Returning to the Scene of the Crime: The Brothers Grimm and the Yearning for Home

Maureen Clack
University of Wollongong


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RETURNING TO THE SCENE OF THE CRIME:
THE BROTHERS GRIMM
AND THE YEARNING FOR HOME

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the degree

MASTER OF ARTS (HONOURS)

from

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by

MAUREEN CLACK, BACHELOR OF ARTS (HONOURS)

FACULTY OF CREATIVE ARTS

2006
CERTIFICATION

I, Maureen Clack, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Arts (Honours), in the Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Maureen Clack

31 October 2006
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In conclusion, I would like to dedicate this project to Connor, my warrior with a kind heart, and Rachael, my independent princess, for making my house a home.
Thesis Abstract

Almost two hundred years ago, in 1812, two German brothers, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, collected folk stories, and revised and published them in a book of fairy tales. The publication, Grimm’s Fairy Tales, remains amongst the best sellers in contemporary western children’s literature despite increasing feminist concerns that the tales deliver outdated and inappropriate patriarchal messages. This thesis seeks to discover what other messages are contained in the tales that are enticing and strong enough to over-rule the well supported feminist warnings.

Considering that most support for the tales praises their value in regard to the psychological development of children, and acknowledging the psychological premise that childhood experiences determine later adult behaviour, this paper proposes that events in the Grimm Brothers’ own childhood dictated the themes of the tales and the messages they contain.

After establishing the connection between fairy tales and the crime fiction genre and then providing a forensic reading of the tales, a less emotive reading which isolates the various parts of the story and sifts through the details for hidden evidence, this paper will show that the death of their father in Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm’s early years, and the consequent loss of the family home and social status, together with the responsibility that these events placed on their young shoulders, provided the reoccurring theme of the tales: the attempt by a young protagonist to regain or replace a lost home, and to re-establish a family.

A similar forensic review of artwork by several contemporary visual artists who have used childhood as a theme for their work further demonstrates that childhood trauma can be a catalyst for creative practice. The works investigated in this paper were selected from two contemporary exhibitions: Scene of the Crime, Armand
Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center, Los Angeles, 1997; and *Mixed-up Childhood*, Auckland Art Gallery, 2005. In addition to these works several of Louise Bourgeois’ sculptures and drawings which, by her own admission, refer to unhappy childhood memories are compared and contrasted with the works constructed by Javier Lara Gomez, who created happy and peaceful “homes” from memory and longing whilst an inmate in Sydney’s Long Bay maximum security prison. Reflecting the Grimm’s creative endeavours and the practice of the visual artists whose work is discussed in the paper, the artworks in the accompanying exhibition, *Defective Stories*, investigate the conflicting construct of home as a haven and home as a site of trauma, in fairy tales and our own childhood experiences.

By launching a forensic investigation into the role of the home in Australian society from the early days of colonial settlement to the present, a period of approximately two hundred years which corresponds to the lifetime of Grimm’s *Fairy Tales*, the paper will also demonstrate that the psychological need for a safe haven is inherent in all humans, child or adult. Furthermore, it will explain how a capitalist society that depends on consumption for survival exploits this need through the exaggeration of external dangers and the promotion of products that promise security. Adults are enticed to invest in larger, safer homes, which are increasingly self contained and ensure protection from the supposed threats of an alternative society while the financial and emotional pressures of such existence create a bubbling pot of tension within those walls; children are cajoled by fairy tales that convince them they are able to secure and defend their own safe haven (and themselves) in a threatening world when the adult population fails them.
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Introduction

Fairy Tales, Feminism, Forensic Science and Home

*If one agrees that childhood is a critically impressionable time of life, especially in terms of forming sexual identity, and if popular fairy tales consistently present an image of heroines that emphasise their beauty, patience, and passivity, then the potential impact of such tales cannot be ignored.*

Kay F. Stone. 407.

In Germany, in 1812, two German brothers, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, published a book of fairy tales. According to the Grimms, these stories were founded on ancient folktales, and were intended to provide a blueprint for a new national German identity. However, rather than the flexible, oral stories that related to all aspects of peasant life the tales became fixed accounts of nineteenth century bourgeois ideology (Rolleke 103-104). As written texts, the fairy tales have retained patriarchal messages, which suggest that the only good woman is the housewife, and the only marriageable girl is a pretty and submissive one (Zipes, 1986 7). These outdated and inappropriate gender biased messages have incited much criticism in the latter part of the twentieth century, particularly from feminists (Tatar, 1987 139; Bottigheimer 94; Cranny-Francis, 1990 85; Gyrusin 54).

Regardless of the substantial, well-supported feminist critique, the Grimm’s Fairy Tales have survived for two hundred years and remain amongst the best sellers in children’s literature in the western world today. Considering the importance of the home throughout the Grimm’s tales (Propp 58), this thesis will investigate the home as safe haven and the home as a site of trauma, and will propose that the foremost message in the tales is a promise of re-establishing a lost home. Supported by psychological references to childhood trauma (van der Kolk, van der Hart, and Marmer 306-307) the paper will also review the work of several contemporary visual artists, including Louise Bourgeois, Tracey Moffatt, Paul McCarthy and
brothers, Jake and Dinos Chapman, who have drawn on childhood experiences for their inspiration.

For a feminist artist, with grandchildren who love to hear the classic fairy tales, such as Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, and Snow White, the apparent failure of the feminist critique to successfully discredit the tales, despite well-substantiated claims of gender bias, not only elicited concern, but also inspired the exhibition, Defective Stories. Founded on the role of home in fairy tales, considering that my artwork, driven by a background in psychology and sociology, has focused for many years on feminist issues related to the home, and acknowledging the fact that differences in gender roles usually stem from childbearing and rearing, it seems plausible to seek the answer to this dilemma in the domestic arena. Consequently, I developed the artworks in the accompanying exhibition, Defective Stories, in conjunction with the research paper to investigate and compare the role of the home in Grimm’s Fairy Tales and the home of the fifties, my childhood home, in an attempt to discover what other messages the tales might contain that are strong enough to over-rule the feminist warnings. Together with an investigation of the origins of fairy tales and their adaptation and manipulation by the Grimm brothers, and a review of the feminist critiques and the psychological arguments that counter them, this thesis will investigate the home as haven and the home as a site of trauma. The following passage, my response to one of the finished works, Traveller’s Rest, which is part of the exhibition, clearly illustrates the confusing construct of “home” (fig 1, page 3).

The house is a simple cottage, a settler’s cottage which evokes images of the Australian outback and the early homesteader’s life; a home which promises luxury-free shelter and respite from the harshness of the elements and the day’s work. Appearing as it does at the end of a narrow road, which has wound its way through and eventually emerged from a dark and dangerous forest the cottage suits its surroundings and supports its title Traveller’s Rest. Because of its precarious position atop a pedestal, the style of the house is important. If a luxury hotel were
Fig. 1. Maureen Clack. Traveller’s Rest. 2006. Acrylic paint on timber, canvas, brass fittings, brass nails. 149 x 32 x 25cm.
to occupy this elevated position, although a welcome sight, it may be suspiciously viewed as a mirage, or at the least seem rather daunting and inaccessible. To a weary peasant traveller or lost child the simplicity of the cottage would be more familiar and acceptable.

The first aspect of the house to impress the traveller or viewer, and perhaps the most important, is the verandah. Because it is neither completely internal nor completely external space, but a bridging area between the two, it offers safety, both in the form of shelter and the opportunity for escape if required. The front verandah of my childhood home, which was originally open to the street, was closed in by my father to provide a sunroom protected from the elements, but as a child I did not appreciate the value of this addition. For me it seemed that the main purpose of these alterations was to prevent unauthorised adventuring into the dangerous world outside. Later, a back verandah, which was also closed in, was added to the house to supply additional family space. This was the area where, as a teenager, I practised guitar and set up my easel, but my strongest memories of it spring from the time when I was much younger, before it was completed and still partially open to the outside world.

As the result of contracting poliomyelitis I was unable to engage in the same degree of physical activity as my friends, and spent more time than the others indoors. Before my father completed the backroom, when it consisted only of the floor, frame, and roof, but was still without walls, I spent much of this confinement playing in the semi-open space. I enjoyed it most on rainy days. Like many western children of my generation I grew up listening to and reading fairytales and with the aid of a set of three plastic bears I re-enacted the story of Goldilocks in several different versions. I could sit protected from the rain, under the shelter of the unfinished verandah, while leaning through the incomplete wall frame to the puddle outside, thus exposing my bears to the adventures that I was denied. *Domus Ursidae*, the bears’ house, was the first piece to be made in this body of work and the spikes hidden in the fur-lined interior of the shelter attest to my to ambiguous
response to the safe surroundings of my home. Since few other children were allowed to play outdoors in the rain, on these days I did not feel quite so isolated. Forensis Publicus, which takes its name from the open Roman courts, and alludes to the investigative process undertaken in the thesis, is the only piece in the exhibition that does not represent a fairytale. Its open walls replicate the unfinished verandah and the waterfall alludes to rainy days. Forensis Publicus, which will be discussed, along with the other works in the exhibition, in chapter four, ponders on that period of my life and the legacy that remains (fig. 2, page 6).

To the lost traveller who stumbles across the cottage at the edge of the woods the semi-open space of the verandah offers the opportunity for a closer look, without fully breaching the private space of the owner or committing oneself to enter. Once on the verandah of this simple home the visitor notices a table laden with fruit. Such a sight supports the belief that this house will supply much needed replenishment, and born from this need, although unsubstantiated, reinforces the idea that one is welcome, perhaps even encouraging the visitor to relax a little and drop their guard. This is not the only purpose of the table of goodies: it also serves as a distraction. Placed as it is in front of the window and away from the door, approaching the table positions the visitor with their back to the door and temporarily draws their gaze from the window, thus providing enough time for the owner of the house to emerge before the stranger looks up through the window and discovers what is inside (fig. 3, page 7).

Suspense in the story may be at its peak at this moment, but in the gallery, viewing the work, our suspense is quickly, though not happily, relieved. Looking around at the other pieces we are reminded that, on a conscious level, this house represents a fairytale and simple observation and deduction will quickly determine the tale to be that of Hansel and Gretel, the children left by desperate parents to perish in the woods. The starving children were lured, with the help of a candy house, into the
Fig. 2. Maureen Clack. Forensis Publicus. 2006. Acrylic and enamel paint on timber, ceramic tiles, brass fittings. 156 x 28 x 26cm.
Fig. 3. Maureen Clack. Traveller’s Rest. 2006. Detail.
clutches of a witch who intended to eat them. We know without needing to look through the window what we will see inside. Despite this knowledge, however, our morbid curiosity, like Hansel and Gretel’s hunger, coerces us to throw the last remaining thread of caution to the winds as we peer into the house and view our fate. Inside there is a chair and another table which at first glance appears to be set for a meal but as our eyes adjust to the dim light we see that the meal is finished and only bones remain. More bones are contained in a bucket and scattered on the floor, and just at the moment when we notice that the back windows of the cottage are barred and offer no alternative exit we realise that the bones are too large to be from any usual meal. Now, too late to escape, and in response to the firm pressure of a bony hand on our shoulder, we turn as if in slow motion, and come face to face with the old woman who lives in the house. Smiling a smile that will never be forgotten she ushers us inside and closes the door behind us (fig. 4, Page 9).

On the corner of my street, four houses down from the family home of my childhood, stood the witch’s house. Similar in style and age to my own, a Californian bungalow built solidly in double brick, the house presented one difference: as a corner house it had almost four times the street frontage of the other houses and consequently took much longer to pass, even when we ran. To add to the anxiety that this created the house was enclosed on one side, the long side, by a high paling fence, complete with thick, dark overhanging bushes. Disturbed by any slight movement, these bushes murmured secrets far too frightening to acknowledge, so running past meant also covering our ears in whatever manner possible, given school bags and tennis rackets to juggle. The anxiety for me was exacerbated by the fact that because of the polio my running was slow and awkward and I was prone to falling down. In the long, seemingly never-ending time it took to struggle to my feet I imagined all manner of horrible tortures that were about to befall me, and like the fate that awaited Hansel and Gretel, my imagined destiny always ended at dinnertime, with me as the main course.
Fig. 4. Maureen Clack. Traveller’s Rest. 2006. Detail.
My worst fears were realised one afternoon as we walked home from school. As we neared the house on the corner, only a short distance from our homes and safety, the “witch”, who was standing in the front yard, beckoned us over. When we were near enough to hear her she told us that she had come home from shopping and found her front door ajar. Feigning fear, she asked us to go inside and see if the intruder was still there. Obviously a trick to trap us! I will never know if it was the good manners that our parents tried to instil in us (which usually, if reluctantly, surfaced in the interaction with adults), our inquisitive natures, or just plain fear that edged us slowly up the steps. Propelled to the front of the group, by the bravery of others rather than my own, I tentatively poked a head around the door (with feet still firmly planted on the mat outside), declared that the house was empty, and then we ran for our lives. Like Hansel and Gretel, (who killed their tormentor) we escaped, but the experience left a sobering life-long memory, as the construction of the artwork has shown. After all our childhood fantasies, the house had become an actual site of trauma for us, just as the elderly widow’s safe haven, her shelter from the hurtful pranks of children, had become a site of trauma for her.

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm’s previously happy childhood home became a site of trauma for them at an early age, with the death of their father and the consequent loss of that home (Zipes, 2002a 2-3). As previously stated, this thesis will argue that the brother’s unconscious need to re-establish their home was the purpose for writing the fairy tales. To further support this claim and demonstrate the impact that early experience bears on later adult activities, the paper will draw on psychological references to childhood trauma and review the work of several visual artists who have drawn on childhood for their inspiration, including Paul McCarthy, Tracey Moffatt and Jake and Dinos Chapman. These artists were included in two contemporary exhibitions: Scene of the Crime, held at the Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Centre in Los Angeles, in 1997, which features artworks that deal with distressing or confusing memories, quite often related to childhood (Rugoff 20); and Mixed-up Childhood, held at the Auckland Art Gallery in 2005, which focuses on work that addresses early life experiences (Craw and
Leonard 131). In addition to the works from the group exhibitions, buildings that recall a happier home, constructed by Javier Lara-Gomez while he was an inmate in Sydney’s Long Bay Gaol (Caper 82), will be compared with several drawings and sculptures made by renowned twentieth century French born sculptor, Louise Bourgeois, to address unhappy memories from her childhood (Storr 40).

Acclaimed child psychologist, Bruno Bettelheim, whose book, The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales (1976), encouraged a revived interest in the classic fairy tale in the late twentieth century, explains that life is often distressing for children, and in order to gain satisfaction rather than disappointment they need to find meaning. Bettelheim argues that to achieve this they must find a way to make sense of the complexities of society and their own often-bewildering feelings, and fairy tales offer a framework in which to work out their confusing emotions (4-5). Although there are many modern children’s books and films that also act as a guide for children, while still encouraging appropriate contemporary behaviour, such as the award winning new classic, Possum Magic, 1989, written by Mem Fox, to cite just one, they are not part of the inquiry in this paper. If anything, since they are promoted by child educators, and readily available, they add weight to the dilemma: given the outdated and inappropriate messages that classic fairy tales contain, why do these less suitable tales remain amongst the best sellers in western societies, when more contemporary models are available?

Since neither the feminist arguments against the suitability of the tales for contemporary western children, founded on their patriarchal lore, nor the psychological evaluations that support the tales as valuable guides for emotional development, can completely discredit each other, the social value of the tales will also be considered. The major proponents from each of these disciplines will be discussed in chapter one. Since the contemporary feminist critique of fairy tales, which began in the early 1970s, is too widespread to investigate fully within the limits of this paper, the thesis will focus mainly on the arguments of those feminist...
writers, such as Maria Tatar (1987 139), Ruth B. Bottigheimer (94), and Anne Cranny-Francis (1992 79), who have challenged Bettelheim’s support for the tales, which relies on Oedipal interpretations (5-6). The chapter will then demonstrate how, despite indicating some support for the psychological benefits of the literary fairy tale, the general evaluation by sociologists and cultural theorists concurs with the feminist claims that fairy tales teach inappropriate and biased gender roles. In view of the fact that professor of German literature and social historian, Jack Zipes, has written in excess of a dozen books on the history and criticism of fairy tales, and that the majority of texts which address their social implications have not been translated from German, the paper will refer quite often to Zipes interpretations of the genre, focusing on the following books: Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion. The Classic Genre for Children and the Process of Civilisation, 1991; Happily Ever After. Fairy Tales, Children and the Culture Industry, 1997; The Great Fairy Tale Tradition. From Straparola and Basille to the Brothers Grimm, 2001; and Breaking the Magic Spell. Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tale, 2002.

Considering that the tales have retained their popularity, regardless of well-supported feminist critique, for two centuries, the thesis argues that fairy tales must contain other appealing messages that are strong enough to over-rule the feminist warnings. Given that Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm wrote adventure stories that involved deceitful and villainous acts; the works in the accompanying exhibition are a reconstruction of criminal events from their fairy tales; prison art program participant, Lara-Gomez created his models from a prison cell; and Bourgeois referred to her childhood as “the scene of the crime” (Rinder 24), it seems appropriate that the search for meaning should be forensic in nature. My choice of a forensic approach to the investigation may also be attributed to many years spent as a guide-lecturer at the Justice and Police Museum in Sydney. In this paper, the term “forensic” is being used literally, as a legal term which relates to scientific formal debate and critical argument, and not as it is commonly suggested in popular culture, as always involving dead bodies (even though there are bodies to be discovered in fairy tales).
To further justify the use of the more clinical and less emotive method of inquiry, which will investigate and collate the evidence from several different perspectives in order to uncover the elusive answer to the feminist dilemma, the paper will compare the development and style of the literary fairy tale with the crime fiction genre; an investigation that will expose many similarities between the two. It will demonstrate that classic fairy tales are not really analogous with any other literary genre apart from crime fiction: beside the intrigue and adventure, and the confrontation between good and evil, which was the original catalyst for the birth of the crime fiction genre, fairy tales are awash with violence (Cranny-Francis, 1990 144). Of particular interest in fairy tales however, is the abuse and hardship directed toward children.

Drawing on a comment by Zipes (2002a 112), which suggested that the Grimm Brothers’ stories reflected some distressing events from their own childhood, chapter two will investigate their early lives with the intention of discovering what messages, conscious or otherwise, they may have implanted in their tales. Consequently, after establishing a similarity between the death of the boys’ father, the loss of their home and separation from their mother and siblings, and the reoccurring search for home in their stories, the thesis will claim that the foremost message in the tales is a promise of re-establishing a lost home. As the thesis will argue, for any child who feels dependent and vulnerable in an adult world, such a message provides the necessary comfort, and the guidance required, to cope with the insecurities of childhood.

After demonstrating the important role that the childhood home played in the creative expressions of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, and the artists whose work is discussed in the paper, the thesis will then propose that the psychological need for home, which is acted out by one protagonist after another in Grimm’s Fairy Tales, is inherent in all humans, whether child or adult. Therefore, it will suggest that the search for a safe haven is the reason that adults are also drawn to the stories,
regardless of well-substantiated feminist warnings of archaic messages and patriarchal propaganda. To support this supposition, chapter three will follow the evolution of the home in Australia from early European settlement to the present time, identifying the issues of security and safety that have concerned individuals, and the community in general, throughout that period. The chapter will focus on the post-war home of the fifties because it is the home recalled and revisited in the accompanying exhibition: the home of my childhood.

Although the thesis will conclude that adults, like children, need to believe that their home will provide physical and psychological security from external dangers, Peter Doyle, crime writer and curator of the exhibition, *City of Shadows: Inner City Crime and Mayhem 1912-1948*, held at the Justice and Police Museum in Sydney, 2005-2007, proves, with the support of forensic crime scene photos, that home is not always safe, nor does danger always come from without. The artworks in the accompanying exhibition, *Defective Stories*, along with the selected works by Bourgeois and Lara-Gomez, and those from the two exhibitions, *Scene of the Crime* and *Mixed-up Childhood*, support Doyle’s statement. To counter the confronting reality displayed in the *City of Shadows* exhibition, humans allocate a badland, a physical or psychological space away from home, in which they determine all evil to exist, and from which they are separate (Gibson 17). In much the same way, children and adults alike employ fairy tales to support the belief, even in the event that they are threatened, that all will be well in the end, and they will live happily ever after (fig. 5, page 15).

In conclusion, the thesis will demonstrate that the culture industry of the twentieth century, encouraged by a patriarchal society and dependent on consumer investment in entertainment for its continued existence, has good reason to ensure the survival of fairy tales. By exploiting the ongoing human endeavour to secure a safe haven, through the promotion of tales that promise a secure home and a happy
Fig. 5a. Room full of memories. The comfortable environment promised with the purchase of a new fifties home. *The Australian Home Beautiful. From Hills Hoist to High Rise.* By Julie Oliver. NSW: Pacific Publications, 1999. 139.

ending, in storybooks, film and video, and on television, the industry encourages consumption of the merchandise associated with the films, which includes toys, games, home wares, food and clothing (Zipes, 1997 6-7). In particular, for boys there are superhero outfits and weapons of all kinds, while girls are offered princess dresses and fairy tale kitchens that replicate a fairy tale palace. Consequently, as a bonus for a patriarchal government, while the ever-popular fairy tales are delivering their promise of home, courtesy of multi-national companies like the Disney Corporation, they are simultaneously preaching patriarchal messages and protestant work ethics that are essential to the survival of the male dominated capitalist ideology.
Chapter 1

**Feminism v Fairy Tales.**

When Lucy of the “Peanuts” comic strip is called upon to tell the story of “Snow White,” she rises to the occasion in characteristic good form: “This Snow White has been having trouble sleeping, see? Well, she goes to this witch who gives her an apple to eat which puts her to sleep. Just as she’s beginning to sleep real well...you know, for the first time in weeks...this stupid prince comes along and kisses her and wakes her up.”

