



Fairyland Protests the Anthropocene: Climate Change, Time, and Narrative Solastalgia

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Abstract

Anthropogenic climate change's lasting negative impact on the physical environment stops humans from ever restoring Earth back to exactly what it once was. In contrast, modern readers are conditioned to associate the pristine landscape of fairy tales with beauty, belonging, and happily ever after. The impossibility of going back to a pre-climate change real-world tarnishes these associations. The primary objective of this paper is to explore the impact of climate change on the environments of fairy tales, by analysing the book *When Fairyland Lost Its Magic*. McKibben's theory of fatal confusion of time is modified to assert that the time of the real-world and time of the fairy tale world has to eventually be the same, since fairy tales fundamentally reflect the values and fears of the cultural time period it interacts with. Therefore, real-world climate change inevitably affects fairy tales. The paper argues that this contributes to narrative solastalgia, a term for the emotional or existential distress caused due to environmental change in nostalgic literature, especially fairy tales.

Keywords: Anthropogenic Climate Change, Fairy Tales, Literary Solastalgia, Time.

Introduction

Despite Tolkien's opinion that "fairy-stories should not be *especially* associated with children" (56), a stronghold of the bowdlerised versions of the *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, most notably by Disney,

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established a potent association of them with modern childhood. The corporate chain of animated fairy tales also succeeded in creating an implication that most, if not all, popular western fairy tale characters live in a faraway place called Fairyland, which may have many names, but in essence is the same. The tales also agree that these characters live during what is ambiguously referred to as ‘once upon a time’, which is decidedly *not* the present time of the real-world. Historically, whatever humans do in the real-world did not negatively affect Fairyland. However, post-pandemic disillusionment does not afford this leniency anymore. We have, finally, arrived at a conjecture beyond which the dreaded Anthropocene insidiously seeps into even familiar age-old stories.

The primary objective of this paper is to analyse the impact of climate change on the environments of fairy tales, using the children’s book *When Fairyland Lost Its Magic* (2023), written by Bijal Vachharajani and illustrated by Rajiv Eipe. When the familiar changes, a sense of distress is created, since we cannot go back to how it once was. In the light of climate change, Glenn Albrecht coined the term solastalgia “to describe the pain or sickness caused by the loss of, or inability to derive solace from, the present state of one’s home environment” (35). This paper argues that solastalgia is also applicable to narrative home environments, or imaginary story-worlds that once gave a sense of belonging, but are now so far removed from reality that it is no longer comforting. In fact, these pristine landscapes only worsen the prospect of living in the degraded environment of the real-world. This produces a “narrative solastalgia,” which is especially evident in the case of fairy tales and Fairyland, often associated with a romanticised ‘golden age’ childhood, the time back when *things were not this bad*.

What is Hidden in Fairy Tales?

Fairy tales find their root in oral traditions all over the world, drawing from mythology and folklore. However, since they were not written down, various strains of the same story existed and were often modified upon. Hence, there are no pure or original fairy tales, just commonly repeated ones. In the seventeenth century, the women of Paris salons engaged in the practice of retelling folktales with clever

insertions about their own plights. In this case, what is hidden in fairytales is social commentary of the aristocracy by women. This is one of the earliest examples of how the contents of fairy tale time is intentionally made to overlap with real-world time.

In the early nineteenth century, the Grimm brothers collected German folktales and codified them through the act of writing. But these initial versions were so horrific that they had to erase parts to appeal to the larger audience. While their original version was rooted in oral tradition, the written fairy tales were societally expected to be mellow. But in no stretch of the imagination are the tales of the Grimm brothers gentle, even after revision, since they still contain quite gruesome depictions of violence and sexual encounters. The brothers also actively rejected many folktales from their collection if they were not 'German enough' (as in, if they incorporated influences from other parts of Europe). So, in the brothers' version of fairy tales, what is hidden (quite obviously) was nationalism. This careful curation, again, cites a prominent instance when the happenings of Fairyland were made to directly reflect the sentiments of the real-world, and cyclically got to influence the real-world back.

