

Luis Perez

Dr. Booth

English M01B

13 February 2022

Essay #1: My Cinderella Story

From kindergarten to eighth grade, I was one of five Hispanic Americans at a school in which the enrollment was over two-thirds Caucasian. As if belonging to a distinct ethnic group did not segregate me enough, I also happened to be a part of one of the few low-income families in the area. What seemed to further complicate my situation was that I always treated my classmates with the utmost respect, but never had the favor reciprocated. In Charles Perrault's "Cinderella; or, The Little Glass Slipper" (1697), Cinderella, like myself, is of a lower socioeconomic status than her loved ones, but chooses to view her distinctions as assets, rather than defects. Seeking the acceptance of others was a desire that nearly defined the course of my childhood years, but little did I know, it was my inner "Cinderella" that allowed me to portray the admirable characteristics that my peers seemed to envy.

Social injustice is an aspect of my early life that relates to the undesirable circumstances of Cinderella. The protagonist, herself, is a symbol of humility and resilience as she is able to withstand the discriminatory and inequitable treatment she receives from her stepmother and sisters. Cinderella does all she can to be awarded a high regard from her counterparts, but somehow manages to gather their negative attention in the process, simply because she is not provided the same opulent commodities as the rest. Thus, the character also symbolizes economic prejudice and discrimination. Cinderella performs every impractical drudgery around

the home, from cleaning to preparing attire and meals. Even with benevolent intentions, she continues to undergo taunting from her stepsisters, being told “[i]t would make the people laugh to see a Cinderwench” in public, which the poor girl responds to by remaining pacifistic because “[a]nyone but Cinderella would have fixed their hair awry, but she was very good, and dressed them perfectly well” (Perrault 1). Genuine acceptance from others, which is a human necessity, marks an area of improvement for not just Cinderella, but myself as well. I recall a situation in which my peers were playing basketball at recess. Only the most reputable children were selected by the team captains, in the order of most popular to least popular. Predictably, I was the last child remaining since I had torn shoes, a hand-me-down sweater, and spoke broken English. Clothing serves as an outlet through which Perrault explores social status in 17th-century France. Cinderella’s stepsisters utilize their money and accessories as tools to segregate the protagonist as a serving person with a low personal worth. Likewise, my friends viewed my clothing as representing my worthlessness. The situation escalated to the point where both teams argued over who would get stuck with the stereotypical poor Mexican child on their team; that was the stereotype they were familiar with and that was the costume I wore. Anyone else in my position would have told a supervisor or even retaliated, but because I still yearned for the acceptance of my classmates, I did not dare to take such actions. However, also like Cinderella, I did not let such hatred change nor contaminate my virtuous intentions. Although it was economic prosperity that allowed my peers to obtain prestigious self-images, it was not economic prosperity that would ever allow them to be as moral and generous as I was.

My life took a turn one Saturday evening in early 2017, when my father came home from work with news I will never forget. Due to his commitment and strong work ethic, the car

dealership he worked at offered him a promotion: his monthly income was going to triple in amount, meaning that he would be able to afford a new home for the family in a matter of months. Just under a year later, I moved into a neighborhood that was considerably more affluent than my previous one. Experiencing such a shift in socioeconomic status was comparable to Cinderella's acquiring of the glass slipper. Such an article of clothing symbolically represents the protagonist's entrance into a new world of social acceptance. When narrating the moment in which it is discovered who the slipper belongs to, Perrault observes that Cinderella's stepsisters "threw themselves" in front of the protagonist "to beg pardon for all the ill treatment they had made her undergo" (Perrault 3). For Cinderella, being the owner of the glass slipper indicates that she will marry the prince, ultimately achieving her happily-ever-after. Consequently, the character has the opportunity to turn her newly acquired wealth into a mended relationship with her stepsisters. In my own transition from poor to wealthy, I also began attracting the positive attention of those who had once marginalized me because of my race and family's financial instability. In spite of the fact that they claimed to have misjudged me and desired to become my friends, I knew the intentions behind their behavior were not genuine. However, I chose to accept them into my social circle. I would have done anything to gain their acceptance years prior, and therefore refused to let my money change who I had been all along. Just as Cinderella is, I am an individual who possesses moral, rather than monetary beauty.

My "Cinderella" story will conclude the day that social injustice is likewise eliminated. From a young age, I was aware of the many circumstantial factors that segregated me from the other children. My inner "Cinderella", however, remained consistent in prompting me to be faithful to my values and use these to earn the acceptance of those I once saw as my superiors.

Perrault's tale remains one of the most popular versions of the "Cinderella" story for an outstanding reason: people still need to learn about and attempt to dismantle the biased, oppressive, and long-lasting standard of social acceptance, and observe that beauty and wealth have no correlation.

Word Count: 979

Works Cited

Perrault, Charles. "Cinderella; or, the Little Glass Slipper." University of Pittsburgh, [sites.pitt.edu/~dash/perrault06.html](http://sites.pitt.edu/~dash/perrault06.html). Accessed 2 February 2022.