* Maria Tatar.1992 xv.

The classic fairy tales of our childhood, those popular tales read to children throughout the western world, such as Snow White, Little Red Riding Hood, or Hansel and Gretel, have their origins in folktale. The versions that are most familiar to us today, however, were recorded by the German brothers, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, in the early part of the 19th century, and have become classics. Since the current popularity of the tales has intrigued scholars from many fields, and all proffer a different possibility for their survival, this chapter will review the major arguments from the psychological, sociological and feminist perspectives with the intention of discovering why fairy tales have flourished. Folklorists argue that fairy tales are an accurate, if exaggerated, record of ancient tribal life while mythologists suggest that they are metaphoric examples of natural phenomena. Most psychologists praise their value as guidelines for development, although, whereas the Freudian school suggests that they are an aid in personal psychosexual maturation, offering a safe arena in which to test alternative solutions to life’s problems, the Jungians believe that fairy tale themes are more spiritual in nature and speak to the universal whole. Sociologists, while admitting to the outdated messages that fairy tales contain, consider them useful tools for examining social structures. Feminists, however, object most passionately to the continued use of the Grimm’s Fairy Tales because of the inherent gender biased messages that they
contain (Tatar, 2003 39-41). Although these messages may have reinforced the patriarchal laws and the strict Christian morals of the time in which they were first published, feminists argue that the tales exemplify behaviour which is completely inappropriate in contemporary western society, particularly the reoccurring and inescapable misogynistic attitude towards women.

Regardless of such extensive feminist critique and the exposure of outdated messages, the tales still remain amongst the best sellers in children’s literature (Zipes, 2002a 154). By focusing on some of the most popular Grimm’s tales this chapter will review the psychological, sociological and feminist critiques and also examine the motivation and collecting methods of the Grimms themselves. First, in order to fully understand the relatively recent literary genre of Fairy Tales, a brief review of its origins may prove helpful.

It has been established by folklorists and mythologists that fairy tales evolved from folktale (Dalton xv). However, during the process of transformation many changes occurred. Perhaps the most significant of these changes has its explanation in the definition of the genres. Folklorists and researchers in children’s literature, Hallett and Karasek, point out that the dictionary defines folk as “the common people”, and accordingly, the folktale, which was an oral tale, was an integral part of traditional peasant life (xv). The stories, which were often mythical in nature, were utilised to explain the relationship between daily tribal activities and the seasonal changes of nature, and to reinforce the practices of each tribe. The tales were passed on by word of mouth during daily labours, around campfires, or in ritual ceremonies, and as oral tales they could be altered to suit the needs and circumstances of each tribe or peasant group to whom they were related (Zipes, 1994 10).

The invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century meant that the fairy tale, which evolved from these ancient folk stories, was eventually recorded in print. It was a tale to be read, and consequently its plot was set. Furthermore, when the folktale was adapted to the written version it lost not only its flexibility but also its
intimate relationship with the common folk. Despite still repeating stories about peasant life, as a written text it was available only to the educated people who were able to read them, and most people in the lower class were illiterate. Even though the first of the printed tales were available as chapbooks (cheap books), which were distributed throughout the German countryside by peddlers, very few manual labourers had the money to buy them (Hallett & Karasek xxii). Whereas folktale was an intimate part of peasant life, fairy tales became the property of the upper classes, the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy. In fact, fairy tales eventually achieved their literary status in the realms of the French court, far removed from the peasant villages where they originated (Hallett and Karasek xviii; Zipes, 1994 17).

Charles Perrault, perhaps the most famous of the French fairy tale writers, was a member of the court of Louis xiv in the late seventeenth century, and along with Madame D’Aulnoy, Mademoiselle de La Force, Madame De Murat, and Mademoiselle L’Heritier, amongst others, he adapted classical tales to suit the tastes of the nobility. Although Hallett and Karasek (xviii) suggest that Perrault’s introduction of the tales to court was simply for entertainment, Zipes believes that it was Perrault’s intention to demonstrate how folklore could evolve into a new genre of courtly art, and be utilised in the civilising process (1994 17).

Regardless of Perrault’s motivation and initial success, the French court was not the original birthplace of the literary fairy tale, a fact that is of great interest to contemporary female scholars. In the mid seventeenth century, before Perrault introduced his tales to court, fairy tales were developed as a parlour game. The aristocratic salons of the time provided a venue for women to display and develop their knowledge, and conversational games were amongst the most popular of the activities, which Zipes explains in the following manner:

*Both women and men participated in these games and were constantly challenged to invent new ones or refine the games. Such challenges led the women, in particular, to improve the quality of their dialogues, remarks, and ideas about morals, manners, and education and at times to oppose male standards that have been set to govern their lives. The subject matter of the conversations consisted of literature,*
Towards the end of the century both men and women began to write down their stories with the aim of publishing, and it was these already developed tales that were introduced to the court. It is important to note, however, that the literary fairy tale that originated and flourished in the French salons was not written for children and neither were the tales that were published in the first edition by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm a century later (Bottigheimer 4).

Encouraged by Professor Freidrich Carl von Savigny, the founder of the historical school of law, to believe that the laws of any country are formed as a consequence of the history and customs of its people, the brothers began a lifetime study of ancient German literature (Michaelis-Jena 7; Dalton v). Zipes suggests that this search was fuelled by the desire for the defeat of France, which controlled Germany between 1806 and 1813, and the formation of a unified Germany, coupled with their belief “that the most natural and pure forms of culture – those which held the community together - were linguistic and were to be located in the past” (2002a 10). As a result of their studies, along with other works of historical and linguistic significance, the Grimm brothers published a book of fairy tales as a way of recording German history and aiding in the development of a national identity (Bottigheimer 9; Ellis 5). The book, Kinder-und Hausemarchen, or Grimm’s Fairy Tales as it is now known in English speaking nations, became the most popular publication of folk and fairy tales and still holds the position of the second largest selling book in Germany, outsold only by The Holy Bible (Paldides 2005).

Declaring their attempt to re-establish traditional German values, in the introduction to the first volume the brothers referred to their book as a guide for childrearing, which would set out appropriate moral standards for the formation of the new society (Bottigheimer 4). It is this instructional aspect of the tales that child psychologist, Bruno Bettelheim, praised in his award-winning book, The Uses of
Bettelheim believed however, in contrast to the brothers’ intended use by parents, the greatest value of the stories was to be found when children were allowed to interpret the meaning for themselves. Supporting his claim, Bettelheim explained that if a story is to hold the child’s attention it must be both entertaining and arouse curiosity, but if it is to enrich his life

...it must stimulate his imagination; help him to develop his intellect and to clarify his emotions; be attuned to his anxieties and aspirations; give full recognition to his difficulties, while at the same time suggesting solutions to the problems which perturb him. In short, it must at one and the same time relate to all aspects of his personality – and this without ever belittling but, on the contrary, giving full credence to the seriousness of the child’s predicaments, while simultaneously promoting confidence in himself and in his future (5).

Bettelheim was convinced that fairy tales achieve the above criteria by speaking to every level of human personality as defined in psychoanalysis: by communicating to the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious minds (5-6). He described the way in which the simplicity of the tales enabled children to deal with the dilemmas confronting them in a manner suitable to their age, whereas a more complex plot would create confusion (8). To illustrate his point Bettelheim explained how the child could assign conflicting aspects of his personality to different characters in the story, and thus battle it out in a dramatised version, learning about actions and consequences in a safe environment. Bettelheim likened this external process to Freud’s explanations, in psychoanalysis, of the interactions between the id, the ego and the superego, the internal adjudicators of adult behaviour (75).

In order to illustrate Bettelheim’s theory, and to compare it with criticisms from feminist and Marxist researchers, in regard to Grimm’s fairy tales in general and Bettelheim’s psychoanalytical interpretations in particular, this thesis will focus on the story of Hansel and Gretel (Grimm 56-63) one of the most popular tales in the Grimm’s collection (Degh 86), and the one which Bettelheim exalted as the most useful for children of all ages, even into adolescence (13-14). As we will discover
later, however, some of Bettelheim’s critics suggested that it was his most favoured tale because it addressed and offered solutions for his own anxieties.

The story begins in the cottage of a poor starving woodcutter and his family. The children, Hansel and Gretel, overhear a plot to desert them in the woods. Hansel comforts his sister, and develops a plan of his own. As the family ventures into the forest under the pretext of collecting firewood, Hansel drops little white pebbles, which he had collected the night before. When the parents fail to return to the pre-arranged meeting place by nightfall, the children are guided home by the moonlight reflecting off the stones. On the second attempt to abandon the brother and sister in the same manner, Hansel, who had been locked in the house the previous night and thus unable to collect pebbles in preparation for the return journey, drops pieces of bread instead. Unfortunately, birds eat the crumbs, and the children are unable to find their way home. Eventually, after wandering lost through the forest for hours, the starving children stumble across a house made from gingerbread and cake. Totally involved in sating their hunger, the children miss the warning signs and are captured by the witch who lives in the house. It is her intention to fatten and eat the children, but this time Gretel has a plan that secures their escape and eventual triumphant return home (fig. 6, page 23).

As we can see, the story centres on the children’s abandonment and subsequent, rather harrowing, journey home. Feminist critic, Maria Tatar cites many examples of parental implications in the trials which beset fairy tale heroes: the arrival of an unkind stepmother due to the death of the mother in childbirth; deals made with spirits or witches where the child itself is offered as payment; and abandonment of the child as a result of poverty (2003 58-59). Perhaps the most obvious question is why, given the fact that their trials were instigated by the actions of their parents, did Hansel and Gretel want to return home? Having proved their ability to think and act for themselves, could they not have remained in the witch’s house, after her demise, and still live happily ever after? The answer lies partly in the tale itself. Wilhelm steadily reinforced the fact, by slight alterations in successive editions,

Please see print copy for Fig. 6
that neither the mother, who was replaced by a step mother, and thus freed from any responsibility, nor the father who was helpless against the persuasions of his wife in the first instance, and the unquestionable truth of folk parables in the second, was to blame for the unfortunate situation. The following examples of the same passage of the tale, taken from different editions, reinforces this claim:

First edition “1810 manuscript: Soon thereafter, they once again had nothing to eat, and the little brother heard again one evening in bed how their mother was telling their father that he should take the children out into the big forest. Then his little sister began to cry very hard, and the little brother got up again and wanted to go look for little stones. But when he got to the door, it had been locked by their mother; then the little brother began to be sad and was unable to comfort his little sister.”

Fifth edition “1843: Not long afterwards, need was everywhere apparent in the house; and the children heard how the (step)mother said to their father one night, “everything has been eaten up; we don’t even have half a loaf of bread left; after that the dance is over. The children have to leave; we’ll lead them deeper into the forest, so that they won’t find the way back out. Otherwise, there’s no hope for us.” It weighed heavily on their father’s mind, and he thought, “It would be better if you shared the last morsel with your children.” But his wife wouldn’t listen to anything he said, scolded him, and reproached him. Whoever has begun a thing must go on with it, and because he had given in the first time, he had to do so a second time, too.” (Meider 125-126).

Zipes, noting that the brothers lived through the wars of the late eighteenth century, which brought famine and poverty, argues that it would not have been too difficult for Wilhelm to rationalise the parents’ actions, exonerate them from guilt, and thus justify the children’s decision to return home (2002b 32). Bettelheim praised Wilhelm’s insight in altering the text, explaining that the replacement of the mother with a stepmother would enable any child listening to the tale to deal with anger towards the mother, freed of the accompanying guilt or the crippling fear that her affection and nurture would be withdrawn (69). Obviously satisfied with his changes, Wilhelm retained the latter text unaltered throughout the remaining editions.
Bettelheim proffered another reason for the children’s return home, which has its beginnings in the earliest physical and psychological needs of the child; oral satisfaction. Supporting his claim, Bettelheim explained that having been abandoned and denied food, for which the mother is entirely responsible in the child’s mind, the appearance of the house, which often represents the body in psychoanalysis, triggered a regression to the oral stage, and the desire again for the oral mother who nurtured the child from her own body (161). However, this lapse, or regression, proved disastrous for the children, as all regression does, and they were deceived by the witch and taken captive. Eventually learning their lesson, and with Gretel’s ingenuity, the children destroyed the witch. Laden with the jewels that they had taken from her house, an act described by Bettelheim as symbolic of the release of the good mother from the bad, they returned home, triumphant, freed from their childish bonds of dependence, and ready to reunite with their parents (162). In Bettelheim’s words “As dependent children they had been a burden to their parents; on their return they have become the family’s support, as they bring home the treasures they have gained” (164).

As previously mentioned, not everyone is supportive of Bettelheim’s acclaimed opinions. Tatar questions his motivation in interpreting the tale, suggesting that his own “real-life fantasies” were responsible for his explanation (1992 xxv). Tatar recalls how Bettelheim, by his own admission, preferred the tales that tell of the child’s devotion to the parent, such as Beauty and the Beast, or a willingness to take on domestic duties, exemplified in the tale of Snow White. Bettelheim enthusiastically supported the dwarfs’ proposal to Snow White that if she kept house for them they would provide for her, and likened Snow White’s situation to the role of many young women who take care of their father in the absence of their mother. After he was widowed, as Tater relates, Bettelheim turned to his daughters for support, with similar expectations from his own adult children as those expressed in his summing up of Hansel and Gretel. He suicided when he was eighty-six, “after an ‘estrangement’ from one daughter, and a sense of
‘disappointment’ when he moved to be close to another” (1992 xxv). Overall, Tatar accuses Bettelheim of selecting or adapting for interpretation tales that support Freudian Oedipal themes, with the intention of laying blame on the children and exonerating adults in general, and parents in particular (1992 xxi- xxii).

Just as Tatar accuses Bettelheim of misinterpretation to suit a personal and somewhat misogynistic ideology, so most feminist critiques berate the Grimm’s tales in general for their patriarchal messages. As feminist literary critic Anne Cranny-Francis explains: “Feminist critics have written at length about fairy-tale because of its role in the acculturation of gender ideology” (1990 85). Showing concern for all children, Cranny-Francis refers to the tale of Little Red Riding Hood, another popular tale from the Grimm’s Fairy Tales, to demonstrate how the gender-biased messages can be just as damaging for boys as they are for girls. The story begins when Little Red Riding Hood, named for the cape she is wearing, is asked by her mother to take a basket of goodies to her grandmother, who lives in a cottage on the other side of the woods. On the way she meets a wolf that tricks her into disclosing her destination, rushes to the cottage before her, and attempts to eat them both (fig. 7, page 27). Cranny-Francis states that the lessons for girls are quite clear: do not disobey orders (although, if they are given by a woman, even one supporting patriarchal ideals, they probably lack authority anyhow); do not dally by the wayside to talk to strangers, as they are most likely to be predators; and above all, do not flaunt your sexuality by wearing a flashy red cape, since, once encouraged, the predator can no longer be held responsible for the resulting events (1992 76-79).

The messages that this tale has for boys are equally controlling. Firstly, boys learn what to expect from a patriarchal female: compliance with authority. They learn that non-compliance or resistance will result in punishment. They learn that they, in the role of the hunter (who was introduced into the tales by the Grimms) will adopt the role of the rescuer. But they learn also that the hunter/rescuer and the
Please see print copy for Fig. 7.

Fig. 7. Gustav Doré. Little Red Riding Hood. Folk & Fairy Tales. 3rd ed.
wolf/predator are complementary parts of the one male being, and they learn that violent behaviour, which is condemned in the wolf, is not only acceptable, but also necessary to keep order in society, in the hunter. In Cranny-Francis’ words, boys learn that “The pair represent the rape threat which is society’s major means of intimidating and regulating women” (1992 82). Elaborating on this theme, Marina Warner, historian and literary critic, explains how, in the earlier versions of Little Red Riding Hood, there was no hunter to save the girl, neither was she eaten by the wolf. Summoning her own courage and cunning, the young girl tricked the wolf and managed to escape (181). Finding the emasculation of the wolf far too confronting, it appears that Wilhelm may have deliberately altered the story as a means of disempowering the girl, and thus promoting the need for male dominance, commensurate with the controlling patriarchal ideals of the time.

However, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Elizabeth Dalton, defends Wilhelm by suggesting that there are many other examples in the tales where the girl is in charge, citing Gretel’s ingenuity in tricking the witch when the situation was at its worst (xxxi).

Feminist author, Ruth Bottigheimer, disregards Dalton’s view, and upholds the feminist challenge to the inherent patriarchal messages, by clearly outlining the gendered roles throughout the Grimm’s collection, and questioning the manner in which Bettelheim simply dismisses this aspect of the stories with the explanation that the young reader pays no attention to gender, and interprets the terms “boy” and “girl” as “child” (168). It is not only Bottigheimer who dismisses Bettelheim’s claim as nonsense; Cranny-Francis agrees, stating that, as a result of our socialising methods, children identify with gender issues very early in their lives (1992 79). After listening regularly to fairy tales children have no doubt that the good girls in Grimm’s tales are beautiful princesses waiting to be rescued by handsome princes, even if they don’t know it at the beginning of the story and must submissively tackle chores and willingly undergo difficulties along the way to their life of “happily ever after.” In acclaimed movie maker, Walt Disney’s still immensely popular animated version of Snow White (1939), the heroine, a
real princess, was forced by her male creators to sing happily as she tackled the menial tasks set by her jealous wicked stepmother, the Queen\(^1\) (fig. 8, page 29). Feminist literary critic, Jennifer Gyurisin, while not defending their actions, suggests that the artists were directed by the patriarchal rules laid down in the Grimm’s version of the tale. In an article on the apparent voicelessness of abused young women in today’s society, she condemns the silencing messages of fairy tales with the following observation:

*Male speech patterns that act as symbols of authority are also prevalent in Snow White. Within the tale, the four types of men, the father, the hunter, the dwarves, and the prince, all work to transform Snow White from abused daughter to domestic wife. As Snow White moves from one male to another, she becomes entangled in strict and overlapping definitions of femininity (54).*

Furthermore, female characters that show some initiative, and thus challenge the stereotype of the submissive and powerless woman, such as the wicked Queen, the stepmother, or the witch, characters that Bettelheim suggests are psychologically one and the same, are all destroyed in the end (69).

Referring to such harsh treatment of strong or wilful females, and as reinforcement of feminist accusations regarding the misogynistic flavour of the tales and Bettelheim’s apparent blindness to it, Tatar is quick to establish that of the three types of ogres in the Grimm’s collection: beasts or monsters; robbers and murderers; stepmothers and witches, the latter easily outnumbers the other two groups combined (2003 139). Bettelheim dismissed all feminist criticism by suggesting that any adult who had not attained satisfactory integration of reality and fantasy in their own formative period would be unable to understand the tales or appreciate their true value (66).

Refusing to accept Bettelheim’s response, and still struggling to understand how stories containing such outdated and biased gender standards continue to appeal to contemporary western societies, Bottigheimer offers the following explanation.

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\(^1\) At the time when the movie was made, female artist were not employed as animators. Women were only permitted to paint in the background.
One essential image might account for the skewed values which inhere in the gender-specific consequences of the prohibition/transgression/punishment paradigm: Eve herself. An interpretation of the original woman as the introducer of sin to the world and as the instrument of Adam’s fall from grace would account for many of the peculiar characteristics of the gender-specific aspects of the paradigm, particularly if all women were identified with Eve’s wrongdoing and all men with Adam’s essential inborn innocence. From this pivotal moment, girls and women in Grimms’ Tales seem to derive their identity as delinquent and their destiny as punishable, while boys and men seem to acquire a blanket excuse together with forgiveness for their transgressions. This premise is nowhere stated in Grimms’ Tales, but it is consistent with the patterns that emerge from the collection and also with exegetical material in many children’s Bibles, catechisms, and chapbooks in Germany. Thus Grimms’ Tales, which incorporate so many of the values of its contemporary society, would appear to be a volume well suited to understanding implicit nineteenth-century German social and moral values. Its use as a sourcebook for the psychology of children and adults beyond those borders, however, is at best open to question and at worst fundamentally misleading (Bad Girls and Bold Boys 94).

Cultural theorist, Peter Wollen, agrees with this thesis, explaining “In the Christian view of the world history begins with a crime – Eve taking the apple from the tree – and every human event that follows takes place under the shadow of this original sin…” (34). Considering the Grimm Brothers’ Christian upbringing and their desire to produce a moral guideline for socialisation, it appears that Bottigheimer has formulated a sound theory and raised a valid argument against Bettelheim’s praise for the psychological value of the tales today. Since Bottigheimer’s thesis is as condemning as it is explanatory, and given that other feminist critics have raised equally compelling arguments, why do the Grimm’s tales still “occupy a central position in the international canon of children’s literature and children’s mass media” as Zipes declares (2002a 154)?