The overall moralistic judgement of the Victorian era did not spare fairy tales. This was the period in which extra care was taken to make all such stories child-friendly, and to remove traces of anything that did not add to the happiness of the tale. The good were rewarded and the bad were punished heavily. Despite the movement into industrialisation, with its soot-covered skies and child labour, the fairytales told to children, especially the wealthier ones, were forced to remain in an idyllic setting, perhaps with even stronger doses of magic and enchantment. Instead of reflecting nationalistic values, these fairy tales developed into a means of escape, back to a pre-industrial world. In the twentieth century, with globalisation and Americanisation, and the advent of mega corporations like Disney, the popularity of fairy tales reached unprecedented heights. What got hidden in the whimsical versions of that time was a large dose of capitalism and gender roles. Despite the medium, evidence points out that fairy tales are dynamic, and continue to reflect the values and fears of the cultural time period it interacts with. This is especially

true when the real-world tries to hide its reality from and through fairy tales.

The act of hiding from reality is inherently political. Only the very young (often due to ignorance), or the very privileged (largely due to wilful ignorance) can hide from everyday reality. Below is an excerpt from David Glassberg's essay "Place, Memory, and Climate Change" which elucidates this point in the pre-pandemic context:

A November 2013 poll showed that in the USA, while 67% believed that the earth was warming, only 44% thought humans had something to do with it. Sadly, although there is overwhelming consensus among scientists, the issue is so politicised that less than half (46%) of registered Republicans or people leaning that way even believed the earth was warming, and less than a quarter (23%) thought that any warming taking place was the result of human activity. These numbers are only slightly higher in other wealthy industrial nations, especially ones such as Norway that profit from the export of fossil fuels. But concerns about a changing climate are much higher among developing nations such as the Philippines that expect to bear the brunt of the effects of rising global temperatures without the financial resources necessary to pay for adaptive measures. (21)

Though industrialisation could disguise chimney smoke as progress, and capitalism could write off environmental pollution for the fulfilment of globalisation, the post-pandemic twenty-first century cannot afford to ignore human actions and its repercussions. Numerous cyclones like Idai and Kenneth in Africa, wildfires in Australia, droughts in parts of India and Africa, floods in the South East Asian etc. all raise accusatory fingers at anthropogenic climate change. We no longer have the luxury to pretend that all natural disasters are natural. Similarly, our leeway to hide from reality through fairy tales is also at an all-time low. Anthropocene, it seems, also extends to Fairyland.

Old Man Anthropos Accelerates Doomsday

His name is a problem. It's too male, too Greek, too monolithic . . . Old Man Anthropos takes up too much space, in the world, in critical theory, and as the cause of so much ecological devastation. Anthropos occupies the dominant and destructive positions: old, rich, male, presumptively white, brutally normative. (Mentz 5)

The term Anthropocene, for better or worse, seems to have taken solid root in critical theory. As Steve Mentz jokes, *The Lord of the Rings* style, "one 'cene to rule them all" (1). The most pressing reason cited for the advent of this epoch, demarcating it from the Holocene, is the unprecedented warming of global temperature. While temperature does rise naturally over large spans of time, the human hand in this present condition, through the burning of fossil fuels and emission of greenhouse gases, is undeniable. But while The International Commission on Stratigraphy, who has the authority to officially sanction the term, is still looking for evidence in the rocks, the concept of Anthropocene has been taken up with great enthusiasm by academia to blame human influence on the planet, particularly anthropogenic climate change and its effects. In an article on the website of the Natural History Museum, Katie Pavid concludes that "although there have been mass extinction events in Earth's history where vast swathes of life have been wiped out, until now they have all been triggered by natural causes like asteroids and volcanic eruptions. This is the first time a single species has caused such destructive effects on the natural world and had an awareness of doing so." However, many critics, like Steve Mentz, "refuse any Anthropocene monoculture," (3) and instead aim to draw from others' attempts to pluralise it.

In spite of one's opinion on the best term for the current 'cene, it is a scientific understanding that at no point in time has the earth been static. Therefore, there has been no original state of earth, only constantly evolving ones. This is why Timothy Morton remarks that "all geological eras are nested catastrophes" (70). Taking this idea, a step further, Jeremy Davies says that "the idea of the Anthropocene should be seen as another product of that neo-catastrophist turn" (9). However, anthropogenic climate change has ensured that the levels

of catastrophe that we currently face have no precedent. Paul Loubere, Lisa Graumlich, John H. Williams and Steven Jackson all call this a 'no-analog,' meaning there have been no previous logs of such climates (Glassberg 19).

