While writing this essay about Cinderella I have gained a greater appreciation for Cinderella and other fairy tales. When I was a child, Disney started promoting the Disney Princess merchandise line. This merchandise line put an emphasis on toys about hair care, large pink castles, and wearing pretty long dresses. I was a tomboy growing up, so I often rejected Disney’s Princess line because I believed it was too girly. The Disney Princesses that were promoted the most when I was a child were Cinderella, Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, Belle, Ariel, and Jasmine. I always disliked these characters because the Disney movies showed them as damsels in distress. As a tomboy, the last thing I wanted was a guy to save me. I wanted to be tough and strong like a boy. Because of this, I rejected fairy tales until I started taking this fairy tales class.

When I enrolled in the Topics in Contemporary Literature course I did not know that the topic would be about fairy tales. I came into the class believing that I would dread the course because I would read about weak females and overly pretty princesses. I was shocked when I saw the dark side of fairy tales. I was fascinated by the history of how the authors of fairy tales were oppressed and what the tales of finding a happy ending meant to them. As the class went on I began to love fairy tales because of the darker side of the stories that were never told by Disney such as Snow White’s step mother wanting to eat her heart and the abuse Cinderella endured from her step family. I was upset because I knew that if Disney showed the dark side of the fairy tales I would have seen these characters differently. Instead of seeing these young girls as damsels I began to pity them because of the difficulties they faced in their lives.

The tale that interested me the most was Cinderella. Cinderella was promoted the most in Disney’s princess line. Because of this, she is seen as a favorite to most young girls. As a child, I heard many girls talk about how beautiful Cinderella’s dress was, how pretty her glass slippers were, and how they wanted to marry a handsome prince. No one ever talked about how she dealt with the abuse from her step family. Most people seemed to forget the abuse Cinderella had to go through to finally achieve a happy ending. This forgotten part about the story interested me the most because it was rarely ever talked about. For this paper I had to research four different stories of Cinderella from different continents. The stories I researched were from Canada, France, Georgia, and Russia. These stories amazed me because they were from different parts of the world, but they all showed a young girl who was abused by her family. The fact that all of these countries had a version of Cinderella showed me how much humans are alike all over the world. The stories showed that young girls all over the world can experience the same problems of an abusive family.

Researching these tales showed me how much of an impact fairy tales have had on young girls for hundreds of years. These stories are relatable to young girls who go through difficult situations with their step families and are also inspirational for girls with difficult lives who hope to eventually have a happier life. Because of this I believe that fairy tales should be cherished and I hope that tales with princesses such as Cinderella will be told for hundreds of more years.