One possible answer may relate to the widespread reception of the tales, as opposed to the limited distribution of the critiques, but not all the criticism is directed towards an academic audience. Working alongside the feminist critics there have been a number of popular female authors who have attempted to discredit the tales
by following in the footsteps of their male counterparts and adapting the stories to suit their own political agendas. Amongst the collection of experimental feminist re-visions are Transformations (1971) by Anne Sexton; Princess Hynchatti and Some Other Surprises (1973) by Tanith Lee; Beginning with O (1977) by Olga Broumas; and the collection of works by the Mersyside Fairy Tale Collective, all of which challenge the stereotypical motifs in traditional fairy tales and attempt to alter our perspective (Zipes, 1986 12-13). Perhaps the most famous of the feminist opponents is the literary critic and author, Angela Carter, well known for responding specifically to the lack of female power and sexual content in the tales of Disney and Perrault by introducing sexually active females into her re-visions (Roemer and Bacchilega 15). In a collation and comparison of some of the myriad interpretations of Carter’s work, literary theorist, Stephen Benson illustrates how her approach to fairy tales instigated energetic feminist debate around the role of pornography as a feminist tool, thus securing the classic fairy tale’s position in serious literary criticism (37).

In addition to academic critique and debate, and feminist rewritings of the tales, several cartoon versions of the stories have been produced, with the intention of reversing the gender roles or ridiculing misogynistic behaviour. However, regardless of such relentless deconstruction, the classic patriarchal fairy tale remains. Furthermore, patriarchal messages are not restricted to the tales themselves, or the many movies selling the same messages: questions also arise from other cultural forms. Why are leading contemporary dress designers showing fairy dresses in their wedding range (fig. 9, page 33)? Why was Princess Mary the most frequently featured female in our women’s magazines for the lengthy period leading up to her wedding in 2003? Why is a television show that offers an ordinary (adult) girl the opportunity to become an Australian princess occupying prime viewing time? Zipes is convinced that the answer lies not in the messages that fairy tales have for children or adults, but in the broader cultural messages we are fed as a consumer society (2002b 25). The following passage will briefly outline the reasons behind Zipes opinion.
Please see print copy for Fig. 9.

Fig. 9. Wings of Desire. Wedding Gown by British designer John Galliano for Christian Dior. Photograph by Emmanuel Fradin, Reuters. Sydney Morning Herald. 8 July 2005.
The changes ushered in by the Enlightenment and the increasing impact of Capitalist Rationalisation meant that even on a daily basis people’s lives were becoming more ordered and regulated. These changes brought with them an ever-increasing degree of stress. Amusements had to be devised to provide a distraction from the responsibilities of work and home and the ensuing sense of disenchantment. The familiarity of fairy tales provided the emotional comfort that was lacking (Zipes, 2002b 25). The potential of the fairy tale to soothe our lives, however, lies only partially within the magic of the tale itself. It is the power that we attribute to the tales that comforts us. Folk and fairy tales were an intrinsic part of peasant life during the time when the feudal system was in place, so for a disgruntled and worn-out serf the telling of tales could lift the spirits and provide a sense of survival and hope. In the labourer’s fantasy, as Zipes speculates, a cannibalistic witch may easily represent the feudal system and the greed and cruelty of the aristocracy. Thus overcoming the witch is symbolic of defeating tyranny (2002b 38, 46). For the working class the fairy tale scenario returned their confiscated power, in fantasy at least.

While generally supporting the socio-psychological value of fairy tales, Jungian psychologist Max Luthi challenges Zipes’ reading. Speaking from the Jungian position, Luthi argues that although dreams and wishful thinking play an integral role in fairy tale narrative, and are necessary and important components of human development, to simply state that fairy tales are about the desires of the poor is to ignore their true value. For Luthi the granting of wishes and the realisation of dreams are symbols that stand for something more essentially fundamental to human nature: they signify “Man’s deliverance from an unorthodox existence and his commencement of a true one” (368): in other words, fairy tales speak of human ascension to a higher plane of knowledge, and understanding of the meaning of life, which Bettelheim states as the foremost psychological task facing children (4-5). Luthi’s suggestion that fairy tales speak directly to the human spirit may explain how, as the social order changed and the feudal system was replaced by a higher order, the tales, apparently once so intrinsically linked to a feudal
society, not only survived but also evolved to meet the needs of an enlightened civilisation. Furthermore, due to their mythic qualities, they retained their magic ingredients of consolation and empowerment, regardless of time and place. It may be the spiritual nature of fairy tales rather than their practical value that has secured their endurance, but it is also the imaginary and mythic nature of the tales that enables their continual appropriation as a tool of manipulation.

French sociologist, and foremost proponent of semiotics, Roland Barthes, explains myth as a type of speech stolen from its original context, frozen forever, and replaced in a different context (134-135). Zipes concedes this point, agreeing that the fairy tale, which has become the classic fairy tale, is a stolen and frozen cultural commodity, which is, for the most part, alien to present time and circumstances (1994 7). The seemingly ancient and inherent truth of the classic fairy tale that is so valued by Luthi for its ability to resist social dogma is in fact a constructed, and relentlessly repeated message. An ancient saying proclaims that repetition is pleasing, but Barthes suggests, instead, that repetition is significant, because it is the constant reinforcement of any historical or man-made fact that convinces a society that it is a natural truth (12). What appears to be significant about Grimms’ fairy tales is the repetition of the constructed bourgeois ideals with which they were first imbued.

There is no doubt that feminist criticism of the blatantly sexist nature of the classic fairy tale is well founded; sociologists can argue convincingly that they are convenient tools of manipulation; and the genealogy provided by folklorists and historians proves that they originated in an age very different to our own. Yet, despite such substantial evidence of their failings, the fact remains that even today fairy tales are amongst the best sellers in children’s literature in the western world. Furthermore, hundreds of thousands of children flock to the movie theatres and video stores each year to view the latest animated version, encouraged by their parents, who spend millions of dollars on the associated merchandise. Considering the ideas debated by Luthi and Zipes, it seems that the unlikely survival of fairy
tales revolves around their mythic, and thus coded and constructed form, resulting in a system which, by its very nature, confounds resolution and is consequently open to exploitation. According to psychologists, however, at the centre of the carefully encoded package of the classic fairy tale there is an appealing truth upon which manipulative systems can build. A more detailed examination of the messages that were implanted in the tales by the writers may uncover this truth. Since Zipes (2002a 112), briefly alluding to a German text on the Grimms\(^2\), suggested that Wilhelm seemed to be attempting to recapture his childhood through the constant rewriting of the tales, the following chapter will investigate the brothers’ early years with the aim of producing a more satisfactory explanation for the enduring popularity of the classic fairy tale.

\(^2\) The text referred to is available only in German.
Chapter 2

Returning to the Scene of the Crime

_Hansel and Gretel_ ends with the heroes returning to the home from which they started, and now finding happiness there. This is psychologically correct because a young child...cannot hope to find happiness outside the home. If all is to go well in his development, he must work [these] problems out while still dependent on his parents. Only through good relations with his parents can a child successfully mature into adolescence.

Bruno Bettelheim. 165.

Chapter one has identified and shown support for feminist concerns that Grimm’s _Fairy Tales_ deliver inappropriate and outdated messages to today’s children, yet they remain amongst the most popular children’s stories. Considering that support for the tales relies heavily on their psychological value, as outlined in the previous chapter, and conceding the psychological premise, that childhood experiences have a long lasting effect on human lives and partly determine later activities, chapter two will explore the comment by Zipes, that Wilhelm Grimm was attempting to recapture his childhood by repeatedly rewriting the tales. By first establishing the links between fairy tales and the crime fiction genre, given the violent nature of the stories clearly demonstrated in chapter one, and then applying a forensic reading to the Grimm’s tales, a less emotive reading that carefully sifts through evidence for hidden, less obvious details, this chapter will suggest that unfortunate and traumatic events in the brothers’ early lives dictated the theme of their tales. Considering that the practical component of the thesis is a sculptural installation, which addresses the disturbing aspects of fairy tales, the chapter will review the way, also by the application of a forensic reading, in which several contemporary visual artists have addressed childhood issues, consciously or otherwise, through their own creative practice.
The brothers, Jacob Ludwig Grimm (1785-1863) and Wilhelm Carl Grimm (1786-1859), were born into a troubled Germany, which was undergoing constant change. During their lives they experienced the effects of the French Revolution, the Napoleonic wars, the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire and the battles of Waterloo. The Germany of their childhood, a parochial collection of over two hundred principalities, was heading, by the end of their lives, towards the formation of the united Reich (Michaelis-Jena 7). Despite the disruptions of the political environment the boys, their three brothers, and one sister grew up in a prosperous household. Their father, Philipp Wilhelm Grimm was the district magistrate of Steinau and was thus able to provide a spacious home, complete with servants, for his family. Philipp Grimm’s position ensured that the eldest children received a classical education, and strict religious training through the Reformed Calvinist Church. Unfortunately, the children’s comfortable and relatively untroubled lives were shattered when their father died suddenly of pneumonia in 1796 (Zipes, 2002a 2-3). The brothers were only eleven and ten years old respectively.

Not only did the family suffer from the personal loss of a loved one, the social structure of the time meant that they were immediately stripped of their middle class status (Zipes, 2002a 4). Forced to move to a smaller house, Dorothea Grimm faced the task of bringing up her young family alone, with neither servants nor income. As Zipes explains, the family could not have survived without the assistance of their grandfather, Johannes Hermann Zimmer, and the generosity of their maiden aunt, Henriette Zimmer (4). Financial matters aside, the responsibilities usually assigned to the head of the house fell upon Jacob’s young shoulders (Zipes, 1991 207). From that time on he felt responsible for the well-being of the family, a situation that may have influenced his later decision to never marry. Two years after their father’s death the circumstances were to change again, when the boys’ Aunt Zimmer took them to Cassel, where she funded their further education at the Lyceum (high school) Fridericianum (Michaelis-Jena 19).
Regarding this offer, their grandfather wrote to the brothers, urging them to be aware at all times of their responsibility to their father’s name, and the great debt to their aunt, who had provided the opportunity for them to re-establish the family’s social position (Zipes, 2002a 4-5). Reinforcing the pressure their situation placed upon them, Michaelis-Jena explains that their mother also wrote to the boys, reminding them that they had been given the luxury of an education that the younger siblings would be denied, and must therefore work hard enough to eventually attain a position which would enable support for the whole family. To their credit both boys responded to the promptings in the letters and eventually achieved the academic status required to gain entry to the University of Marburg. In fact, as Michaelis-Jena notes, both Jacob and Wilhelm graduated at the head of their class (21-22). It was perhaps at this time, however, that the brothers fully realised the unfairness of the patriarchal order that determined Germany’s politics, as the following passage will explain.

Regardless of their high achievements at the Lyceum, the Grimm’s lower social status prevented automatic admission to the university. Although they were eventually given special dispensation to study, the injustice of the situation was exacerbated by the fact that the wealthier students whose families could well afford to pay the fees were given financial assistance, while Jacob and Wilhelm had to pay for their own tuition. Recounting these inequities, Michaelis-Jena (6) notes, in reference to a passage in Jacob’s biography, that despite suffering at the hands of such elitist regulations, the elder brother vowed to prove his worth by attaining academic success. It is quite possible that the personal experience of such inequalities perpetrated by the bourgeois system, cruel inequalities that befell the brothers as a result of misfortune alone, may have prompted the Grimm’s belief, already outlined in the previous chapter, that the true national identity of the German people was to be found in the values of the common folk, rather than the elitist policies of the ruling class. However, if this was the intended
message in the tales, there remains the contradiction of the continued support for patriarchal bourgeois ideals that is inherent in the Grimm’s Fairy Tales.

Jacobs vow, and indeed the efforts of both brothers, are testimony to the practical and intellectual responses to their unfortunate situation, and display courage tempered with humility. From this perspective it is entirely plausible that the brothers may have consciously intended to support the working class, and show, through the collection and publication of folktales, that the true spirit of the German people did not reside with the upper classes. The following thesis, though, will propose that on an emotional level the response of the brothers may have been quite different. This paper will suggest that despite overcoming the physical difficulties that arose as a result of their father’s death, Jacob and Wilhelm were so traumatised by the loss that, contrary to outward appearances, psychologically they remained fixated in that moment. While echoing the conscious desire for a united Germany (Zipes, 1991b 214) the constant rewriting of the Grimm’s Fairy Tales was an unconscious attempt, driven by the trauma of a cruelly interrupted childhood, to rewrite the tragic events of their formative years with a happy ending.

The idea of a happy, carefree childhood is a relatively new concept. In ancient and tribal cultures humans were commonly classed as infants until the age of six or seven, and were then viewed as small adults who were able to carry out assigned duties, restricted only by their size and strength. Childhood, as we know it today, was not securely established until the arrival of the Enlightenment (Sale 26). The original concept of childhood was born during the 16th and 17th centuries, as an elitist activity of the European upper classes, but it was not until the Romantics of the 18th century embraced the idea of a period of innocence that childhood was fully acknowledged. From that time it progressed with all the momentum of a runaway train, expanding to reach the middle classes in the 19th century. Finally, in the 20th century its boundaries spread to encompass the lower classes. By this time however, the Romantic notion of childhood innocence had been replaced
with the psychoanalytic premise that childhood is far from innocent, and children are emotionally vulnerable prey (Craw and Leonard 129-130).

Psychoanalysis, a method of identifying and treating irrational personal desires and behaviours, which depends largely on discovering the connection between traumatic childhood experiences and later adult behaviour, arose out of Freud’s studies of human behaviour. The relatively recent term given to serious manifestations of this reactive behaviour, which also encompasses trauma situations encountered in adult life, is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), but as Craw and Leonard argue, in childhood cases the trauma itself is not always serious, and often appears trivial (129). In response to this argument, Bessel van der Kolk, a leading researcher in PTSD, explains that a seemingly minor event in childhood might have quite serious impact on later life, “because trauma early in the life cycle fundamentally affects the maturation of the systems in charge of the regulation of psychological and biological processes” (1996 x-xi).

The regulatory systems to which van der Kolk refers correlate to the stages outlined in both psychosexual maturation and developmental psychology. Freud identified five stages of psychosexual development, from the oral stage, from birth to one year of age, through the anal, phallic, latent, and finally the genital stage in adolescence, which leads to normal adult relationships. Freud proposed that problems in any stage could interrupt development and have a long lasting effect on the individual’s personality (Atkinson et al. 515). Jean Piaget, acclaimed Swiss child psychologist, formulated a developmental theory which explains how a child’s ability to reason progresses through four distinct stages as they grow, beginning with the sensory motor stage, from birth to two years of age, during which the child learns to manipulate physical objects, continuing through the other three stages with increasing levels of cognitive understanding, until they develop the ability to process abstract ideas. Events experienced in one stage will be evaluated differently, and less successfully, than they would be if encountered in a later developmental period (Cohen 36-37; Atkinson et al. 80-84).
When evaluated by the previously outlined psychological developmental theories, the sudden death of their father and the associated loss of their home and upper middle-class lifestyle most certainly qualify as traumatic events in the Grimm’s childhood. The trauma was exacerbated two years later, as the boys experienced further disruption to their lives with a move to Cassel. Although the generosity of their Aunt Zimmer, who arranged the move, enabled their continued education, it meant that they had to leave their mother and siblings. Once in Cassel, as Michaelis-Jena laments, Jacob and Wilhelm were even denied the comfort afforded by extended family, as their aunt had organised accommodation for them in a single room elsewhere (20).

For Wilhelm, who had only just turned twelve, the separation from his family would have been very difficult. Perhaps Jacob, who had turned thirteen by the time they moved to Cassel, could have coped a little better with this second major change to his life, but there is evidence to indicate that he too was struggling with their situation. His years at high school were shadowed with insults and degradation, and as has already been stated, the reluctant acceptance of the boys by the governors of Marburg University, despite their outstanding grades at school, was embarrassing and cruel. In his diary Jacob recorded details of the financial struggle he constantly faced, and the disappointment of repeatedly unfulfilled promises, by the university board, of monetary assistance (Zipes, 20002a 5-6). Apart from the frustration of his situation, Dalton (xvii) alludes to the shame that Jacob must have experienced, since the scholarships were withheld because the family was too poor, and therefore, according to the University’s contradictory regulations, not worthy of support.

Wilhelm, who was mainly responsible for rewriting the tales, a task that spanned forty-five years and seven editions, addressed his loss through the constantly repeated attempt, in the stories, to correct the unacceptable events of his life. The main theme in the tales, the quest of a child or at least a young person, to save or
replace the family home, correlates with Van der Kolk’s theory, founded on early studies of trauma, that once traumatised, a person “acts as if the original traumatic situation were still in existence and engages in protective devices which failed on the original occasion” (1996 196). Alluding to the similarity between the brothers’ early experience and the theme in their stories, Tatar notes that in the Grimm’s tales the trials of most protagonists begin at home (2003 145). Supported by the previous findings, this paper proposes that the Grimm’s Fairy Tales, the acclaimed creative literary achievement of the German brothers, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, bears the imprint of trauma, and, regardless of its proclaimed use as a guide for childrearing, was an unconscious attempt to rewrite their own interrupted childhood and, psychologically, re-establish their family home.

Visual Artists and Childhood Trauma

Just as the Grimm brothers relived their childhood experiences through literary activities, research has shown that artists from all creative fields have employed the practice of revisiting confusing childhood events, and reworking them in their art. To cite one famous example, unresolved psychological wounds were named as the catalyst for the works of genius by the famous artist, Vincent van Gogh (Bataille 61-72). To further reinforce this thesis the paper will investigate the work of several visual artists who have used childhood as a site of creativity. Considering that the artists were selected from two group exhibitions the curatorial philosophy of the exhibitions will also be briefly explained.

Mixed-up Childhood was the title of an exhibition held in the Auckland Art Gallery in 2005. The title alludes to the many ways that childhood is experienced and perceived. In the words of the curators:

*Mixed-up Childhood looks at the way contemporary artists have exemplified, explored and critiqued prevailing attitudes to childhood. Works in the show address traditional commonsense representations of childhood: the natural child, the wild child, the child as monster, the embryo adult. They explore the lived experiences of childhood: its spaces, props, practices. They excavate childhood memories and invent fanciful pasts. They*
challenge the compartmentalisation of ‘childhood’ and ‘adulthood’, and insist on it (Craw and Leonard 131).

Despite the expectation, due to its variety of approaches, that the show would evoke a diverse range of responses including the celebration of childhood, overall it elicited a pervasive feeling of unease.

The series of photographs by Steven Meisel, titled The Good Life, 1997, is a perfect example of the unsettling nature of the show. Drawing on the notion of the post World War II American nuclear family, Meisel’s images depict the happy family in the ideal home, but all is not well. Like the family they capture, the images are too perfect. They are deliberately posed, artificially coloured, and “suffused in a golden glow” (Craw and Leonard 138). Regardless of the type of activity in which the family is engaged, they are impeccably dressed: there is not a speck of dirt or a wrinkle to be seen. The settings are reminiscent of the American family television shows from the 1950’s and 1960’s, such as Leave it to Beaver and Father Knows Best, and convey the same message of paternal protection offered by the self-proclaimed greatest country in the world. Rather than appearing relaxed and safe, however, the facial expressions of the family in the photographs are set in a permanent smile that looks rigid and false. Not only does the viewer sense that the smiles are forced and do not represent the family’s true feelings, the images evoke a deeper suspicion that the photographs, like the ideals they exemplify, are a deliberate attempt to cover up a more sinister reality. Or are they an attempt to expose it? Or perhaps, like the Grimms, Meisel may be attempting to construct a better memory (fig. 10, page 45).

In support of these suspicions it should be noted that, regardless of the image of a safe haven and ideal home for children that the American nation constructed for itself after the war, and still promotes today, it is not a true reflection of reality. The 1993 report from the National Victim Centre (US) cited approximately three million reported cases of child abuse or neglect in the previous year (McFarlane and van der Kolk 568). Closer to home, on October 15th 2005, the Sydney Morning

Fig. 10b. *Father Knows Best* (still from the television series). *Daily Telegraph*. 25 October 2006. 40.
**Herald** reported on page one that one in ten babies under the age of one was reported to the Department of Community Services in New South Wales in the previous financial year, for the same reasons. The issues alluded to in Meisel’s work, the suspicion of a different family experience behind the alluring scenes of the idyllic home of the 1950’s, a concern which also applies to current society, will be further investigated in the following chapter.

Like Meisel, Sally Mann photographs staged scenes of childhood, but her images lack the gloss and pretence of Meisel’s work, and portray children engaging in adult activities, far removed from the protected childhood alluded to by Meisel. Mann’s images are shot in black and white with an antique view camera, which gives them an alluring sensual quality. The sensual content, however, is quite disturbing. *Candy Cigarettes*, 1989 shows a young girl smoking. She faces the camera defiantly, challenging the viewer to condemn her. Beside her is another, younger girl with her back turned to the camera, but also striking a pose of defiance. Mann’s work has been praised for its acknowledgement of childhood independence, or at least the child’s desire for it, but it has also been challenged as pornography and exploitation (Craw and Leonard 133). Doubtless, the ambiguous nature of the images encourages such varied responses, but the debate is exacerbated by the children who feature in the photograph: they are Mann’s own daughters. Does this make her work more or less exploitive (fig. 11, page 47)?