However, Eric Higgs argues that “the past offers a wide array of alternative models of ecological integrity” (145). Humans have had various approaches to maintaining the ecological integrity available to them. Glassberg notes three kinds of parables that historians offer as examples of how humans dealt with climate related issues. The first are stories of collapse. These deal with the history of past civilisations that failed to adapt to climate change. The second are stories of environmental sustainability. These examples are often all indigenous or tribal testimonies. And finally comes the stories of resilience, in which societies successfully overcame natural disasters like tsunamis or earthquakes, and human-made ones like war. But what is evident from this is, unfortunately, that history cannot prepare us for the scale of catastrophe we have brought upon us at the present. It is impossible to fully practise indigenous ways of living in tandem with the environment in this capitalistic present. And most examples of resilience have so far been valiant efforts of a people against one major disaster, but the Anthropocene brings in all disasters at once to all peoples.

So, it seems that climate change not only brings in existential problems, but also political ones. It encompasses the rich-poor divide, as well as the divide between the so-called developed and developing nations. The earlier some nations developed, the larger the role they played in climate change and global warming. However, the burden of bearing the consequences of such actions fall to countries that began their development journey later on. From this perspective, climate change becomes a postcolonial issue, and the Anthropocene becomes even more problematic.

Real-World Time vs Fairy Tale Time

Environmentalism Bill McKibben is of the opinion that humanity is lost in a “fatal confusion about the nature of time and space” (7). The confusion he is talking about forms the basis of nature-culture divide.

In essence, most cultures consider the time of nature and the time of culture as two separate times. Rapid changes in human activity seems to have informed the notion of equally rapid change in the time of culture. On the contrary, the general slowness of drastic change in nature is taken as the time of nature being slow on principle. By this logic, nature has to be almost static for long periods. But it clearly is not. From micro to macro levels nature is capable of rapid change. Therefore, this notion of separate times for nature and culture is unfounded.

If nothing else, climate change has accelerated the speed at which nature changes. Tropical regions are getting nearly too hot, and even the glaciers are melting. Unprecedented temperatures have changed wind patterns, affecting hurricanes and cyclones. Human activity, ranging from deforestation to hunting and poaching, has led to endangering numerous species to the point of extinction. Without them, their ecosystems have had to change dramatically. Also, from the time of industrialisation, human beings have demanded too much resources from the earth, resulting in resource depletion. In the face of climate change, the rapid deterioration of nature puts the transience of human existence to shame. According to McKibben, “as climate change accelerates, it is humankind who has become slow-moving and seemingly unchanging” (Bastian 24). Humans are unable to react in time to the changes affecting earth, and this could constitute a catastrophe at a planetary scale.

In the essay “Fatally Confused: Telling the Time in the Midst of Ecological Crises”, Bastian problematises the failure of time-telling devices like clocks to talk of qualitative time. The quote given below offers a glance into the problem:

Schedules for transitioning to low carbon energy production, for implementing truly sustainable fishing policies, or for developing transport systems independent of cheap fossil fuels, for example, are all running decades behind . . . [we] coordinate ourselves with work, school, and transport schedules, with periodic bill payments, public holidays, and anniversaries, while our efforts to respond to climate

change are squeezed into the spare moments around this, if at all. So, while the clock can tell me whether I am late for work, it cannot tell me whether it is too late to mitigate runaway climate change. (Bastian 24-25)

Hence, the time-telling device that a culture uses influences what kind of time they are concerned with. And time is always concerned with change, a before and an after. Clocks have provided cultures reassurances that after a moment comes another, which is much like the one that came before it. There is comfort in the constancy. As Barbara Adam reasons, “the time of the clock is quantified and standardised, unaffected by context and seasons” (70). However, the root problem still remains: if culture considers nature’s time to be different from its own, and also decides how to measure time and with what, then its measurements will always be inadequate to understand change in nature. Bastian phrases this as “the importance of asking what counts as change and for whom” (28). In other words, clocks cannot calculate both quantitative as well qualitative time. “Using the wrong time scale in the wrong context, we risk tricking ourselves into thinking we are aware of, and thus able to coordinate with, those other beings or things that are most crucial, when in fact we may be falling further and further behind” (Bastian 31).

