apart --- appeal.

**Insight appeal** raises the bar of fairy tale personal enrichment. The digitized experience of moving from one route to the other where players have the "narrative say" in the plot movement of *Cinders* cannot be negligible. Following the plot progression in *Cinders* is like following the *Pied Piper of Hamelin*. The piper plays so well the tune that lures others unwary of where they would be taken to. Any first timer in the visual novel playing would be another Pied Piper victim but not a dead one though. Ironically, the victim cum player becomes the

victor at the end. Why? There is no dead end. This advanced fairy tale re-encounter tends to spur the narrative hunting for what comes next.

**Duration appeal** brings the issue of extent of participant/player engagement. Who would have imagined that fairy tale reading can now be fairy tale playing? Trekking the diverse terrains of *Cinderella* and *Cinders* would depend on the individual's "wonder level." Reading the story of *Cinderella* offers an absolutely expedient experience as opposed to several hours of playing its digital counterpart *Cinders* which can unavoidably stimulate the appetite to want for more while being embroiled in its web of conflicts that are arresting to the players.

At the end of it all, the dual journey of reading and playing a fairy tale is never futile. The by-product is a literary experience that adds premium to the study and appreciation of the heritage value of the Classics.

## Conclusion

*Cinderella* embodies most Classic works. Its manifold themes that depict the broad scope of human drama have been intertwined into new works of art with innovative touch that reflects the dynamism of this fairy tale as its legacy perpetuates. The creative experiment on its digitized edition *Cinders* is something that can be looked back to as the tradition of fairy tale writing leads us from one historical developments to the other. These developments are presented in groundbreaking platforms that have the potential of influencing future writers to step into the world of the Classics and make literary inroads to sustain the creative flow.

As Cinderella does her wardrobe change to fit the modern taste and paradigm in fairy tale writing, she may have to consider upsizing her dress collection and preserve her oldest dress which can be regarded as an enduring reminder that new renditions of this Classic are inspired by it. It appears that any modern dress has recognizable remnants of the old original design which serves as its working pattern. And the same impression goes with modern fairy tale writing which tends to fall back on the Classics for story writing stimuli that help propel its creative momentum.

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