*Popsicle Drips*, 1985, a close-up shot of Mann’s son Emmett, shows his naked torso with some dark liquid dribbling down around his genitals (fig. 12, page 48). Our initial response is horror, as we imagine something sinister happening to the boy, but the title persuades us that he has simply been enjoying an ice cream that has melted in the hot summer sun. Relief all around. Or is there? Somehow the unrest stays with us; we cannot convince ourselves that the photographs are harmless. The problem, however, may not lay in the conscious content of the work. In posing the scenes for the photographs Mann may simply be juxtaposing the innocence of
childhood with the child’s own desire to grow up, thus providing the ambiguity for
which her work is acclaimed, but there may also be an unconscious element that
alludes to the trauma of a child forced to grow up before her time. If we look again
at Candy Cigarettes, behind the girls who are behaving beyond their years, we can
see Emmett’s figure in the background, perched on stilts and blurring into the
distance. The image may be a reference, in psychoanalytical terms, to dissociation.
Emmett may represent the part of the psyche that splits off during the experience of
trauma, metaphorically floats away, and takes with it all memory of the incident
(van der Kolk, van der Hart, and Marmer 307).

The title of a sculpture by brothers, Jake and Dinos Chapman, The Return of the
Repressed, 1997, also refers to a form of dissociation, but in their piece the memory
has returned to haunt us. There is little doubt that the Chapman brothers intend to
haunt, or even horrify us, but most discussion of their work focuses on its reference
to the potential dangers of genetic engineering. Jake and Dinos create mannequin-
like children-with-a-difference. They are mutants, sculptured humans-gone-wrong,
and they warn of the potential danger of playing God. In a world where animals
have been cloned, and a human ear grown on the back of a mouse, the Chapmans’
work is simultaneously an acknowledgement of scientific achievement and a
condemnation of it. In a later work, What the Hell I-IX, 2000, which art critic,
Jennifer Allen, calls “a rather startling revision of the holocaust” (66), the
Chapmans focus on genetic engineering of the most horrible kind: the kind that
experiments on humans. What the Hell I-IX is also a comment on trauma. In
response to this reading of their work, and considering that the title alludes to
psychological responses rather than physical experiments, a closer look at The
Return of the Repressed is recommended (fig. 13, page 50).

Repression is a term coined by the founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, to
describe the process whereby an unacceptable experience, impulse or idea is
banished into the unconscious, in the name of civility, only to reappear in dreams or
Please see print copy for Fig. 13.

slips of the tongue (Craw and Leonard 157). In psychoanalytical terms “the return of the repressed” indicates an “involuntary irruption into consciousness” of an aberrant derivative of the repressed material (Rycroft 157). In The Return of the Repressed, the girl, like the mannequins on whom she is modelled, has no genitalia. For a model this is not unusual. What is extraordinary, though, is the eruption of a second head, fused to the first at the ear, and protruding in abhorrent form from the shoulder. In true mutant fashion, the connecting point of the two heads appears more like the missing genitalia than an ear. Exhibition curators, Craw and Leonard, suggest that the second head which appears bruised and bloody, represents the coming into consciousness of the repressed material, and considering the wrongly positioned sexual organs, may well allude to a confusing sexual experience during childhood (157). Feminist writer, Sarah Kofman, suggests it is a previously lost personality, which she refers to as one’s double (56). Notwithstanding their obvious critiques of genetic modification, the sculptures of Jake and Dinos Chapman can also be viewed as a creative response to traumatic, and repressed, childhood events.

Throughout the Mixed-up Childhood exhibition many artworks reiterate similar concerns. Inez van Lamsweerde and Vinoodh Matadin collaborate to produce fashion photographs of three-year-old models wearing satin underwear. Or are the photographs kiddie porn? Once again we are unsettled. As Craw and Leonard observe, “The girls seem inappropriately sexual, strangely adult, creepy” (160). Adult and creepy because, in these “seamless creations” as art critic Roy Exley calls them (34), the artists have superimposed a man’s lewd smile on the innocent young faces. By illustrating the imposition of patriarchal expectations on such young girls, Lamsweerde and Matadin lay blame for the loss of innocence directly at society’s feet (fig. 14, page 52).

Anthony Goicolea also employs manipulated images to produce a series of photographs that cast adolescent boys as warriors, visual counterparts of the Grimm’s protagonists. The similarity between the setting in Goicolea’s photographs and the plots in the Grimm’s stories is no accident; as Craw and Leonard
discovered, many of the scenarios, which present young boys as warriors preparing
to face their foe, recall the uneven battles between a young protagonist and a
formidable enemy, like Jack and the giant, or Little Red Riding Hood and the wolf
(156). Caught between childhood and adulthood, the makeshift adolescent soldiers
in *Warriors*, 2001, glare, scowl, threaten, pose, and appear bored and disinterested
all at once. However, as closer observation of the artwork reveals, in true fairy tale
fashion and echoing the failure of adults to protect him, just one child is fighting the
battle, with only himself to rely on (fig. 15, page 53).

Elsewhere in the exhibition Tracey Moffatt’s series of photographs, *Scarred for
Life*, 1994, testifies to Van der Kolk’s explanation that childhood trauma does not
have to be life threatening to have long lasting effects. Almost all of Moffat’s
images, coupled with their captions, clearly identify the exact moment of trauma.
One work, however, is confusing. In *Heart Attack, 1970*, a naked man, viewed from
behind through an open door, is leaning over the bed and touching a young girl, in
what appears to be a sexual encounter. The caption tells a different story: “She
glimpsed her father belting the girl from down the street. That day he died of a
heart attack.” The discrepancy between what was viewed (the image) and what was
understood (the text) exemplifies the psychological phenomenon of repression,
which occurs, as this paper has previously explained, when an unacceptable, or
incomprehensible, event is experienced. *Heart Attack, 1970* discloses a trauma too
severe to acknowledge (fig. 16, page 55).

The reference to perverse, even sinister experiences simmering just beneath the
surface in many of the works in the *Mixed-up Childhood* exhibition links it to an
earlier group exhibition, *Scene of the Crime*, held at the Armand Hammer Museum
of Art and Cultural Center, Los Angeles, in 1997. The exhibition of selected works
from the latter half of the twentieth century was curated, not to provide a horror
show of disturbed and disturbing work, but to “raise a reasonable doubt about
whether the usual versions of postwar art history tell the entire story” and to suggest
an alternative approach for interpreting art work (Rugoff, 1997 20).
Please see print copy for Fig. 16.

Writing in the catalogue to the Scene of the Crime exhibition, and referring to a performance work by Ed Ruscha, Royal Road Test, 1967, in which a typewriter was thrown out of the window of a speeding car, and the scattered remnants documented like evidence of a crime, curator, Ralph Rugoff notes:

…it requires that the viewer arrive at an interpretation by examining traces and marks and reading them as clues. In addition, it is marked by a strong sense of aftermath: indeed…[it] is known today only through photographs, and like documents of a crime scene, these images present us not with a set of objects so much as a place where something happened. Inextricably linked to an unseen history, this type of art embodies a fractured relationship to time. Like a piece of evidence, its present appearance is haunted by an indeterminate past, which we confront in the alienated form of fossilized and fragmented remnants (62).

Rugoff suggests that this type of art making, which encompasses conceptual art and installation, requires a forensic aesthetic, not in the construction of the work, but in the approach of the viewer, who must “speculatively piece together histories that remain largely invisible to the eye” (62).

Prior to the Second World War, forensic photographers took photos of the crime scene, and the body if there was one, as a record of the crime and proof of injuries, and very little else. However, once engaged in military combat many of them found themselves dependant on their ability to read every detail of a hostile and foreign environment in order to survive. When they returned to police work they brought with them a new awareness of space, “…an understanding of territory as the holder of all threat and security, something to be scrutinised, decoded and brought back to law” (Gibson, 1999 4). Today the forensic scientist isolates each individual aspect of the crime scene, subjects those elements to a range of expertly supervised tests, and then brings the results together to expose a very different scene to the one originally encountered, a less emotive and more informative scene. It is this search for hidden detail that will be applied to the following selected works from the Scene of the Crime exhibition (fig. 17; fig. 18, page 57).

Pioneering forensic scientist, Edmond Locard founds all forensic investigation on the observation that every contact leaves a trace (Williams, 1999 6). In Admissions Office, 1969, David Hammons supplies the investigator with a trace-to-die-for. Clearly imprinted in black, on the glass panel of a door marked “Admissions Office”, is the body print of a person trying to look inside. Rugoff explains the image as a political comment on the exclusion, by many colleges at the time, of African Americans (1997 77). A closer, forensic inspection, however, reveals that the distortion of a face pressed against glass leaves an image more the shape of a child’s face than that of a mature college student, and in proportion to the door, the imprinted figure is closer to the height of a child than an adult (fig.19, page 59).

Discussing the effects of trauma in children (and adults), van der Kolk, van der Hart, and Marmer (306-307) explain that an individual who suffers the dissociation that accompanies an overwhelming experience remains caught in the nightmare of confused, reoccurring flashbacks and fragmented memories, which cannot be logically explained. Despite the outward appearance of normality, the inability to form a complete personal narrative interferes with the ability of the individual to conduct a fully functioning life. Rather than the act of exclusion by an institution, the contact trace in Hammons’ image, which appears to be left by a door closing in a child’s face, may represent the act of exclusion from a normal life brought about by the experience of a traumatic event. Instead of a literal reading that determines the black imprint as a representation of the black skin of an African American, a forensic interpretation, which identifies the imprint as something other than it first appears to be, proposes that the dark smear alludes to the dark secrets that a traumatic experience buries deep in the psyche. Possibly, whereas the transparent glass panel acknowledges the partial recollection of events, the closed door references the inability of the victim to access a complete picture. Conversely, Eileen Cowin’s untitled cibachrome photograph of 1997 recalls a past event in great detail. The image of a bath draped with green and white sheets, is undoubtedly a post-modern reference to Jacques-Louis David’s Death of Marat.
Please see print copy for Fig. 19.

1793 (Carrier 731). A traditional art historical reading tells us that the photograph’s allusions to both history and criminal activity are twofold, for just as it acknowledges an historical act of political assassination and an historical act of painting, it also refers to the crime of appropriation and the crime of murder. A forensic reading will allow us to see that it alludes to much more (fig. 20; fig. 21, page 61).

With regard to forensic investigation, Peter Wollen reminds us of what we should already know, at least from watching television, if not personal experience:

…that crime scenes should never be disturbed…Nothing should ever be moved until it has been photographed…Nobody should tamper or interfere with anything in any way….The crime scene should be controlled, guarded, and protected; it should be preserved in its integrity, untainted” (25).

Cowin has not followed these rules. Her crime scene is tainted. It was changed before she took the photograph. The body has been moved. There still remains enough evidence to connect it with the Marat murder, and even if the photograph were to be separated from all documentation, as was the fate of the crime scene photographs currently on display at the Justice and Police Museum in Sydney (Watts 9), anyone familiar with the assassination would file it under M. But it would tell a different story. Judging by the bloodstain, Cowin’s photograph would testify that the scene was a place where something sinister had happened, but we are no longer certain what event had actually transpired. By removing the body Cowin has caught our attention and demanded that we look more closely. She knows what writer Luc Sante discovered when he studied archived crime scene photographs from early twentieth century New York: “The more empty the photograph the more it will imply horror” (62).

During the experience of any normal and understandable event the brain identifies, interprets and organises the elements of that experience into a narrative memory, which can be recalled and understood at a later time. When the event is traumatic in nature, with no prior frame of reference, the normal processing cannot occur. In

Fig. 21. Eileen Cowin. Untitled. 1997. Cibachrome print. 50 x 40in. In *Scene of the Crime*. 12
these circumstances the sensory details of the experience are recorded as isolated incidents, but the event itself is never formed into a complete memory (Bennett 23). A forensic reading of Cowin’s retake on David’s painting would suggest that the attention to detail in the reconstructed scene alludes to the heightened sensory awareness of a specific site at the time of trauma, and the missing body is analogous to the unformed memory of the event. Floating as the image does in a black void is indicative of the way that traumatic experiences are isolated from normal processing, triggering the psychological act of dissociation, which has already been explained. David’s painting suggests that Marat was reading a letter at the time of his death, while Cowin’s version of the incident shows the letter lying on the sheet, perhaps indicating the abrupt interruption to a normal activity, which is often the case in a traumatic event, and the resulting interruption to a normal life. Instead of a post-modern comment on art or history, Cowin’s untitled artwork may be a reference to an unnamed crime.

Santa’s Chocolate Shop, 1996-97, a video by Paul McCarthy, leaves the viewer in little doubt as to the nature of the crime to which his work alludes. The photographic still printed in the catalogue presents as the pivotal point of the story, and it seems unnecessary to view any more. The still depicts a man, standing alone in a workshop, wearing a brown animal suit that may represent some kind of reindeer, a supposition that is supported by the long animal nose, the Christmas decorations, and the title of the work. The antlers, however, are out of sight. Since the animal costume is a well used method of breaking the barriers of natural shyness and nurtured wariness of small children, the lack of large, threatening horns is no surprise. Coupled with the promise of Christmas toys and chocolates, however, the disguise is reminiscent of the enticing candy house encountered by Hansel and Gretel, suggesting a less than innocent intention behind the masquerade. The animal suit is torn away at the groin, exposing the man’s genitals and confirming our suspicions. The legal premise of innocent until proven guilty becomes redundant in light of this image. The workshop has become a crime scene (fig. 22, page 63).
Fig. 22. Paul McCarthy. *Santa Chocolate Shop*. 1996-97 (still from video).

Please see print copy for Fig. 22.
Caleb Williams, curator of the Justice and police Museum in Sydney, convinced by forensic experts, proclaims that the crime scene “speaks in a secret code that can be broken by the alert searcher” (21). If we are alert we notice the expression on the face behind the mask as the man/animal looks away from the camera, as though he has been caught in the act. If we are alert we notice that, rather than the defiance of a seasoned perpetrator, or the shame of an addicted paedophile, his stance indicates confusion. His arms are outstretched with the palms of his hands, diminished by his oversized animal suit gloves, facing upwards in a gesture that suggests the surprise of a child unaware of his crime. It almost appears that he is caught wearing someone else’s costume, or left with someone else’s mess. Considering that statistics cited in the exhibition, Jailed. Penitentiary to Private Prison 1840-2000, held at the Justice and Police Museum in 2004-2005, indicate that in the late 1990’s, overall, forty percent of inmates in Australian prisons were exposed to some form of abuse as a child, and amongst those convicted of child abuse the number rose to over seventy percent, it is quite possible that the perpetrator is trapped in the vicious circle of re-enacting behaviours learned from someone else. It is quite probable that he is a victim. As Craw and Leonard note, McCarthy’s work often reminds us “the sins of the father are passed on to the son. It’s conditioning” (142). A forensic reading which evaluates the image as a set of individual clues may uncover more than one layer of evidence, and suggest, as Rugoff did in regard to Ruscha’s work, that the recent event depicted in McCarthy’s video is “inextricably linked” to other events in the past (1997 62).

Unlike the Mixed-up Childhood exhibition, the works in Scene of the Crime were not restricted to artistic responses to childhood, but many of the artworks in the show allude to a “place where something happened” possibly during childhood. Due to the inconclusive explanations provided by traditional art theories, these works have elicited a forensic response, which has in turn uncovered an alternative interpretation of the work. Considering the circumstances of the Grimm’s childhood, acknowledging the effects of trauma on children, and given the evidence that trauma is reworked through artistic endeavours which are possibly better
understood by a forensic reading, it may prove fruitful for this investigation to approach the tales written down by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm in the same manner. Maria Tatar’s observation that “murder, mutilation, cannibalism, infanticide, and incest” are common events throughout the stories, is validation of the violent nature of most fairy tales, and supports the application of a forensic investigation (2003 3). Furthermore, the closest literary genre to fairy tales is crime fiction, which first appeared in the nineteenth century, around the same time as Grimm’s Fairy Tales (fig. 23, page 66). As feminist literary critic, Anne Cranny-Francis, explains, the antecedents to crime stories were the Gothic fictions of the eighteenth century, which were written to address a contradiction central to society, the struggle between good and evil, a struggle acted out repeatedly in fairy tales (1990 144).

Reviewing the development and popularity of the crime fiction genre, forensic psychologist and criminal profiler, Brent Turvey, notes that contemporary humans are equally fascinated with sensational crimes. Turvey suggests that there are two reasons for this. First, we need to acknowledge the dark side of human behaviour, albeit from a safe distance.

Second, there is a need to label criminals in such a way that they are separate from us; that they are not the same as we. This to prove that criminals are monstrous deviations from the norm, and what lives in them could not possibly live in us (10).

Cranny-Francis suggests that since the line dividing good and evil deviates from a regular pattern, adults, like children, must constantly negotiate their position to it (1990 145). Crime stories and fairy tales offer many varied and valuable approaches in this negotiation, and in this regard they function in a similar manner. In the opinion of crime writer and critic, Cathy Cole, the two genres are inseparable because, as she explains it, the monsters of popular crime fiction, such as Hannibal Lecter and Temple Gault1 “are the bogeymen of our childhood… [they are] retellings of fairytales” (114-115).

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1 Hannibal Lecter is the cannibalistic monster in Thomas Harris’ series of work, including The Silence of the Lambs. Temple Gault is the equally sadistic aberration of humanity in the Kay Scarpetta forensic science series by Patricia Cornwell.
Hansel and Gretel: A Forensic Analysis

Groundbreaking analysis of the structure of fairy tales by acclaimed anthropologist, Vladimir Propp (58), determines that the story always begins with the members of a family at home, the drama starts when one or more members leave that home, and the tale concludes when the hero returns home. Accordingly, it seems relevant to focus the forensic investigation of Grimm’s Fairy Tales on the homes depicted in those tales. For the purpose of brevity, rather than taking a magnifying glass and finger printing kit to each of the fairy tale homes that are represented in the accompanying exhibition, Defective Stories, the investigation will focus on the homes in Hansel and Gretel, the tale discussed and critiqued in the previous chapter (fig. 24, page 68).

As we know from Chapter one, the story of Hansel and Gretel begins in the family home of a poor woodcutter, his wife, and their two young children (stage one of Propp’s analysis). When the situation became so grave that there was no longer food for them all beyond the next few days, the wife convinced her husband to take the children into the woods and desert them (stage two of Propp’s analysis). A forensic psychologist would no doubt determine that the real crime in the story was the inequality of a social system that fostered an elite upper class in lavish homes alongside the starving peasant population in little more than temporary huts. Likewise, Jacob and Wilhelm blamed the social situation for the first actual crime in the story, a crime not uncommon throughout the country at that time due to widespread famine, the premeditated abandonment of the children. In the brothers’ personal experience, these crimes were reversed: it was the abandonment by their father, albeit through death rather than a personal decision, that led the family into poverty. Acknowledging his father’s innocence in the real life drama, Wilhelm exonerated him by laying blame for the desertion of the children in the story at the feet of the mother. Then, in a later edition, as has already been explained, he removed culpability from the mother by replacing her with a stepmother.
Please see print copy for Fig. 24.

The stepmother’s initial plan to abandon the children failed, entirely as a result of Hansel’s ingenuity, which alludes to the willingness of the young Grimms to tackle the responsibilities that their father’s death demanded. The second time the children were left in the woods it was Hansel’s plan for survival that failed, in recognition of the inability of young children to carry such a burden. Through the recounting of this final abandonment, which left Hansel and Gretel homeless and lost in the woods without either parent, the Grimms were reliving the trauma, not only of the loss of their father, and the subsequent loss of a their home, but also the eventual separation from their mother and siblings as well, and their consequent need to find their own way in the world.

The opportunity for the brothers to study at university, purely as a result of their hard work at high school, is represented in the story by the discovery, after surviving a terrifying ordeal in the woods, of the Gingerbread House and its promise of salvation. It is here though, despite the justification of hunger, that Hansel and Gretel commit the crime of theft, and are punished by imprisonment. Although Jacob and Wilhelm were not imprisoned, the upper class students and staff of the university treated them as intruders who were not entitled to an education, as this paper has already explained.

Evidence shows that the Gingerbread House was the site of many crimes: not only the theft of food by the lost children and their illegal incarceration by the witch, but also the witch’s attempt at cannibalism, explained in psychological terms as retribution for the children’s act of devouring her house (Bettelheim 162). Ultimately, the children gain victory when Gretel murders the witch. In contemporary western society the law determines that it is the state and not the individual who will mete out punishment, and suitably humane punishment at that, but fairy tales take a different position. Tatar notes that quite often the sufferings planned for the victim are turned against the antagonist, an event illustrated when the witch ends up in the oven instead of the children, suggesting that fairy tales support the Old Testament premise of an eye for an eye (2003
Although there is evidence that Wilhelm attempted to eliminate some of the less acceptable behaviours, such as incest and pregnancy, from the stories, he seems to have had no conscience regarding violence. To illustrate her observations, Tatar explains that Wilhelm “rarely let slip the opportunity to have someone burned at the stake, drowned, forced to dance in red-hot-shoes, torn to pieces, or stripped naked and put in a barrel studded with nails and harnessed to a horse” (2003 181).