Culture's clock-time is ill-equipped to calculate the changes of time in Fairyland, too. The concept of time is historically significant to the concept of fairy tales. In fact, in an article titled “Fairy Tale Origins Thousands of Years Old, Researchers Say” published on the BBC News website, Durham University anthropologist Dr Jamie Tehrani, declares that:

Jack and the Beanstalk was rooted in a group of stories classified as The Boy Who Stole Ogre's Treasure, and could be traced back to when Eastern and Western Indo-European languages split more than 5,000 years ago . . . Beauty And The Beast and Rumpelstiltskin to be about 4,000 years old. And a folk tale called The Smith And The Devil, about a blacksmith selling his soul in a pact with the Devil in

order to gain supernatural abilities, was estimated to go back 6,000 years to the Bronze Age. (“Fairy Tale Origins”)

Just as the time of nature and the time of culture are not separate, and instead are actually the same, the time of Fairyland is one with that of real-world culture. Though attributed to be always stuck in a nebulous ‘once upon a time’, the time of Fairyland coincides with the changes in real-world cultural time. The reasons for this were already established in section two, but to reiterate, fairytales inherently reflect the values and fears of the cultural time period that it interacts with, and therefore need to be in the same time continuum. In the context of the post-pandemic 21st century, this notion becomes extremely clear, and is reflected in the book, *When Fairyland Lost Its Magic*.

When Fairyland Lost Its Magic Due to Climate Change

Robert Macfarlane calls Bijal Vachharajani and Rajiv Eipe’s *When Fairyland Lost Its Magic* as “grave, funny, furious”, right on the cover. In the section where praise for the book is registered, he goes on to say this: “They re-tell Grimm for our grim Anthropocene, but without (quite) letting hope slip out of sight. A subversive book that will make children want to read on, and also make them want to question the world beyond their windows and screens.” This sentiment showcases the importance of the book in the present cultural time. The book, like all fairy tales, is actually meant for adults, though produced primarily for children, and discusses the values and fears of the third decade of the 21st century.

It is quite important to note that the author and illustrator are both Indian. This Indian-ness does not stop at their identity, but is infused into the characters and tone of the book. Eipe’s abundant black and white illustrations reveal familiar European fairy tale characters, like Rapunzel, Goldilocks, or Cinderella, wearing Indian clothes, and using Indian colloquial phrases. However, it is not merely a retelling. The characters are not merely Indianised while the story remains the same. In fact, the story is completely different, precisely because the characters are Indianised. The book is a very deliberate attempt to retell European (coloniser, first world) tales with an Indian

(colonised, developing country) twist. The twist is, of course, a retaliation against anthropogenic climate change, specifically from the perspective of a former so-called third world country.

Glassberg raises many relevant points regarding climate change and social justice, which is fundamental to the relevance of *When Fairyland Lost Its Magic*. He mentions that early on, it was thought that third world countries remained poor because the coloured people were lazy and did not use their resources properly. The rise of nations like India into one of the major developing countries of the world has dispelled such racist myths (22). But, it cannot be ignored that the drastic change in climate conditions have adversely affected developing or poor countries the most, since they often fall short of the infrastructure to mitigate disasters. They are also the ones who are made to deal with the consequences of the high carbon emissions done by the developed countries early on. Since the majority of the fault lies with developed nations, Glassberg questions whether they should be held accountable to help out the poorer countries (23). He also expresses doubt as to whom to help, and what to protect, heritage sites or ordinary land (23). There are no easy answers, only uncomfortable questions. But the developing world is furious, and it shows in works like *When Fairyland Lost Its Magic*.

Vachharajani's book immediately makes its tongue in cheek nature clear, and shines the spotlight on causes for climate change, right from the first paragraph. The story begins with Rapunzel's hair washing day. Rapunzel's "tower is so high that it rivalled most industrialist's fancy buildings," and her hair is "so long that it rivalled the number of zeros in said industrialist's bank accounts" (9). However, this is no familiar Rapunzel with lush clean hair. Instead, Vachharajani's Rapunzel struggles to maintain her long mane due to the "Great Water Crisis in Fairyland, and could only wash her hair on Thursday between 6 a.m. and 6.25 a.m." (11). This intentionally mirrors the lives of millions in big cities of India who depend on pipeline water. To top it all, since Rapunzel lives so high up, the air around the tower is so thick with pollution that she cannot breathe. She cannot move either, because she is trapped.

Helen Adams remarks that the “poorest people usually live in the most environmentally risky locations” (430). While Rapunzel is not originally financially poor, she is poor in matters of choice, as in, she does not have any. Adams goes on to say, “analysis of data reveals three reasons for non-migration: high levels of satisfaction, resource barriers and low mobility potential. Immobility in dissatisfied people is more likely to be caused by attachment to place than resource constraints” (429). In Rapunzel’s case the attachment is caused involuntarily. But unlike her, millions of people are trapped in their hometowns because of sentimental attachments and familial obligations. There also exist others who lack resources to move; job opportunity wise, or due to the lack of education or skills.