When the brother and sister finally returned home (stage three of Propp’s analysis), with the help of a duck, for whom Gretel showed great concern, perhaps to re-establish her compassionate and gentle (female) nature after the aggressive dispatching of the witch, the stepmother had simply disappeared, and their father was alone. The woman’s unexplained disappearance could be viewed by a forensic team as another cause for suspicion, a suspected case of foul play perhaps, delivered by the hands of the father who was remorseful for his compliance in the crime, and exacting his revenge. However, according to Bettelheim’s theory, outlined in chapter 1, which argues that the stepmother was one and the same person as the witch, there is no additional crime. The death of the stepmother-witch is already accounted for, and dismissed.

Although the reintroduction of their own mother would have completed the happy ending, Wilhelm’s hands were tied. He had posed a dilemma for himself by the initial introduction of a stepmother, which presupposes the death of the birth mother, an all too common occurrence in early nineteenth century Germany (Zipes, 2002b 32). However, the dilemma was of minor consequence. In German society during the Grimm Brothers’ lifetime, successful private life, like public life, was dependent on patriarchal rule. Since their trauma was caused by the loss of their father and the consequent loss of their home and social status, the most important task faced by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm was to re-gain their patriarchal heritage (Zipes, 1991b 212). The security of a patriarchal future is the message that still remains at the centre of Grimm’s Fairy tales.
This chapter has shown how a tragic event in childhood can provide a pivotal point of reference for the creative process. In many cases, as current research shows, these episodes of trauma are criminal in nature. The crimes that shattered the early lives of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were not delivered by the hands of monsters, as we know them, but were perpetuated by fate and misfortune, and the elitist and unjust political system of late eighteenth century Germany. Although the brothers overcame the inequities of their lives with the aid of extended family members and the Christian work ethic that was part of their bourgeois legacy, they were not unscarred. The cruel disruption to their normal progression through the developmental stages of childhood ensured that they remained unconsciously fixated in the trauma, condemned to repeatedly revisit the fateful event of their father’s death and the consequent loss of their family home. For Jacob and Wilhelm the regression to the site of trauma was played out through the creative process of writing. While the conscious intent may have been to provide a blueprint for the construction of an ideal German nation, free of bourgeois rule, the constant rewriting of the Grimm’s Fairy Tales was an unconscious yearning for home, their lost home, complete with the patriarchal ideals that informed their early lives.

Since their tales are imbued with the attempt to regain a lost childhood, it is not surprising that the legacy left by the Brothers Grimm speaks so directly to children, and as this paper has shown, its value for children has many facets. Fairy tales provide the opportunity for children to try out various coping mechanisms free from the consequences of failure; they offer a safe arena for acting out the inevitable frustrations of childhood, free from danger or retribution, particularly from the adults on whom they depend; mostly, they address the inherent need in children for a safe home, and empower them to provide it for themselves if the adult world fails to do so. The longing for home, though, is not exclusive to children. Psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, humanitarians and theologians suggest that the search for home is the driving force throughout our
lives. The following chapter will investigate this theory with the intention of explaining why today’s adults, along with their children, are seduced by fairy tales, despite the awareness of their inappropriate and misleading messages.
Chapter 3

Home Sweet Home

For a house to be a home...you need to feel positive about the place:
secure, rooted, comfortable...

Mark Wakely. 3.

The previous chapter explained how the Brothers Grimm attempted, albeit unconsciously, to resolve the trauma of losing their father and home through the creative activity of writing and rewriting the Grimm’s Fairy Tales, and that it is the protagonists’ search for home, the central theme in fairy tales, which captures the imagination of children because the need to find one’s own place in the world is one of the drives that is born with the child. However, the problem remains, particularly for feminist critics, that fairy tales also deliver inappropriate and outdated patriarchal messages that are largely ignored by parents who support the stories. The previous chapter concluded with the suggestion that the reason for this apparent blindness to a serious flaw in the suitability of fairy tales for a contemporary audience might arise from the fact that the driving search for home is not restricted to physical needs, nor to children, and thus the messages of the fairy tale speak to an inherent need in all of us. This chapter will investigate that idea, and ascertain how it manifests in contemporary society.

While reviewing the role of the home in general, the paper will focus on the home of the ‘50s because it is the home of my childhood, which is represented, remembered and investigated, in the accompanying exhibition, Defective Stories, where it co-habits with fairy tale homes. By investigating the relationship that Australians have with their homes, and the reasons, both physical and psychological, for their dependence on the home for safety, the chapter will explain how fairy tales address the inherent need for home in adults as well as children.
Furthermore, it will demonstrate how, despite exposing the abuse that some children experience at the hands of adults within the supposedly safe environment of home, fairy tales offer exoneration to the guilty parent.

Having explained the reasons why adults continue to support the outdated patriarchal messages in fairy tales, the paper will demonstrate the way in which the culture industry, which depends on consumption for its survival, has utilised the attraction of Grimm’s Fairy Tales for both adults and children to serve its own needs. The thesis will argue that by encouraging the continued production and presentation of fairy tales in all their various forms the government directed culture industry, which provides a contemporary guide-for-life, is promoting the sale of the associated merchandise, while simultaneously preaching patriarchal lore. Finally, to further establish the long lasting impact of the childhood home, whether a safe haven or a repository of unhappy memories, the chapter will review and compare the artwork made by Javier Lara-Gomez while he was an inmate of Long Bay Gaol with the work of world renowned twentieth century sculptor, Louise Bourgeois.

First, in order to fully appreciate the way that the idea of home was constructed in post World War II white Australia, we must track its evolution from the essential shelter of early settlers, isolated in a foreign and hostile land, to the Great Australian Dream of the fifties. In the early days of the colony, the unfamiliar country itself presented dangers to the new settlers, and home, simple as it was, provided the only means of shelter and protection. According to Peter Pierce, professor of Australian literature, not only was the reality of this threat demonstrated in the many reported cases of colonials lost in the bush, it also became the theme of several poems, stories and paintings of the colonial period, in which, more often than not, the missing person was a child (17). Amongst the most famous of these representations of children lost in the bush are Frederick McCubbin’s painting, The Lost Child, 1886, and the novel by Joan Lindsay, Picnic at Hanging Rock, which achieved international attention when Peter Weir made it into a feature length movie. Although written in 1967, and released as a film in

Fig. 26b. *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (still from movie). Patricia Lovell on behalf of Picnic Productions Pty Ltd. In *The Country of Lost Children. An Australian Anxiety*. 161.
1975, the story, which tells of the mysterious disappearance of three schoolgirls in Victoria’s Macedon Ranges, was set around a Valentine’s Day picnic, in 1900 (fig. 25, page 75; fig. 26, page 76).

In the 1890’s there were also several Australian fairy tales developed around the theme of lost children, although, unlike the stories penned by the Grimms, which suggest that the threat most often arises from the creatures, human or otherwise, who inhabit the forests, the danger in the Australian tales seems to be inherent in the landscape itself. In a comparison of the Australian fairy tales written by Atha Westbury, Jessie Whitfield and Ethel Pedley, and those published by the Brothers Grimm, Pierce suggests that the common theme is the importance of the life lessons that were learned by the protagonists (60-63). Child psychologist, Bruno Bettelheim supports this evaluation of fairy tales by suggesting: “In fairy tales, being lost in the forest symbolises not a need to be found, but rather that one must find or discover oneself” (220). Pierce believes that the focus on the lost child and the emphasis on the land as perpetrator in these representations not only attests to the real fear that parents held, due to their own lack of knowledge about the country, and thus their defencelessness, but also to a deeper sense of loss arising from the separation from family and motherland that they themselves experienced, whether by choice or imposition. In Pierce’s words:

> Symbolically, the lost child represents the anxieties of European Settlers because of the ties with home which they have cut in coming to Australia, whether or not they journeyed here by choice. The figure of the child stands in part for the apprehensions of adults about having sought to settle in a place where they might never be at peace (xii).

The only respite from the foreboding sense of helplessness against such unfamiliar external dangers and internal despair was found in the safety and security of the home.

In the 20th century, when much of the bush was settled, and there was a greater understanding of the nature of the Australian outback, fear of the hostile land turned
to a guarded respect for its perils, and although the threatening and dangerous
Australian bushland continued as a theme in Australian literature, it was no longer
seen exclusively as the enemy, but as a possible ally to those who understood it.
Referring to the crime stories written in the 1940’s by Australian writer Arthur
Upfield, which featured Aboriginal police officer, Napoleon Bonaparte (Bony),
Steven Knight, professor of English literature, notes that the stories often conclude
with the land itself delivering the punishment to the perpetrator, whether by fire,
famine, or a hostile animal (144). Apparently, increasing familiarity with the
foreign land and the gradual taming of the landscape had eased the anxieties of the
people.

However, as the rest of the world became more accessible and, effectively, closer to
home, the First World War brought the threat again from outside, this time
delivered at the hands of a human, yet equally foreign, enemy. Although the
fighting took place in Europe, Australian men rallied to the cause, leaving their
families and the Australian shores, to help contain and eventually end the hostilities
far from our door. The title of home, originally reserved for the motherland far
away, and then allocated to each individual dwelling, was extended to encompass
the country. These threats to security were repeated with the terror of World War II,
which came even closer to home, and were exacerbated by the possibility of mass
annihilation from nuclear weapons. Although the west was again triumphant and
the threat destroyed, thus enabling the western nations to embark on an ascent into
stability and prosperity and an expectation that living conditions would improve
(Herlinger 120), our politicians warned that we must expect a strong element of
instability in the post-war years (Coombs 76-77).

This uncertainty came in the form of the cold war, which brought not only fear of
communist invasion but also the mistrust of our own trade unions. According to
political historians Stephen Alomes, Mark Dober and Donna Hellier,

...the Communists were seen as saboteurs and wreckers. In the
politics of paranoia, they were seen as sinister conspirators and
operators undermining the working of Australian democracy or even
The Australian way of life. The menace without and the threat within were seen as inextricably linked (9-10).

The cold war brought an insidious creeping fear that once again threatened destruction from outside, enabled by those closer to home; a destruction that could come with little or no warning and less chance of defence, recalling a similar threat to that imposed, in the past, by the unknown and untamed Australian bush. Once again people sought solace in the perceived safety of their homes.

The desire to seek physical safety and security within its own haven, which psychologist, writer and broadcaster, Stephanie Dowrick (180), believes to be an inherent trait of human nature, was rapidly embraced by the triumphant capitalist American government, and thus the Great American Dream of owning one’s own home was promoted, not only as a means of physical security but also as the way to individual financial freedom. The monetary investment required to achieve this dream, an investment that was essential to the survival of a capitalist society, (Zipes, 1997 7) was in turn, readily adopted as a personal goal by the members of that society. In support of, and a desire for, the emerging American way of life and its promise of personal and financial security, the Australian government and the Australian people followed suit (McFarlane 29). Marriage, which had increased during the war continued to do so into the ‘fifties (Sullivan 40), and Commonwealth Prices Commissioner and Economic Consultant to the Prime Minister, Professor D. B. Copeland, decreed that “A special feature of the Government programme of national works should be its housing plans” (152). As the dust of the war settled, the Great Australian Dream of owning one’s own home took full flight (fig. 27. page 80).

The home of the fifties was a dream home. Even the more modest versions featured modern and innovative designs and materials, and labour saving devices that promised to free the parents for more family time (Oliver 95). The families who started with the purchase of a small home looked forward to the possibility of adding another room or at least a verandah, a situation which was brought about in

Fig. 28. Buster Keaton’s One Week (still from the movie).
The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. In Dream Home.
part by easy to use materials and the rise of the owner-builder (fig. 28, page 81). In fact, throughout the fifties, one third of the houses built in Australia were built by their owners (Wakely 39). Commenting on this trend, historian and curator of social history, Charles Pickett (97), explains that the fibro manufacturers in particular took advantage of the post-war housing boom to promote do-it-yourself products, even to the extent of producing enamelled fibro panels for ultra modern, streamlined bathrooms. As supply problems decreased and wartime controls were lifted houses were erected in increasing numbers. Almost two hundred thousand new homes were built in Sydney between 1947 and 1961, of which one fifth were housing commission homes that provided the opportunity for lower income earners to benefit from the rise of a democratic society (Kendig 109). Sydney, like Melbourne and Adelaide, almost doubled its population between 1947 and 1971, and home ownership rose during this period from fifty to seventy percent (Kendig 66).

Of this period, pre-eminent Australian architect, Robin Boyd, remarked that Australians embraced their homes with “…the strange sort of possessive love with which people have always regarded their shelters” (250-251). French architect, Olivier Marc (7), believes that we experience this possessive love because there is a psychological space inside us that we are attempting to replicate externally in the building and re-building of our homes. For Marc (14), this strong personal connection we have with our homes stems from the desire to regain the perfect conditions of the ultimate home, the womb; a hope which he believes is forever doomed to frustration except on a higher plane of consciousness (fig. 29, page 83). Freudian psychologists explain Marc’s thesis as part of our personal psychosexual development that must be addressed before we can move on, while Jungian proponents challenge the psychosexual developmental theory, and suggest that it is our search for the universal home in which we are all one. Jungians agree, however, with Marc’s belief that it can only be found on a higher level of consciousness (Zipes, 2002b 24). The psychoanalytic theory could explain the attempt to put our personal stamp on our homes, while the Jungian belief in our
Please see print copy for Fig. 29.

attempt to re-unite as a whole is supported by the way we cluster in groups. Either way, Sarah Pink, British sociologist and feminist, agrees that the act of homemaking is a work in progress:

*Although it might be possible to invest one’s identity in an architectural and material and sensory space called a home it is rarely possible to do so completely. As a forever incomplete project, home is never completely realised materially, but instead exists partially in one’s imagination as a series of constantly developing dreams or plans.*

These dreams and plans, and the attempt to establish our own identity, are most easily realised by focusing on the interior space of our dwelling, by the addition, alteration and replacement of furniture and fittings.

Consequently, interior design played a large part in the development of post-war domestic identity. Originally designed to suit the more compact living spaces, the newer streamlined furniture, often styled in Europe and America, quickly replaced its ornate and bulkier predecessors as the emblem of high quality and fashion. However, as journalist and social commentator, Julie Oliver, notes, without doubt, the piece-de-resistance of post-war home decor was the television set. Australians fell in love with television and, despite the high cost of most sets, almost immediately demand was approximately ten times the available supply, with many families going into debt to embrace a totally new lifestyle (11). The television became the focus of family life and seating arrangements in the family living room changed from the popular circular pattern that allowed for ease of conversation to a semicircular arc facing the screen (Oliver 126-128).

Television brought the world into the living room, not only expanding the horizons of each inhabitant, but also making the home more self-contained. Through the new medium, the popular family sitcoms mentioned in the previous chapter idealised the nuclear family and promoted the stereotypical gender roles praised in fairy tales. Even the women who had held jobs and kept the nation functioning during the war were expected to return to a life of domesticity (Zipes, 1986 30). Furthermore, fairy
tales themselves flourished in the new medium. Prior to television, the modern version of fairy tales, the animated movies created in the Disney studios, were only available to awestruck children via a special and rare visit to the cinema. The weekly Disney television show, The Mickey Mouse Club, not only brought the animated fairy tales into the home, it also introduced children to the wonders of the world. However, not only did television replace, or at least supplement, the radio, the theatre, and the movies for entertainment purposes, it also brought news of world events more vividly into the Australian psyche, and these events were not always welcome. In 1960, the unfolding terror of one major, devastating event had families glued to their screens: the kidnapping of eight-year-old Sydney schoolboy, Graeme Thorne. The Australian people were once again confronted with the anguish of losing a child to a faceless predator (fig. 30a, page 87).

In 1960 Basil and Freda Thorne, a middle-class couple from Bondi, won the relatively new Opera House Lottery. As a result of their new found wealth and the publicity they received, their son, Graeme, was abducted on his way to school, and held to ransom. The kidnapping went terribly wrong and Graeme died before the money was handed over (Brown and Wilson 23-27). In the following five and a half weeks, as the Thornes waited in steadily diminishing hope of recovering their son, the nation, once again, succumbed to its fear of the unknown. Children were kept indoors, or allowed out only under supervision, and the whole family watched from the safety of their home as the nightly television news broadcasts continually reinforced the new form of terror that lurked outside, a terror that social historian, Noel Sanders, perceives as more threatening because of its cold-blooded and calculated nature (104).

Sanders also implicated the effects of television on children in the growing public panic, which increased as the days and weeks went by until the body was found (fig. 30b, page 87). Explaining how the brothers who found the body on a rock ledge that they referred to as a “fort” (cowboy-style) had known about it for several weeks before they told their parents, Sanders notes:
The ‘forts’ on television and the nightly TV spectacle of the corpses surrounding them had mapped in with the kid’s fantasy space, especially since they had failed to mention the real corpse they had seen. It seemed to confirm an emerging concern that the images of TV fantasy could confuse the line between reality and fantasy (105).

Children, however, are not the only ones susceptible to fantasy. The fact that the kidnapper proved to be an immigrant, a fact pre-empted in an article in the Sydney Morning Herald only one day after the kidnapping, provided some form of solace for the Australian people: an Australian could not be capable of such a hideous crime. It was perpetrated by an outsider (Sanders 103).

Solace in this form, however necessary, is only shallow. Fear remains dormant, just below the surface, ready to break through with the slightest ripple. For the Australian people, the next ripple came as a thundering surge on Australia Day, 1966, when not one, but three children “vanished without a trace” in broad daylight, from South Australia’s Glenelg Beach (Kidd 237). The Beaumont children, nine-year-old Jane, seven-year-old Arna, and Grant, four, were never found. Australian newspaper journalist and crime researcher, Alan Whiticker, believes: “More than any other crime, the disappearance of the three siblings…seems to have permanently damaged the Australian psyche” (117). He suggests that it has become “…one of the defining crimes in the history of this country” (117). Following so closely on the heels of Graeme Thorne’s kidnapping and murder, the disappearance of the Beaumont children, and the fruitless search for any clues, which was recounted nightly in all its detail in the lounge rooms of myriad Australian homes, courtesy of the television camera, succeeded in undermining any remaining sense of security. Once again parents were terrified of the unnamed dangers that lurked outside their door, and the relatively free and innocent way of life experienced by many children in the post-war security of suburban Sydney was abruptly, perhaps irretrievably, taken away (fig. 31, page 88).
Fig. 30a. Kidnap victim, Graeme Thorne. Justice and Police Museum collection. School children were asked to cut this photo from the newspaper and carry it, in case they recognised the boy.

Fig. 30b. Vacant block where Graeme Thorne’s body was found. Justice and Police Museum collection.
Please see print copy for Fig. 31.

Fig. 31. Max Dupain. Playtime in Woolloomooloo. 1950s.
In Insites, Spring 2004. Cover
After two hundred years of displacement, war, and horrendous crimes it was apparent that the new Australians were not going to experience a life of happily-ever-after, as they may once have hoped. Over time, however, their attitude to the unique land had changed, and people began to embrace it, and even build the Australian character around it. So much so that when baby Azaria Chamberlain disappeared from her parents’ tent at Uluru (known at the time by the western name of Ayers Rock) in 1980, and her mother, Lindy, the wife of a Seventh Day Adventist minister, reported sighting a dingo running from the area with a bundle in its mouth, the nation was divided in its loyalty. Once again fear of the land and its creatures threatened to invade the fragile Australian psyche.

Pierce believes that the growing Australian disbelief in Lindy Chamberlain’s innocence was centered on the growing attempt to identify with the land and its unique creatures, and the misguided “refusal to credit dingoes with such active and malign agency” (175). Since the baby disappeared in the most untamed part of the country where the dingo was symbolic of the unique land with which the colonial settlers were slowly coming to terms, journalist and historian, Richard Evans (9), suggests that it was easier to condemn the woman who accused the dingo, and thus threatened this developing, yet fragile, relationship with the country, than to acknowledge again the sense of alienation from the land and its native animals that had been experienced in the past. Particularly so when the woman followed a strange religion, dressed her baby in black, and then refused a public show of emotion at her loss. Although the native aboriginals, who possessed a close cultural relationship with the land and were more comfortable and accepting of its reality, never doubted the mother’s story, the local western inhabitants of the Northern Territory, to whom Lindy Chamberlain was an outsider, named her as the perpetrator, and thus the scapegoat for their own dark fears. Evans (9) believes that these fears extend beyond the fear of strangers, or unknown forces, and touch on our barely acknowledged fear of ourselves. Declaring that an outsider is responsible for evil proves we are not. Lindy Chamberlain’s incarceration served the same symbolic purpose as retreating into our own homes: psychologically it removed the

Fig. 32b. Wild Dingo. Photograph courtesy of Michael Flowerdale. In Through My Eyes. The Autobiography of Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton. 422c.
threats to ourselves and our families that we overtly believe to lurk outside but secretly suspect to also dwell within (fig. 32, page 90).

Peter Doyle, curator of the exhibition, City of Shadows: Inner City Crime and Mayhem 1912-1948, at the Justice and Police Museum in Sydney, supported by the numerous crime scene photographs that make up the exhibition, notes that despite attempts to present an outward appearance of stability, the front door of the private home represents a boundary between the external image and the internal reality of the home. According to Doyle, who refers to these photographs collectively as “Our Dark Places”, the personal details of life behind those doors “…were not generally discussed in public, rarely written about, and depicted - if at all – only in the most idealised ways” (exhibition text panel). Pink, supported by crime statistics, agrees with Doyle by acknowledging that, regardless of our claims, home is not always a site for the production of “happy empowered identities”, but might also be a breeding ground of secrets, suffering, violence, and physical and mental domestic abuse, that are part of the everyday home lives of many people (23). It is fear of this dark aspect of our own natures that we attempt to deny by finding a scapegoat like Lindy Chamberlain, or the foreigner who introduced kidnapping into the country, or, failing a human on whom to lay blame, the land itself.