The book then comes to Snow White, who is called No White since there is no more snow left in Fairyland due to climate change. Her famous red lips are hidden behind a mask. Quite interestingly, the seven dwarves are now seven Indian coal mine workers who are named after greenhouse gases. No White’s stepmother’s evil plan to kill her does not succeed since there are no longer apples to poison, due to crop failure attributed to the lack of rainfall followed by a blight.

On the other hand, Sleeping Beauty cannot not even sleep due to climate anxiety. The Three Little Pigs have gone to the city to become construction workers. Poor Goldilocks cannot find anything perfect anymore, certainly not any payasam to eat. She says that everything is too hot and too cold at the same time (21), further noting that:

Nothing was as is, in Fairyland. Their beloved homeland was turning into the Land with Strange Weather, The Land of Smog and Dust, The Land with Too Much Snow (where it wasn’t meant to snow), and Too Much Heat (where it was meant to be cold). The glaciers were melting at such an alarming rate that *The Fairyland Times* had called it the worst climate crisis since the Narnian Ice Age. (Vachharajani 24)

Unseasonal storms and rising sea levels saw Fairyland inhabitants travelling in boats, and boatmen extorting exorbitant prices. Most

importantly, “the morals of Fairyland were messed up. There were no Happily-Ever-After, and the once Enchanted Forest was now the Disenchanted Not-a-Forest . . . Where once stood magical baobabs and banyans, brightly painted flame-of-the-forest and amaltas, and mighty oaks and sequoias; there was now a land full of tree stubs and palm trees, since palm oil was very profitable” (26). The lack of forest clearly affects animals. The Big Bad Wolf is now just a big wolf with acute hunger pangs. Also, his friend, the mermaid, is sad that the corals are all now white, signalling that oceans are warming (36).

Amidst of all this, characters play the blame-game, much like people in the real world who accuse individuals for using plastic straws while letting mega corporations emit unfathomable amounts of toxic waste into the environment. In the book, Cinderella has been living quite comfortably in her palace, showcasing how wealth disparity plays out during climate change. No White sillily accuses her as the cause of climate change since her name has the word “cinder” in it. Fairy Nani is distressed at this and decides to petition the Snow Queen. They find out the rest of Fairyland has also gathered at the palace to voice complaints. Even on the way to the palace, the difference in how climate change affects the rich vs the poor is shown. Cinderella goes in a carriage, while poor characters had to walk for days.

Turns out, the Snow Queen lost her powers, and is currently thawing alongside her land. Ignoring the direness of the Fairyland, Prince Charming embodies the values of patriarchy and capitalism, and insists everything is fine. Much to everyone’s chagrin, he says what Fairyland needs is, in fact, more industries. When Hansel and Gretel show up, the two children symbolising the youth of today, they demand change.

In the end, the inhabitants of Fairyland travel to the end of their world (beyond which exists the real-world), and realises that it is human activity that has seeped into Fairyland, polluting the storyworld too. In the only way that the author can conclude the book, the characters send in strength and magic to humankind, wishing that they will change their ways and make everything better. As far as ending for children’s books go, this is predictably optimistic, but it

also feels like bringing a bucket of water to fight a wildfire. However, the hope is that in seeing someone hold the bucket, others will also feel the need to put out the fire.

Narrative Solastalgia

Even as *When Fairyland Lost Its Magic* makes a poignant point, it leaves the reader feeling slightly lost. This feeling does not stem from the plot of the book, but from its deviation from the familiar. Fairyland, we had assumed, would always remain untarnished by human actions. The last place we expected to bear the brunt of anthropogenic climate change is perhaps, an imaginary land. But as Glassberg notes, “climate change does change almost everything” (18). This pervasive change implies that humans cannot fully rely on fairy tales as escape anymore. That strategy worked well throughout history, and still does work for people who are on the last stretches of trying to remain wilfully ignorant, but for the ones who deal with climate anxiety and want to keep accountability, fairy tales cannot be the same old ‘home territory’ again. This results in narrative solastalgia.