Ross Gibson, researcher, writer and filmmaker, investigates this tendency of human nature in his book Seven Versions of an Australian Badland, which recalls and ponders on the violence, mystery and tragedy that haunted a desolate stretch of road in northern Queensland; a stretch of road which Gibson has travelled many times since his childhood (19). Known as the Horror Stretch, the strip of road that runs between Rockhampton and McKay has been the site of several murders and many more incidents of violence and mystery, reaching back to colonial times and the real fear of the unknown land. The isolated and eerie nature of the road, along with its malevolent history and the exaggerated, almost mythic versions of its stories, make it the perfect badland, a place which Gibson describes as a natural setting for an imagined evil (15). Gibson suggests that we nurture our badlands as a place to
Please see print copy for Fig. 33.

banish and isolate all evil, imagined or otherwise, so that goodness, by contrast, can be claimed for the regions that we inhabit (17). This need is exacerbated when our home, or homeland, is threatened (fig. 33, page 92).

With the devastating events of what is now known as 9-11, the destruction of the World Trade Centre in the heart of New York’s business district by terrorist suicide bombers in 2001, the need to promote a sense of security has been uppermost in the policy of patriarchal western governments. They have attempted to achieve this in the way that will secure the future of the government itself, rather than that of its people: by waging war against the enemy, even when there is no proof who the enemy is or where the enemy is to be found. Gibson explains this strategy by stating, “…the law needs the outlaw for reassuring citizens that the unruly and unknown can be named and contained even if they cannot be annihilated” (178). Western leaders justify their aggressive actions by encouraging a return to fundamentalist Christian beliefs, which support the exclusion of all opposing ideologies: beliefs that are also inherent in the two-century-old Grimm’s Fairy Tales.

Regarding individual safety, the government is placing emphasis on the need for citizens to secure their own homes, just as the government is securing the nation. Given our natural tendency, supported by historical evidence, to retreat physically and psychologically into our homes at times of stress and fear, it is not too difficult for the government to exact compliance with its policy. Converting our homes to our own personal fortress involves not only the excessive though increasing use of external security devices, such as alarms and security cameras, but also, and more commonly, the construction of a self contained and private world within its walls. By preaching the need for increased personal security the patriarchal capitalist government is promoting consumption, and relying on the culture industry, an essential tool of such a government, to maintain it.
As Zipes explains, the purchase of larger and more elaborate televisions and home entertainment systems, for which increasing numbers of families are going into debt, just as they did when television first came to Australia, brings political dogma into the home and the psyche of the people (1997 114). The fear mongering has been so successful that the seven television network claims that its program, *Border Security, Australia’s Front Line*, a show that exposes illegal attempts to cross our borders and smuggle contraband into the country, is the most popular show on television (2006). The reason for this is explained by scientific journalist Michael Bond. In an article that draws on numerous scientific studies, Bond reports how “…people base their predictions about the future more on the vividness and emotional impact of past events than on the probability of them happening again” (19). Since television is visual and direct it is more likely to trigger a strong emotional response and change our attitude to an event, regardless of our intellectual understanding of the circumstances. Furthermore, Bond reports that our anxiety rises in proportion to our exposure to television stimulus (19). Since regular news programs, almost nightly, expose us to directly transmitted, and politically edited, images of terrorist attacks that threaten our independence from outside, we are conditioned, irrationally, to believe that we are in immediate danger, as Bond explains, and thus retreat even further into our private fortresses (19).

Just as the news editorials condition adults so the equally manipulative mass-mediated versions of the Grimm’s tales “play a crucial role in the socialization of children throughout much of the modern world” by delivering patriarchal messages, courtesy of the big home screen (Zipes, 2002 154). The patriarchal ideal, alive and well in traditional fairy tales, of confining women within the boundaries of domesticity serves to indoctrinate children at an early age into accepting archaic dominant/submissive male/female roles. For Zipes, the literary versions of fairy tales and their filmic adaptations also impact on adults by enticing them to believe that the scripts of submission/domination are personal experiences rather than a form of mass control by a patriarchal government intent on promoting its own ideologies (1994 47).
Since parents hold the power in the family situation they also harbour the guilt of abusing that power, albeit unintentionally, in the same way that is common to many fairy tales. However, despite exposing the guilt, the tales also offer exoneration. Even though child abuse and abandonment was a common occurrence amongst war-torn and destitute German peasants, and thus a common theme of folktales, middle class Wilhelm could not justify blaming parents for such behaviour. As this paper has previously explained, in subsequent editions of the Grimm’s Fairy Tales he removed power for such decisions from the father, and replaced the mother with a dominant stepmother on whom he could lay blame and eventually punishment, with a free conscience. Despite the numerous trials encountered in fairy tales, Wilhelm Grimm ensured that a happy home was always secured in the end.

Visual Artists and Memories of Home

For prison inmate, Javier Lara-Gomez, home in Sydney’s Long Bay gaol was far from ideal. Discussing prison conditions and the difficulties faced by prisoners, author and social researcher, Neer Korn, explains: “Inmates lives are greatly restricted and they are preoccupied with finding ways of beating the system, ridiculing it, rising above it” (33). Lara-Gomez rose above it by employing sculpture as a way of creating alternative spaces. Between 1993 and 1997, whilst an inmate of the maximum security unit, Lara-Gomez created highly lacquered, brightly coloured and obsessively detailed architectural models of buildings, which recalled a happier life of freedom and choice. Lara-Gomez grew up in a Colombian family of craftspeople, and it was in this genial family setting that he gained the ability to fashion a range of discarded materials into objects that blossomed with a new life, along with the philosophy that was to become a valuable aid in transcending the oppression of the prison environment (fig. 34, page 96). The churches, casinos and houses that he fashioned acted as a reminder of home. Of these pieces Bruce Adams, art critic and writer, says: “His objects of worship and entertainment suppressed the austerity of prison life by endorsing the artist’s different cultural reality” (4).
El Palacio de la Salsa, 1997, represents a four-story palace of grand style, ornately decorated with turrets reaching to the sky. The upper floor, which appears to be different to the other three, and features a rooftop balcony from which the tallest of the turrets emerge, is awash with welcoming lights that shine through its numerous windows. For all its grandeur, it is a lively and happy building that recalls parties and celebrations, far removed from life in a prison. Kathleen Caper (82), curator of education programs at the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Sydney, suggests that the title might refer to the dance of the same name; a theory that is strongly supported by an investigative peep inside. Tiny guitars, apparently crafted for the purpose by Lara-Gomez, lean against the walls, which are lined with record album covers. Photographs of musical instruments are strewn across the floor. There appears to be little doubt that Lara-Gomez remembers buildings that were safe and happy havens (fig. 35, page 98).

Physical and psychological safety are commodities rarely found in prison. As Williams notes, prison culture is fraught with nervous tension as inmates depend on their wits to avoid the gangs and survive physical and sexual abuse. Furthermore, any sign of weakness in the face of such pressure is despised by inmates and guards alike (2004 6-7). For the inmate there is little opportunity to feel at peace, and Lara-Gomez ponders on his plight in Town Hall Church, 1997. Once again there is a welcoming light that glows warmly through the round coloured glass windows, and reflects across the marbled floor with its images of saints. The door to this comforting building, however, is barred by a pendulum, which fills the whole space, and above the blocked entrance the image of a Christian cross covers the face of a clock with only one hand. The clock, pendulum, and Christian symbol, together with the title, which incorporates church and state, may serve as a reminder for its creator that he must pay his dues to society, before he can return to the comforting arms of a Christian congregation. The painstaking and time consuming detail with which Lara-Gomez adorns his models, illustrated by the use of hundreds of plastic clips that once sealed packets of bread and now tile the roof of the church, may indicate a patient acceptance of his fate.
Not only the ingenuity of creating perfectly realistic roof tiles with the plastic tags, but the ability to procure these things within the prison environment, have established Lara-Gomez’ assemblages as outstanding feats of creativity and determination. Furthermore, it attests to the regard that his fellow inmates held for him. Stuart, also an inmate at Long Bay, explains that personal items are usually accumulated only when someone goes home and hands their things on, as a courtesy, to another inmate (Korn 115). Lara-Gomez’ work so intrigued the residents of the prison, that they collected all manner of materials for him and left them in his overflowing cell, a breach of regulations that the equally fascinated guards not only overlooked, but even facilitated (Caper 83).

Regardless of the material, Lara-Gomez found a way to transform it. A string of sixty miniature Christmas tree lights, supplied by Sue Paull, co-ordinator of the Malibar Art Unit and Boom Gate Gallery at Long Bay, inspired Lara-Gomez to recreate his prison home, Wing Ten, which consists of sixty four cells (Caper 83). Although this was a break from his usual practice of constructing buildings that spoke of freedom, 10 Wing, 1997, celebrated a different reality to that normally associated with incarceration. Speaking of the building itself Paull states:

This is a maximum security setting, a collection of century-old buildings with high walls, razor wire and bars. But the gaol also has unexpected elements, such as a set of large murals painted by inmates in the 1980s, which visually transforms the centre of this austere environment into an illusory, fantastic realm (2).

The murals depict idyllic landscapes of grass and trees rather than stone walls, open spaces free of bars, and prosperous cities with lavish buildings. Rather than guards the cities are watched over by a caring creator and famous saints, who diminish the barred windows and transcend the heavily bolted door. It is these spiritual elements that Lara-Gomez celebrates in his work.

Although the recreation of Wing Ten constructed by Lara-Gomez features a slightly different version of the murals originally painted on the actual building by Tim Guider and other inmates in 1986, it portrays the same message. Where Guider and

his team had painted copies of famous religious paintings, Lara-Gomez collaged his building with prints from magazines supplied to him by the Art Gallery of New South Wales (Caper 83). The Christmas tree lights, shining through the small barred windows display a welcoming sight quite contrary to the realities of prison life, perhaps indicative of the nurturing environment in the art program. Regarding the daily workings of the program, Caper (82) explains how the ten inmates selected by Paull each year work together in a studio environment and are housed in the same block, encouraging an “artistic fraternity” that, to some extent, replicates a family situation: a situation which is totally alien to most prison experiences (fig. 36; fig. 37, page 100).

Shortly after completing 10 Wing, when the art program was temporarily closed in 1997, Lara-Gomez was transferred to Goulburn Gaol where the realities of prison life caught up with him. Not long after arriving at Goulburn he was murdered by another inmate. Fortunately, his unique celebrations of home and his dedication to reconstructing memories of a better life have survived the artist. His work was exhibited in a solo show at the Casula Powerhouse in 2000, and appears from time to time in a variety of exhibitions and articles, which quite often explore artistic recollections of home.

Renowned sculptor Louise Bourgeois also produces work that recalls her early years. In an interview conducted by art critics, Rainer Crone and Petrus Graf Schaesberg, Bourgeois stated: “All my work in the past fifty years, all my subjects, have found their inspiration in my childhood” (17). By her own admission, however, in contrast to the fond memories immortalised by Lara-Gomez, not all of Bourgeois’ recollections were of happy times, as her following comments about the first of her cells, Articulated Lair, 1986, demonstrates. Initially, Bourgeois describes the piece, a panelled room that features two doors, as “a place to go, a place you need to go, a transitory protection” (Crone and Schaesberg 13). Although her statement refers to the shelter offered by home, her further comment, that one door is to enter by, and the other for escape, if needed, convinces Crone and
Schaesberg that Articulated Lair alternates between a shelter which provides a sense of freedom and security to a trap or prison (13).

Bourgeois’ apparent yearning for the safety of home and her negative response to it may stem from her conflicting memories of family life. As Bourgeois explains it:

_To affirm your identity, you make the past – which in certain ways you hate – into a beautiful thing. But when you go back and see the actual scene of the crime...the actual scene of your early years, you don’t recognise it. Either you have embellished it, or you have torn it apart, or you have murdered it, or you have made it a pie-in-the-sky. Whatever you did you don’t recognise it._ (Rinder 24-25).

The past to which Bourgeois refers, her childhood, was spent in early twentieth century France. Born into a patriarchal French society, Bourgeois, who was named after her father, Louis, in a ploy to counter his disappointment at the birth of a second daughter, grew up watching her mother’s attempts to cope with his arrogant and hurtful behaviours. In 1974 Bourgeois made her famous work, _Destruction of the Father_, which was a response to his cruel and belittling manner towards the family (Storr 39). The same theme was addressed in a drawing, Untitled, 1986, which features several pairs of red scissors pointing menacingly toward each other (fig. 38, page 103; fig. 39, page 104). Bourgeois explained this drawing as a reference to dialogue, which, in her experience, was about cutting each other down to size (Rinder 139-141). After reviewing a lifetime of her drawings, a large proportion of which recalled memories of home, Rinder declared that for Bourgeois the house is “...the site of infidelity, treachery, and abuse...”(18). To understand Rinder’s conclusion, and the effect that her parents’ emotional battle had on Bourgeois’ views of her early family life, we need only look at her series of drawings, _Femme-Maison_, 1945-1947, which combine, as one, a woman and her house.

In a story about her home, Bourgeois describes her body as a house with several storeys (Hubbard 40), a description clearly illustrated in her femme-maison pieces.

Please see print copy for Fig. 38.
Commenting on the many references to houses throughout her work, art critic, Paul Gardner, notes that the cellar is “… her favourite part of the house, the ultimate hideout or lair” which she likens to the unconscious (51-53). Conversely, the attic represents the conscious mind, and as French philosopher, Gaston Bachelard, states: “Up near the roof all our thoughts are clear” (18). However, in each of Bourgeois’ three versions of the woman house illustrated, there is no head. The house has absorbed the woman’s identity along with her ability to think for herself. Gardner (49) suggests that it may be pertinent to the interpretation of the work to note that although the title *Femme Maison* is usually translated as woman house, the French word “femme” can also mean wife. With this in mind the work can be read as a direct reference to her mother’s situation, as a housewife with no say in the way her marriage was conducted. The exposed female anatomy in each of the “wife house” drawings may refer to the fact that her mother’s situation was no secret (fig.40, page 106).

Amongst Bourgeois’ most persistent memories of the family home in Choissy-le-Roi is the memory of the mistress who her father brought to live with them for ten years (Storr 37-39); a situation that is reminiscent of the disruption to a happy family, in many fairy tales, brought about by the introduction of a stepmother. Monsieur Bourgeois cited his daughter’s education as the reason for the woman’s presence, and her mother used Louise to report on their activities. Louise referred to this dual role she played in the family triangle as child abuse (1982, 44). Storr explains the connection between these early experiences and her work in the following way:

* Bourgeois suffered terrible damage as a result of the stress she experienced in the sexually immature years of her childhood and early adolescence. The obsessional return to those traumatic times, and the hope-against-hope that that damage can be retroactively undone or patched has been the driving force behind everything she has made (40).

Hubbard agrees with Storr’s response to Bourgeois’ work. In her headless figures, she sees “Childhood trauma and its implications…denoting psychic damage” (40).
Please see print copy for Fig. 40.

Fig. 40. Louise Bourgeois.

a. *Femme Maison*. 1946-47. Oil and ink on linen. 91.5 x 35.5cm.
b. *Femme Maison*. 1945-47. Oil and ink on canvas. 91.5 x 35.5cm.
c. *Femme Maison*. 1946-47. Oil and ink on linen. 91.5 x 35.5cm.

Please see print copy for Fig. 41.

The cell, Choisy, 1990-1993, contains a caged marble replica of the family home over which a guillotine blade is suspended; further reference to the headless figure. The work also displays a sign from her father’s workshop. Storr (82) interprets this piece as the fear of being cut off from the past, but given the blatant disruption to a happy family life that was brought about by the inclusion of the mistress, it may more specifically refer to the severing of the family unit, a direct reaction to her father’s infidelity. In a similar manner to Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm’s focus on home in their fairy tales, the repeated theme of the home in the art of Louise Bourgeois strongly suggests an attempt to reconcile a childhood trauma (fig. 41, page 107).

In support of this suggestion, Gardner notes: “…repetition is refinement, another attempt to solve a problem” (104). Perhaps the strongest testimony to Bourgeois’ progress in resolving her childhood problems is a sculpture that also bears the title Femme-Maison, made in 1983, almost forty years after the drawings of the same name (fig. 42, page 109). For Gardner this work is “an emblematic self-portrait: Bourgeois, late in life” (53). Rather than the shapely and exposed nude figures displayed in the drawings, the marble sculpture features a fuller, if somewhat sagging figure, which recalls early fertility goddess sculptures, rather coyly draped in what Mieke Bal, cultural analyst and Professor-at-large at Cornell University, refers to as Bernini’s infinite folds (101). The head is still displaced by a dwelling, but it is small and somewhat diminished by the body, and “voluptuously sinks into the royal robe” (Bal 102). Femme-Maison, 1983, may be an indication that Louise Bourgeois is finally breaking free from the emotionally restricting walls of her childhood home, and creating her own place in life. As Gardner observes: “To Louise Bourgeois the studio is definitely home” (10).

Through their creative expression visual artists, Louise Bourgeois and Javier Lara-Gomez have attempted to transcend difficulties and establish a safe and happy home, and to challenge a dominant patriarchal order. Lara-Gomez attempted to do this by creating spaces that reached beyond the oppression of prison conditions,
whereas Bourgeois exposed and whittled away at unjust paternal rule. Jacob and
Wilhelm Grimm were attempting the same thing, but because of the time and
manner in which they wrote their fairy tales, the patriarchal messages persisted.
Although adults are well aware of the outdated ideologies that are contained in
Grimm’s Fairy Tales they continue to support the stories because the main theme of
the tales, the quest to secure a safe haven, resonates with the inherent need for
home that is common to all humans, whether child or adult. While many fairy tales
expose the ways in which certain adults abuse the power that they hold in the
family unit, often with the best of intentions, they also provide exoneration for
remorseful parents by offering a scapegoat, usually an outsider of some sort, for
each unjust incident. This tendency in fairy tales to allocate blame elsewhere
replicates the human trait of creating a “badland”, a place removed from us, in
which to situate all evil, and thus preserve the notion of our safe home.
Furthermore, failing the availability of a scapegoat, in any form, on whom to lay
blame, fairy tale scenarios provide the wherewithal for parents to blame the child
for its own unhappy experiences, under the guise of necessary life education. A
patriarchal capitalist government that is dependent on mass consumption to
maintain its position can easily exploit any adult tendency to rely on the motifs in
fairy tales to justify less than perfect parenting by promoting the tales and the
associated merchandise, in a cyclic pattern of propaganda and consumption, to
parents who have themselves been seduced since childhood by the transformative
powers of the tales.
Chapter 4

Defective Stories

…it is in the house more than anywhere else that reality and imagination struggle for supremacy.

Lawrence Rinder. 18.

The exhibition, Defective Stories, was developed in conjunction with the research paper, to investigate and compare the role of the home in Grimm’s Fairy Tales and the home of the fifties, my childhood home, with the intention of discovering what messages the tales contain that are strong enough to dispel the feminist concerns that fairy tales contain patriarchal messages. This chapter will explore the exhibition as a complete body of work, exposing the common and emerging themes, and then subject each piece to a more thorough inquiry in order to establish a relationship with the ideas previously discussed in the paper. Many expected observations will be made, but as it has already been demonstrated, a thorough and objective investigation of artwork can also uncover some surprising results. For example, rather than the simple, china and lace-filled cottage we might associate with Little Red Riding Hood’s Granny, we discover the velvet and fur lined boudoir of the “working-girl”. In addition, a review of the exhibition will show that although fairy tales are marketed to attract a young audience, they contain many themes which appeal to adults. Further, it will demonstrate that it is not only parents who have an interest in supporting the stories; contemporary western governments, in the role of patriarchal parent, also have much to gain by promoting fairy tales. An investigation of the work will explain how these benefits include the idealisation of submissive, domesticated women and the constantly reinforced messages of male supremacy, which serve to maintain order (fig. 43, page 112).
Fig. 43. Maureen Clack. *Defective Stories*, 2006. FCA Gallery. University of Wollongong.
Some degree of control is in play even before we enter the space, for as we approach the entrance to the gallery we are alerted by a sign, complete with police tape, that we are about to enter a crime scene. However, once inside the space, we discover what seems to be a scenario usually encountered farther along in the policing process; we are facing what might be a line-up of suspects. Unlike Bourgeois’ hybrid femme-maison drawings, these works have no actual human form, however, because of their height and proportions, they have a presence that is anthropomorphic, recalling the painted wooden vertical “personages” that she made to symbolise the friends she left in France (Gardner 58). Given the formal and rather solemn appearance of the twelve “figures” in the room, we may even have fast tracked to the final phase of the investigation, and be confronting a jury that stands in judgement of us. Somehow, in a few steps, we have crossed the line dividing good from evil, and the viewer, searching for answers as an investigator might, rather than the gratification sought by a voyeur, has, nevertheless, become the accused (fig. 44, page 114).

What is there about these figures that can so readily cause us to doubt ourselves? Although we can face these “beings” eye-to-eye perhaps their austere and unyielding stance recalls the experience of being confronted by authority and causes us to regress to memories of childhood misdemeanours, when, hardly able to reach the doorknob or light switch, we were reprimanded by adults who towered over us. Perhaps they remind us of the rules and regulations imposed by those adults, which acted as invisible but extremely effective boundaries and kept us under control. Or perhaps our response might be explained by Gibson’s theory, that coming too close to evil, even when we are not the perpetrator, evokes fears of our own dark side. We need not ponder for long over this question, for as we move nearer to the figures and see them as individual entities, their power diminishes, and we regain control. They are no longer beings but have become instead buildings, or in some cases, a hybrid of architecture and landscape, and it can be seen clearly now that each dwelling, despite its lofty position, is the cause for caution and concern. Rather than one crime scene, we have uncovered twelve.
Fig. 44. Maureen Clack. “Judges.” Defective Stories. 2006. FCA Gallery, University of Wollongong.
The first house, a Garden Shed, complete with lattice fencing and climbing plants, appears to be intact; there is no sign of damage or destruction. A peep through the slightly open door, however, reveals the reason for suspicion. Facing the door is a chair on which is perched a golden egg, but between the prize and the entrance, on the floor immediately inside the door, is a trapdoor opening to a deep void. Close investigation into the dark interior of the shed reveals further signs of a trap: the dim light, which is filtered through barred windows at the back of the room, highlights the chair, which is unproportionately large for the shed. There is little doubt that it is the Giant’s house, but what is the crime that has beckoned our prying torches and demanded a closer inspection? Has someone, Jack perhaps, been enticed into the house and fallen down the trapdoor to his peril, or did he enter, illegally, through it? And if so, was he trying to steal the golden egg? If it was Jack, of the beanstalk fame, and he was attempting to rob the giant, there is an ethical dilemma: how can fairy tales that are promoted as a guide for children justify stealing? (Fig. 45, page 116).

Bettelheim (193) argues that although the moral failings of the tale resulted in several altered versions, the value of the story has little to do with the moralistic approach and is to be found, instead, in its guidelines for the maturation of children, particularly boys. If the fact that Jack committed a crime to reach maturity causes concern, it can be justified, if required, by noting that the giant wished to harm Jack and is therefore fair game (Thomas 80). In today’s political environment, breaking into the giant’s house and taking what he needs to secure a safe and happy future for himself and his mother, could be interpreted as a metaphor for invading another country to preserve his own nation’s ideologies. Calling on fundamental Christian teachings, and providing the enemy is of a different persuasion, such invasive and

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1 In the early part of the story Jack trades the family cow, which represents the oral stage of development, for a handful of magic beans, an act that Bettelheim describes as the beginning of his independence. Unfortunately his mother beats him for his irresponsible actions, throws the beans out the window and sends him to bed without supper, effectively returning him to the dependent oral stage. Since Jack’s real attempt to take charge had failed, fantasy steps in to save him. The phallic symbolism of the rapidly growing beanstalk, which Bettelheim interprets as a dream, obviously indicates Jack’s desire to move into the Oedipal stage, and his successful battles with the giant, both physical and psychological, are symbolic of attaining manhood (189).
Fig. 45. Maureen Clack. *Garden Shed*. 2006. Acrylic and enamel paint on timber, brass fittings, climbing plant. 149 x 32 x 25cm.
aggressive behaviour is justified. With political education in mind, the story of Jack and the Beanstalk serves a capitalist government well.

Along with other fundamental Christian beliefs, the eye-for-an-eye philosophy of the Old Testament is rife throughout Grimm’s Fairy Tales. Standing next to the Garden Shed is a gatehouse, Rights of Passage. It is the gatehouse through which the goose-girl passed each day on her way to tend geese, and where the head of her dead horse, Falada, hung. As she passed she spoke to the horse, and it answered. In the tale the magical exchange between the horse and the girl is explained by the fact that the goose-girl was really a princess, but Thomas interprets the severed horse head as the girl’s conscience, and their conversations as the struggle between childhood behaviours and maturity (235). In the sculpture, choice is symbolised by the three hats hanging in the gatehouse, but the hats may also represent the crime in this story, which, according to the Grimms, is identity theft (352). (Fig. 46, page 118).

On her journey to marry the ruler of a neighbouring kingdom, the princess’s lady-in-waiting forced her to change places, and passed herself off as the bride-to-be, leaving the true princess to tend the geese. The choice of bedding in the drawers of the sculpture, ranging from straw for peasants and horsehair for merchants to feathers for royalty, represents the changing social status of the two young women. Referring to social position and wealth, psychologist, Donald Baker (15), suggests that the real message of the story is that certain things must be given up if we are to progress in life. As the tale progresses, a disgruntled goose herder, anticipating some revenge for the way the goose-girl teased him, informed the king of her magical powers. The king, however, was more intrigued than worried, and through some tricks of his own, discovered her true identity. Perfect Old Testament justice was achieved when the king trapped his false wife-to-be into determining the punishment for an impostor, and then sentencing her to the cruel fate that she had decreed for another (Bettelheim 137). In the same manner as the story of Jack and
Fig. 46. Maureen Clack. *Rites of Passage*. Detail. 2004.
Acrylic and enamel paint on timber, rope, straw fibre, feathers.
Fig. 47. Maureen Clack. *Rites of Passage*. 2004. Detail. Acrylic and enamel paint on timber, brass fittings, rope, straw fibres, feathers.
the Beanstalk, the Goose Girl contains messages of retribution that are useful tools of political propaganda (fig. 47, page 119).

Both Rites of Passage and the Garden Shed refer to outdoor buildings, and recall the backyard of my childhood home. My father’s shed was full of hammers and saws and nails, with which I sated my creative needs for hours, often building small houses of my own; an activity that has been relived many times over through my sculptural investigations of home and childhood. In the shed, there were also long strips of timber for making lattice. The outhouses in our yard, the ferneries and orchid house, were constructed in lattice, and so was the side gate through which I ventured into the outside world, like so many of the heroes in fairy tales. However, not all fairy tale protagonists face their challenges in the outside world: many of them, particularly females, such as Little Red Riding Hood, Goldilocks, and Bluebeard’s wife, enter a home, expecting sanctuary, only to meet with trouble.

Chateau Morte is the next crime scene to be investigated. It is a sombre grey castle with heavy doors, and recalls the “darkened, enigmatic chambers” of Bourgeois’ cell, No Exit, 1989, which features stairs that cover secret compartments (Gardiner 103). It bears no resemblance to the dream castles in Walt Disney’s animated version of many fairy tales. None-the-less, it is the supposedly happy ending for the young woman who was to be saved from poverty by marrying a rich merchant, Bluebeard. Inspection of this site provides the most damning evidence so far. The floor is a large grate which covers what appears to be a reservoir of blood; two large hooks dangle above buckets, which are obviously there to catch more blood; and perhaps most disturbing of all is the spare hook-in-waiting. Despite the lack of a body, the evidence here strongly indicates murder, and promises more to come. For the young bride who discovered this horrific scene there could be no reaction other than terror. Many male interpreters of the tale, however, suggest that her response should be shame, born from the guilt of disregarding her husband’s instructions (Tatar, 1987 177-178). (Fig. 48, page 121; fig. 49, page 122).
Fig. 48. Maureen Clack. *Chateau Morte*. 2004. Acrylic and enamel paint on timber, velvet, brass fittings. 147 x 26 x 23cm.
Fig. 49. Maureen Clack. *Chateau Morte*. 2004. Detail.
Acrylic and enamel paint on timber, velvet, brass fittings.
When Bluebeard took his new wife to live in his castle he gave her total freedom, with the exception of one room, which was locked. Despite his instructions, he left the key with her when he went away, and she repaid his trust with disobedience, even though she feared the consequences. In Perrault’s words:

*Once at the door of the room she paused for a moment, recalling her husband’s prohibition, and thinking that some misfortune might strike her for her disobedience. But the temptation was so strong that she could not withstand it* (Zipes, 2001 773).

Although she tried to hide her terror at discovering her dead predecessors, she was caught out, and threatened with the same fate. Since his wife had behaved like an ungrateful and contrary child, Bluebeard had little choice but to punish her, because fairy tales are:

*consciously designed to impart specific lessons framed by adults for children. As cautionary tales, they demonstrate how children with undesirable traits – deceitfulness, curiosity, insolence – come to a bad end* (Tatar, 1987 192).

Considering that the fictional character of Bluebeard was supposedly based on the horrific activities of Gilles de Rais, a seventeenth century guardian of the French court, who abducted and tortured children (Zipes, 2001 731), along with murder, the crime scene offers evidence of child abuse. However, perhaps of even greater concern than these most hideous of crimes is the way in which the fairy tale, Bluebeard, has been employed to exonerate parents, and lay blame for their misfortunes on the children themselves. Despite its fame as a House of Horrors, where unspeakable deeds occurred, the story of Bluebeard’s castle stands instead as a warning against disobedience, which must be punished.

The house on the corner of my street has already been identified as the witch’s house of my childhood memories, and it also holds the award for my personal childhood house of horrors. Several years after the “break and enter” in which we were asked to be investigators, the “witch” died, and her adult son, of whom I had no recollection at all, returned with his common-law wife and her two children to occupy the house. One Saturday afternoon, as I was preparing to leave for a music
lesson, a commotion broke out and the children ran from the house into the street, splattered with blood. A luncheon guest who witnessed the crime told police that the witch’s son, apparently angered by a request to slice some bread, used the knife, instead, to kill his wife. Although this story is factual, it could not have fitted a fairy tale scenario any better had the Grimms written it themselves. I was to learn later that the son had been away in a mental institution for many years, due to unstable behaviour, and that some degree of instability ran in the family. I also learned later that our childhood fears of the elderly lady in the corner house, and our disrespect born from them, were founded on our distrust of someone a little different: a replication, perhaps, of the post-war anxieties regarding communist supporters, rife in our society at that time.

The heroine in the story of Little Red Riding Hood (Brothers Grimm 101-105) is another victim of the unjust accusation of guilt. The story begins when her mother sends her with some goodies to her Granny on the other side of the woods. By the end of the day she has been tricked, terrified, and in some versions, devoured by the wolf, in what is referred to as a cautionary tale: a warning against talking to strangers. Although extreme, the value of such a story can be justified in contemporary terms, by recalling, from the previous chapter, the kidnapping and murder of Graham Thorne. The kidnapper beckoned Graham over to his car, spun him a yarn, and enticed him into a living nightmare (Brown and Wilson 26). However, not all interpretations of Little Red Riding Hood read it as simply cautionary. In several twentieth century critiques, Little Red Riding Hood has been accused of flirting with the wolf, setting up a rendezvous, and then screaming for help and claiming assault when he followed her lead (Thomas 114; Tatar, 1987 40-41). (Fig. 50, page 125).

These damning opinions evoked widespread feminist criticism, which pointed out how the story quite clearly states that Little Red Riding Hood was sent into the woods by her mother, and was simply demonstrating good manners by being polite to the wolf. Furthermore, it was her grandmother who actually invited the wolf into
Fig. 50. Sarah Moon. *Little Red Riding Hood*. Courtesy of Creative Education, Inc.
her home (The Brothers Grimm 103). The feminist objections were countered with the suggestion that both the mother and grandmother had orchestrated the meeting as a result of their own unfulfilled sexual desires, demonstrated by the gift, from her grandmother, of a sexually arousing red cape (Bettelheim 173). It is this crime of entrapment that is investigated in the crime scene, Cottage Industry.

The cottage appears, from the outside, to be a woodcutter’s cottage, a reminder that the hero of the fairy tale, introduced to the story by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, was a woodcutter. Since this house seems to be situated on top of a stack of timber logs, the title of the piece, Cottage Industry, seems appropriate. The light from the investigator’s torch, however, exposes an interior that is in complete contrast to the expected simple life of a woodsman. The walls are lined with red velvet, and a fur-covered lounge is situated in the centre of the room. Fur has been associated with brothels since German novelist and Professor of History, Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, invested it with feminine significance in his novels (Deleuze 33). In works of art, fur has often been replaced by velvet as the “fetishistic material-par-excellence” (Foster 136). Although the room is quite dark, a mirror-ball hangs from the ceiling, perhaps indicating readiness for a party, and to support this assumption, a table in the corner is laid with wine and refreshments. The room is quite clearly prepared for the purpose of adult entertainment (fig.51, page 127; fig. 52, page 128; fig. 53, page 128).

The evidence here may well indicate that the industry referred to in the title is the oldest profession in the world: the house may be a brothel, set up by women with the intention of seducing the male of the species. If so, the victim would be the unsuspecting wolf, but this assumption is in direct contrast to the moral of Perrault’s earlier version of the tale, which suggests that the wolf represents the predatory male rather than the innocent victim (Zipes, 2001 747). If we are to accept that the tale is about female sexual desire, as Bettelheim proclaims, we must concede that the tale has been altered to suit patriarchal ideologies. In this case, the outward appearance of a woodcutter’s cottage may support Cranny-Francis theory,
Fig. 51. Maureen Clack. **Cottage Industry.** 2005. Acrylic and enamel paint on timber, mirror, velvet, fur, brass fittings. 144 x 27 x 23cm.
Fig. 52-53. Maureen Clack. *Cottage Industry*. 2005. Detail. Acrylic and enamel paint on timber, mirror, fur, velvet, brass chain, brass fittings.
explained in chapter one, that the Grimm’s’ version of the tale not only demonstrates, but also approves, the need of a weapon-wielding male to provide and maintain safety and security (1992 82). Once again the fairy tale has proved to be a valuable ally for contemporary western political philosophies that advocate aggressive action in the name of protection, and support patriarchal dominance.

Not only are females repeatedly reminded in fairy tales of their submissive role in the service of men, any woman who displays initiative is immediately considered a threat, accused of evil activity, and either banished or cruelly punished, as chapter two has demonstrated. The sculpture, Domus Ursidae, is a monument to one such female, Goldilocks, or more specifically, to her ancestors. Domus Ursidae is the home of the three bears that Goldilocks illegally entered whilst on a walk through the woods. In the popular versions of the tale, despite the fact that she was the perpetrator, she escaped unharmed and unpunished, and was never heard of again (Warner 243). Given the circumstances of the crime, an investigator encountering the scene might expect to find a broken latch, signs of destruction (in this case baby bear’s broken chair, which gave way under the weight of Goldilocks’ body), and perhaps some missing items (to wit, baby bear’s porridge). Counter to such expectations, the crime scene tells a different story (fig. 54, page 130).

The dwelling is an open construction with no door to break through, and there is no sign of damaged or stolen property. In fact, the only piece of furniture in the room, a chair, is perfectly intact. A closer inspection of the chair, however, reveals evidence of a different crime, one more sinister than a simple break and enter. The chair is suspended by chains that are attached to a pulley system, and further inspection of the surrounding area discloses its grisly purpose. When the chains are released the chair is lowered into the fur lining of the house, which conceals protruding spikes, thus inflicting a cruel punishment on its occupant; a punishment that recalls the fate of many women suspected of practising witchcraft. Considering Bettelheim’s reference to earlier versions of the story that featured an old woman as the intruder, rather than a young girl, the connection with witches is apparent (218).
Fig. 54. Maureen Clack. *Domus Ursidae*. 2004. Acrylic and enamel paint on timber, fur, brass nails, chain, brass fittings. 146 x 25 x 24cm.
Fig. 55. Maureen Clack. *Domus Ursidae*. 2004. Detail.
Warner relates the story of one such perpetrator who was captured by the bears, burnt, thrown into a pool where she floated rather than sank, proving she was indeed a witch, and was then impaled on the church steeple, as a warning to others (157). Later versions of the story eliminated the violent punishments yet retain, to this day, the cautions against vagrancy, trespass and curiosity, particularly for girls (fig. 55, page 131).

In similar patriarchal fashion, witches feature as the scapegoat in many of the Grimms’ tales. The story commonly known as Sleeping Beauty is one example, and for evidence of this we have only to look at the crime scene, Royal Breeding Ground (fig. 56, page 133). This time the castle is more like the one which introduced the magical world of Walt Disney and the Mickey Mouse Club to television screens, and enticed children from all corners of the western world to beg their parents for a trip to Disneyland. The road leading to Disney’s castle seemed to sparkle with jewels and in a similarly royal vein, the road leading up to Sleeping beauty’s castle is padded with cushioned velvet; quite the opposite to the river of blood that gushed from Bluebeard’s den. The interior of the castle clearly reflects the title of the story, Sleeping Beauty, since the only piece of furniture in the royal chamber is the royal bed where the princess was laid after she succumbed to a sleeping spell cast by the wicked and jealous witch. In true heroic fashion, in their version of the tale, Briar Rose, the Brothers Grimm sent a handsome prince to rescue the princess, whom he then married, and they lived happily ever after (167).

Briar Rose, however, is a sanitised form of the tale, and the title of the crime scene, Royal Breeding Ground, more closely reflects the earlier version, Sun, Moon, and Talia, written down in 1634 by the Italian writer, Giambattista Basile (Zipes, 2001 685-688).

One major difference between Basile’s version and that written by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm is the fact that in the original tale the beauty, the daughter of a nobleman rather than a princess, was not asleep but dead. Further, the hero was not a prince, but a married king. When he came across the dead girl he succumbed to
Fig. 56. Maureen Clack. *Royal Breeding Ground*. 2004. Acrylic and enamel paint on timber, velvet, perspex, brass nails, brass fittings. 157 x 24 x 25cm.

Please see print copy for Fig. 57.
her beauty, “gathered the fruits of love” and rode away (Basille, 2001 685-686). As only a magical fairy tale could tell it, nine months later Talia gave birth to twins who suckled the poison splinter from her finger, and thus brought her back to life. Even though the tale is one of sexual assault, for which no one but the king is responsible, his wife, the queen, was the next one to be cast in the role of the villain. After hearing of the king’s dalliance in the woods and discovering the fruits of his labour, in a jealous rage, she ordered that the children be cooked and fed to their father, and that Talia be burnt to death. Fortunately, her plan was foiled, and like the impostor in The Goose Girl, she met the fate she had planned for another (fig.57, page 134).

Completely exonerated for his crimes, which include infidelity, rape, the murder of his wife under the guise of retribution, and, if we acknowledge Basile’s version, necrophilia, the king married the girl, and they lived happily ever after. Only the jealous witch, who cast the spell, and the jealous queen, are remembered as villains. Disregarding the crimes in the story, Baker (16) believes that the important aspect of the tale is the long sleep, which he interprets as symbolic of the contemplation needed to make wise decisions, and thus achieve happiness. Feminists are more concerned with the patriarchal ideologies that completely excuse the king’s behaviour and, once again, lay all blame at the feet of the female (Bottigheimer, 1987 94).

As folklorist, Lutz Rohrich, notes, witches were supposed to possess the power to cause male impotence, and the belief in witches was a reflection of the male fear of intelligent, superior and powerful women (8). Managing to eliminate both witches and mature women in one after another of the tales was a way to re-establish patriarchal power. The Six Swans (The Brothers Grimm 163-167) is another tale that features two female villains, and this time both are jealous stepmothers. The sculpture, Sweat Shop, which appears to be a modern, although somewhat basic, apartment block, provides some clues to the initial crime with the discovery of nests, rather than normal furniture, in its six main apartments. The first villain in the
Fig. 58. Maureen Clack. *Sweat Shop*. 2005. Detail. Acrylic paint on timber, straw fibre, firewood, brass nails, brass fittings.
story had cast a spell that turned her six stepsons into swans, and in order to break the spell, their sister, another long-suffering stepdaughter, had to weave a shirt of nettles for each of them. As with all fairy tale trials, there was a catch: she was not to speak for six years. During this period a king fell in love with the girl, and despite no word from her, they were married (fig. 58, page 136).

Further inspection of the building uncovers one enclosed basement apartment, and another that is locked, and it is here in the lower levels, Louise Bourgeois’ favourite part of a building, which she sees as “the ultimate hideout or lair” (Gardner 51), that the details of the latter crime are discovered. The second villain in the story, the king’s jealous stepmother, eventually convinced him that his new wife was a witch who deserved to be burnt at the stake. Since one basement room contains a single stool surrounded by nettle stalks, and observing that the basement is situated on top of an even deeper cellar in which there is preparation for a fire, it is probable that the room is the cell where the young queen waited, in silence, for her impending fate. On the appointed day the swans flew over just as the fire was lit; their sister threw the shirts over them, and was then able to explain all to her husband, who released her.

The other basement room in which there is a large nest fitted with spikes, gives some clue to the outcome of the tale. Five brothers were restored to their human form but the sixth shirt was unfinished, and thus the youngest brother had one wing in place of an arm for the rest of his life. It goes without saying; the jealous stepmother-queen was delivered up to the same fate that she herself had planned for the heroine. Although the case appears to be closed at this stage, there may be more to learn from this crime scene by considering the title, Sweat Shop. Given the unwavering and relentless labour of the young queen, and the vague similarity between the building and a battery henhouse, it can be read as a critique of the return to outdated protestant work ethics that are manipulative tools in the preservation of western capitalist government policy.
Fig. 59. Maureen Clack. *A Room with a View*. 2005. Acrylic and enamel paint on timber, perspex, rope, brass fittings. 161 x 28 x 24cm.
The other high-rise crime scene, *A Room with a View*, is a response to the story of *Rapunzel* (The Brothers Grimm 66-69), the young girl locked in an isolated tower, by a witch-stepmother. Thomas (180) suggests that the tower refers, in anthropomorphic terms, to the witch herself, and the isolation she felt from the community: a fate that she then imposed upon the girl. In the artwork, the obvious reference to the fairy tale, the plaits of hair that were the only means of climbing up or down, entwine the girl with the building, recalling Bourgeois’ *Femme-Maison*. The tower, however, is a contemporary urban building rather than the usual fairy tale tower, and the twin plaits set into the recessed panel may be seen as the pulleys in a modern elevator. Not only does this suggest the inappropriate place of fairy tales in today’s western society, the corporate appearance of the building also alludes to the business deal between Rapunzel’s father and the witch that eventually led to the girl’s imprisonment. Caught stealing lettuce from the witch to quell the cravings of his pregnant wife, the desperate man promised the unborn child to the witch when she reached her twelfth birthday. When the witch, desperate herself for a child, eventually took charge of the girl she was so afraid of losing her that she locked her in the tower: a regretful yet inevitable outcome, but one from which the girl eventually escaped (fig. 59, page 138).

On a more personal level *A Room with a View* recalls an event from my own childhood that involved imprisonment, or at least detention, and escape. Inside the tower there is a chair surrounded by hair which has been clipped, alluding to the action taken by the witch when she caught Rapunzel allowing a prince to climb her plaits of hair and enter the tower. The chair in the artwork, however, is also a ladder. When I was about nine years old, my sister, who had been sent to her room for some minor crime, called from the bedroom window and instructed me to bring a chair that she could use as a ladder, and thus escape. I can’t recall whether my compliance was due to respect for an older sibling, or the desire to be part of the intrigue, but for whatever reason, I brought the chair. My sister climbed out the window and went to play with the boys up the street while I was left holding the
Fig. 60. Maureen Clack. *A Room with a View*. 2005. Detail.
evidence. I was consequently convicted for a more serious crime than the one for which my sister was originally detained (fig. 60, page 140).

Detention is a reoccurring theme in many fairy tales. Cinderella was kept as a slave by her wicked stepmother, and the crime scene, Out of the Ashes, replicates the hearth where she was continually sentenced to perform menial tasks (The Brothers Grimm 86-93). In ancient times, however, the keeper of the hearth held a prestigious position (Baker 17). Considering that there is such a discrepancy between the role of the hearth in the fairy tale and its significance in peasant traditions, from which fairy tales derived, a closer inspection is demanded. The beam from the investigator’s torch highlights a pear tree, rising from the ashes, but rather than signifying new hope, the burnt and violated tree indicates betrayal. In earlier versions of the story, it was Cinderella’s hiding place and her father’s favourite tree, but he cut it down to expose her to the king’s men. The two pears lying in the cinders signify the emasculation of fathers throughout fairy tales, and the inability to protect their children when confronted by any authority figure, good or evil (fig. 61, page 142; fig. 62, page 143).

Sifting through the ashes not only exposes the manipulation of the tale itself, it also uncovers a different Cinderella: one who was as devious as the wicked stepmother and sisters created by the Grimms. In The Cat Cinderella, written by Basille almost two hundred years before the Grimms penned their version, Cinderella had two stepmothers. The first was cruel, so the girl killed her, and convinced her father to marry her teacher who had been kind and loving towards Cinderella. Once settled into married life, however, the teacher revealed not only her true, uncaring nature, but also her six previously unmentioned daughters, who took Cinderella’s place in her father’s heart. Cinderella was punished for her crime and demoted to the position of servant (Zipes, 2001 445-446). In the classic fairy tale, the tale adapted by the Grimms as a guide for children, the darker side of the girl’s personality was completely eliminated, leaving a compliant, domesticated, and beautiful girl in her
Fig. 61. Maureen Clack. *Out of the Ashes*. 2004. Acrylic and enamel paint on timber, brass fittings. 163 x 26 x 25cm.
Fig. 62. Maureen Clack. *Out of the Ashes*. 2004. Detail.
place, together with the message that these were the only female qualities worthy of
reward.

The same qualities in the princess, Snow White, in the tale of the same name (The
Brothers Grimm 178-186), angered her wicked and jealous stepmother so greatly,
that the girl had to run for her life. Although she escaped from the queen, her fear
of being found confined her to a small cottage owned by dwarves, for whom she
cooked and cleaned. The crime scene, Reflections on Domestic Science, depicts the
cottage as a schoolroom, and refers to the lessons that taught her to be a patriarchal
female; lessons inherent in fairy tales. An apple, suspended from a fishhook in the
ceiling, hangs over her head as a constant warning of the threat posed by the queen.
Peering through the window to more closely inspect the apple, a suspected weapon
in this crime, brings us face to face with our own reflection; a reminder that the evil
we have banished to the badlands is perhaps a product of our own dark side (fig.
63, page 145; fig. 64, page 146).

One tale which acknowledges the dark side of the protagonist is the story of Hansel
and Gretel (The Brothers Grimm 56-63). This is the story where the most famous of
all fairy tale incarcerations took place, in the gingerbread house in the forest, where
the witch detained the siblings. This crime scene, Traveller’s Rest was investigated
in the introduction. The tale of the two siblings is fraught with trials and tribulation,
as are most of the Grimm’s tales, and the fishhooks and spikes in the sculptures
reflect these dangers. But sharp objects do not always indicate trauma. In the early
folk versions of the tale from which Little Red Riding Hood was derived, on her
way to Granny’s house, the girl had to choose either the road of pins or the road of
needles, a reference to the tasks undertaken in mediaeval sewing groups. By
choosing the road of needles she indicated her ability to handle sharp objects
(Zipes, 2001 744). In this interpretation of the tale, the sharp objects are a positive
thing.
Fig. 63. Maureen Clack. *Reflections on Domestic Science*. 2006. Acrylic and enamel paint on timber, perspex, sand, mirror, brass fittings. 149 x 28 x 24cm.
Fig. 64. Maureen Clack. Reflections on Domestic Science. 2006. Detail.
If we turn our backs on the evil of the gingerbread house and walk away, as Hansel and Gretel did, with a hopeful view of the future, we find ourselves walking down the centre of the two rows of houses, and they are no longer fairy tales or crime scenes; they have become the street of dolls’ houses that I laid out with my sister, our friends and my cousins who lived across the road. To replicate the traditional dolls’ house, a variety of which sprung up in my backyard throughout the school holidays, the houses in the exhibition each have a small door for the tiny resident to enter through and a larger door to enable greater access for play. My relationship with small houses, however, began much earlier and with houses that were much smaller than our dolls’ houses.

When I was a child my mother often bought me miniature toys for birthdays and Christmas, or the occasional special treat. Regardless of her motivation, whether her choice was a result of cost, convenience, or her own fondness for small things, my growing collection fostered a love of miniatures that was shared with my sister and our friends. Susan Stewart suggests that the popular appeal of the miniature toy may be attributed to its “projection of the world of everyday life” on a more manageable scale (57). This is a very apt description of our backyard attempts at town planning. Referring specifically to the dolls’ house, Stewart further explains that as a metaphor for containment the miniature house provides its viewer with a sense of mastery over often conflicting issues of interiority and exteriority (37). I developed this sense of mastery as I played with two of my favourite miniature houses. By opening the exterior door of one, a tiny yellow house no bigger than a matchbox, I gained access to the interior space and the minute table and chairs inside, which could be carefully lifted out of the house, or re-arranged in different settings inside. The second one, a small picnic basket that I could hold in the palm of my hand, opened to reveal three tiny bears with even smaller cups and plates. These could be set out for a teddy bears picnic. The miniature scale of these houses allowed me to carry them with me, arrange them as I chose (a choice quite often directed by my actual circumstances), and then carefully pack them away. Such
was my fondness for these tiny interactive toys that I collected them into my teenage years.

My favourite miniature house was a do-it-yourself construction kit carefully packed into a matchbox. It came complete with walls, floor and roof, and a front garden and fence. I still have this house, which has accompanied me on many family outings, and been built and rebuilt countless times throughout the years. Just as my early experiences of home provided the foundations of my creative practice, so this tiny portable house that can be reconstructed again and again has supplied a personal working methodology.

In the exhibition, Defective Stories, the houses, despite their reference to popular fairy tales, have taken on the persona of the traditional dolls’ house, thus providing the option of not only looking through the windows, but of opening the doors to more fully encounter the contents. In praising the value of such encounters, Stewart awards the dolls’ house the honour of being “the most consummate of miniatures”, not only because it so strongly articulates the relationship between the inner and outer worlds, as has already been noted, but also because it is a “center within a center…a materialised secret” (61). Perhaps it was the unequalled pleasure of discovering and sharing a secret that enticed us, time and time again, to arrange our dolls’ houses in rows in my backyard and plan our community. Once this was accomplished, the delight of accompanying our tiny families as they visited and experienced each other’s homes was a highlight, and the ultimate aim, of the activity. Or perhaps, as Bachelard suggests, our dedication to the task was fuelled by the faithful loyalty that all creatures have for their home, and the desire to return to it, at least in dreams if not reality (99).

Like our parents, we created our own Australian Dream. Our dreams were fanciful, perhaps, in regard to the adventures we planned, and rarely had time to carry out before dark, but they were not aspirations to a richer lifestyle. Although our fathers constructed most of the doll’s houses, our dream homes were enhanced with our
own ideas and available material, albeit it creatively employed, in similar fashion to our own homes and our parents’ practical example. As James Broadbent, historian and curator observed, dolls’ houses of that time, were

...windows – rose-tinted perhaps – into their owners’ and makers’ cultural and social milieux. These are toys with which children learned to live in the world in which they lived, romanticised or idealised, but rooted firmly in their familial environments (2).

Echoing our parents’ example, which was fostered by the growth of post-war suburban development, our identities were fashioned as much by our neighbourhood as our own homes. Accordingly, many hours were spent in discussing the layout and design of the street in what were generally congenial meetings, hindered only occasionally by personal disputes. However, according to Propp’s extensive study, explained in a previous chapter, disputes or traumas arising from the home environment are the common cause of all fairy tale trials, and must be resolved before anyone can live happily ever after. We had the advantage over our parents regarding such disputes: we simply re-arranged the street, and separated the warring factions. It may be this reasonably simple way of resolving day to day problems that has fostered the interest that adults have also shown in dolls’ houses, as curator and heritage consultant, Robin Christie observes (1); or adult interest may simply illustrate a more affordable way of playing around with different styles and room arrangements (Quinn 17). Or perhaps adults, like children, may be drawn to the secret worlds that exist within the miniature house. Regardless of the validity of these suggestions, the fascination that dolls’ houses hold for adults may be driven by less practical desires, and represent the same elusive search for “home” that also fosters the adult interest in fairy tales.

Not only were we urban planners extraordinaire, we also took the security of our community into account. Like our forebears, we allocated a badland at the edge of our estate, where the threatening members of our society were situated: and like our elders, to ensure that they were not we, we chose dolls of a different race to fill this role. Since I was not particularly interested in dolls, one Christmas I was given a set
of Cowboys and Indians instead, the precursors of today’s Ninja Turtles and their foe, or the Power Rangers and their alien adversaries. The Indians, as foreigners, were perfectly suited to be our enemy, and the cowboys, the fifties heroes with white hats, became the law enforcers of the community. With the danger contained in the cardboard enclosure outside the neighbourhood boundaries, our doll families slept safely inside their homes. There was no crime scene in our estate, except perhaps the muddy hole in my father’s well-tended lawn that was the doll community swimming pool. In true community spirit we all laboured together for hours in its construction, to provide recreation for our hard working doll families. In the same manner as fairy tales, our street of dreams supported protestant work ethics, alive and well in the fifties, and promised a bright future, providing we were diligent and productive.

At the far end of the “street” stands the only piece in the exhibition that does not recall a fairy tale (fig. 2, page 6). It recalls my childhood home, and the unfinished verandah where I played with my three bears. The sculpture resembles an open forum, and as the title, Forensis Publicus, suggests, it alludes to the open courts of the Roman Empire and the growing industry that has taken its name, Forensic Science: the collection of evidence that leads to detention. It has already been explained that while I was detained at home, due to illness rather than misbehaviour, I could sit inside the house, lean through the open wall, and move my bears out into the yard. Having learned from the three bears in the fairy tale that danger could be encountered inside the home as well as beyond its walls, despite all messages to the contrary, my bears bravely risked the outside world. Just as Lara-Gomez recreated happy memories from within the prison cell where he was detained, Forensis Publicus recalls the happy memories of my childhood home rather than the experience of confinement, and replicates the fairy tale message that success is attainable, providing we strive for it (fig.65, page 151).

Subjected to a thorough examination, the sculptural installation has transformed before our eyes from an interrogation space to a judicial arena, and then, as if by magic, to an investigator’s banquet of crime scenes. And just when there seemed
Conclusion

Extensive and thorough feminist critique in the latter part of the twentieth century has demonstrated that Grimm’s Fairy Tales are responsible for delivering a patriarchal guide-for-life to today’s children. Regardless of such well substantiated criticism the tales originally published by the Brothers Grimm in 1812 still rank amongst the best sellers in children’s literature in the western world. The dilemma posed by such obvious disregard for the feminist warnings inspired the research documented in this thesis and the exhibition, Defective Stories. Expanding on previous work that addresses feminist issues of home, the works in the exhibition investigate and compare the home in fairy tales with my childhood home, the fifties home, in an attempt to discover what other messages the Grimm’s Fairy Tales contain that are strong enough to over-rule the feminist warnings.

Since most support for fairy tales comes from psychologists, who praise the safe problem solving options that the tales offer children, particularly when they feel let down by their parents, the paper has proposed that despite the brothers’ claim that the tales were written as a guideline for the development of a united Germany, problems in Jacob and Wilhelm’s own childhood were the motivation for writing and rewriting the tales, albeit on an unconscious level. Propp’s analysis of classic fairy tales highlights the importance of home in the tales, explaining how the story always begins at home, the problem arises when someone leaves that home, either by misadventure or some act of cruelty, and ends when, despite numerous trials and tribulations, the triumphant protagonist either returns to that home, or re-establishes a new one. This plot replicates the brothers’ early lives. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm lost their home at an early age with the death of their father, and the trauma was further exacerbated when, due to the resultant hardship, they were separated from their mother and siblings. Although the brothers studied hard, achieved well and were eventually able to support the family, this thesis suggests, with the support of
psychological theory, that the interruption to their progress through childhood left a legacy of unresolved issues, which they tried to correct through the writing and rewriting of the tales; specifically, the re-establishment of the lost home.

The Grimm Brothers’ modus operandi is not unique. Creative practitioners in all fields return to childhood themes for their inspiration and thus provide a wealth of material for researchers, editors and curators. Mixed-up Childhood, an exhibition held at Auckland Art Gallery in 2005, is one example. Although the curators, Craw and Leonard, explain that the title refers to the various ways that childhood has been represented in the works selected for the exhibition, a walk through the gallery spaces suggests that the title may be a Freudian slip: many of the works quite clearly indicate confused and conflicting memories. They are mixed up.

For example, Meisel’s photographs depict happy scenes of a post World War II nuclear family, but the family members are stiff and unrealistically posed, and their smiles are rigid and false. The overall impression is that the family is replicating unfamiliar experiences, or perhaps attempting to cover a different reality. While Mann’s photographs of children are more realistic than Meisel’s, the content is more disturbing. In her photographs her own children display seductive behaviours associated with adults, rather than children, which elicit suggestions of child abuse or kiddie-porn. The same unsettling emotions are stirred by Inez van Lamsweerde and Vinoodh Matadin’s collaborative fashion photographs of three-year-old models, on whose innocent faces the artists have superimposed a man’s lewd smile. Anthony Goicolea also manipulates photographic images to produce an army of juvenile soldiers ready for battle, but closer inspection reveals that it is the same young boy, left to fight his battles without any support.

In contrast to the puzzling images created by the other artists, Tracey Moffatt’s photographs and their accompanying text quite clearly depict a moment of childhood trauma. In one work, however, the image and the text tell different stories. Heart Attack, 1970 speaks of encountering previously unexperienced sexual
behaviours and the confusion associated with such events. Elsewhere in the
exhibition, in reference to similarly confusing and unfamiliar circumstances, Jake
and Dinos Chapman exhibit life-like model children caught in genetically
engineered nightmares; or, rather, it is one child with two heads and misplaced
genitals. An unsettling response to the Chapmans’ confronting work replicates the
overall feeling for the exhibition: it evokes a sense of definitely confused, and
possibly traumatic childhood memories.

The reoccurring messages of confusion, violence, and abuse in the Mixed-up
Childhood exhibition connect it to another exhibition, Scene of the Crime, held at
the Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center, Los Angeles, in 1997. In
staging this exhibition, the motivation for the curator, Ralph Rugoff, was to select
late twentieth century artworks that referred to traumatic events, challenged
straightforward interpretations, and required the attention of a forensic look, which
pieces together initially inconspicuous signs to offer an alternative reading.
Although the works selected by Rugoff were not restricted to childhood themes,
many of them recall childhood trauma. In particular, Paul McCarthy’s video,
Santa’s Chocolate Shop, 1996-97, which depicts a man masquerading in a reindeer
suit, with a dubious purpose in mind, when scrutinised by a clear forensic eye,
suggests past events that are forever entangled with the recent events depicted in
the video. Although acting in the role of the perpetrator, when methodically
analysed, the evidence in the artwork suggests that in the past, the man-animal was
the victim.

Inspired by the evidence that trauma is reworked through artistic endeavours which
are possibly better understood by a forensic reading, a critical inspection of the
Grimms’ fairy tale, Hansel and Gretel exposed several similarities between events
in the brothers’ early lives and the themes in the story, thereby supporting the thesis
that the search for home and the promise of finding it, the inherent theme of classic
fairy tales, is the reason for the tales’ continued popularity. Furthermore, the thesis
proposes that the psychological premise, that the human search for a safe haven
encompasses a spiritual need and not only physical shelter, and consequently remains one of the strongest drives throughout life, explains why adults are equally captivated by fairy tales messages. A review of the European home in Australia, from its beginnings in the early days of settlement as basic shelter from the elements, to its elevated status as the Great Australian Dream of the fifties, demonstrates that home is not always the safe place humans long for. It is not surprising, therefore, that fairytale motifs offer solace. They convince us, child and adult alike, in the event that we encounter problems that may result in the loss of our safe haven, we have the ability to regain that home and the security that we believe it affords.

Javier Lara-Gomez lost his home when he was incarcerated in Sydney’s Long Bay Gaol. Echoing the fairy tale messages of empowerment, despite adverse circumstances, he overcame the oppression of prison life when he entered the prison art program and replicated the happy spaces of his childhood by constructing colourful, detailed models of churches and halls. In these spiritual and cheerful spaces Lara-Gomez found the comfort lacking in the prison environment. In contrast, Louise Bourgeois spent fifty years producing artworks that recalled the unhappy and traumatic memories of her childhood home, due mainly to her father’s inconsiderate and cruel behaviour. Regardless of their opposite life experiences, both artists used the creative process to work through the traumas of patriarchal oppression, with the intention of establishing a safe and happy home.

A further benefit of the tales for adults, when understood through Bettelheim’s Oedipal interpretation, is the exoneration they offer to parents who are remorseful for abusing the power they hold in the family situation. Although child abuse and abandonment were common occurrences amongst the peasant classes of a war-torn and struggling Germany, middle-class Wilhelm was unwilling to accuse the parents in the stories for mistreatment of the children. Instead, he introduced a scapegoat, frequently a stepmother or witch, on whom to lay blame for the evil deeds. This
aspect of fairy tales replicates the human tendency to allocate all evil to a badland, a place away from ourselves, so that we remain free of guilt.

It is not only individuals who rely on fairy tale motifs. Contemporary western societies, whose survival is dependent on consumer investment, also have good reason to encourage the survival of fairy tales. Promoted by the culture industry, which designs our lifestyle and generates millions of dollars through entertainment, fairy tales continue to sell their messages of empowerment to children, not only in books, but also through television, video and movies. Moreover, the sale of associated merchandise, including costumes, magic weapons, and games, which assist the child to re-enact the empowering actions of the protagonist, encourage further reliance on, and thus consumption of, the tales in all their forms. As a bonus for the governing bodies of contemporary society, while empowering children, fairy tales are also educating them, during their most impressionable years, in patriarchal lore, which is essential for the survival of a male dominated society.

This thesis has shown that fairy tales speak to us of home: not only the building in which we dwell, but also the external equivalent of a personal spiritual space inside of us, for which we all long. However, the idealised home to which we strive and the reality of day-to-day existence are very different, so fairy tales also offer solutions to the problems encountered on the life-long journey. Adults are provided with the means of justifying the inevitable mistakes they make when bringing up children, by relying on Bettelheim’s Freudian interpretations of the tales, which exonerate parents of wrong doing and hand responsibility back to the child. Children are given a safe way to be angry towards their parents when they feel unjustly treated, by identifying with different characters in the stories; they are given the belief that they can provide their own home when the adults in their life fail them; and they are supplied with the knowledge that they possess the power to eliminate any monsters that they encounter along the way. The message inherent in fairy tales is clear: through hard work and compliance with authority, everyone
lives happily ever after, except for robbers, monsters, the witch-stepmother, and the feminists.

Please see print copy for Fig. 66.