It was Glenn Albrecht, an Australian professor, who coined the term solastalgia by combining the Latin word “solacium” meaning comfort, with the Greek “algia” which denotes pain. The author asserts:

The word ‘solace’ relates to both psychological and physical context . . . If a person lacks solace, then he or she is distressed without the possibility of consolation. If a person seeks solace or solitude in a much-loved place that is being desolated then she or he will suffer distress. In both contexts there is suffering . . . Solastalgia describes the pain or sickness caused by the loss of, or inability to derive solace from, the present state of one's home environment. Solastalgia exists when there is recognition that the beloved place in which one resides is under assault. (Albrecht 35)

Albrecht also makes it clear that solastalgia and nostalgia are different. While nostalgia derives from a yearning to return home, solastalgia is a form of homesickness one experiences when one is still at home. Place identity and attachment are strong factors of solastalgia. The quote given below shall make this clear:

The ways that humans understand and value their surroundings are inseparable from the histories they experience in that environment, either first-hand or through others' stories. They attach memories to places, and over time form emotional bonds with the particular, familiar environments they call home. These bonds orient them in space, telling them where they are in the world; they orient them in time, telling them their place in a succession of past and future generations; and they orient them in society, telling them with whom they belong. Like other species on earth, humans become acclimated to particular places and environmental conditions. They develop a home territory. Even though humans are capable of moving great distances and adapting to a wide range of environments, many of them become disoriented, and often homesick, when they do. (Glassberg 27)

Solastalgia is a product of disruption to existing order, which in turn topples place identity. Technology and disease are both considered agents of such change by Albrecht. Besides these, natural disasters and human-made changes can both factor in. A lot of the natural disasters are caused by anthropogenic climate change, and are often unprecedented in the home territory. "The concept of solastalgia has relevance wherever there is the direct experience of negative transformation or desolation of the physical environment (home) by forces that undermine a personal and community sense of identity, belonging and control" (Albrecht 35). Human beings crave home. When the familiarity of home is threatened, we are lost. To top it, Glassberg points out that by "reshaping the kind of stories that historians tell, climate change challenges historians' efforts to foster a community's sense of place and faith in the continued existence of its familiar home environment" (26). Similarly, the influence of real-world time on Fairyland reshapes fairy tales. The new versions that cannot escape the polluted grime of reality shake the sense of

familiarity that people once felt towards these tales. Fairyland no longer feels like home.

Solastalgia has alternatively been described as the “emotional or existential distress caused by environmental change” (Newport et al. 543). Building on this, narrative solastalgia can be termed as the emotional or existential distress caused by environmental change in nostalgic/familiar literature, especially fairy tales, which are often associated by many with an important time period of personal past. Nostalgic here implies literature with a personal link to a sense of ‘golden childhood’ or very happy/comforting times. For people who grew up reading or watching fairy tales (the happy European ones), *When Fairyland Lost Its Magic* jolts them out of familiarity. None of the characters look or behave the same as they once did. And it is not because the author chose to make them different. Instead, it is also because the reality of the reader themselves has changed so much that the life of fairy tale characters seems foreign. In the face of deforestation, it is hard to picture enchanted forests. It gets confusing to imagine Rapunzel’s long hair without creeping questions of how she maintains it in the time of water scarcity and air pollution. The manufactured happiness that was once acceptable while consuming fairy tales, especially as children, is no longer taking hold in the face of climate anxiety. Even when reading the same tales that we read during childhood, the ones we consider as our narrative home territory, the reader feels a stark sense of not belonging there anymore. And we cannot go back either, no matter how many times we try to read it again. This inability to feel at home, despite engaging with the home territory, as far as fairy tales are concerned, leads to narrative solastalgia.

Conclusion

Fairy tales are “stories so familiar. Retold, recast, made anew with every retelling” (Vachharajani 101). From the very beginning, fairy tales have never been static, and to expect them to suddenly be, to offer solace in the wake of humans trying to escape the desolate reality we have created in the real-world, is the height of wilful ignorance led by desperation. Though fairy tales have been relegated primarily for children, the act of telling them, and the choices made

within, have always been within the purview of adults. In fact, they reflect the values and fears of the cultural time period they interact with. Throughout history, there have been many attempts to hide truths in and from fairy tales, but the post-pandemic 21st century does not leave room for such practices. Hence, the disillusionment that society underwent extends towards the no-longer-protected land of fairy tales, too.

The much-contested Anthropocene with its human influence seems to be unable to leave a place untouched, even the imaginary Fairyland. Reality, in the wake of anthropogenic climate change, triggers a sense of exclusion from the pristine lands of fairy tales. The human tendency to distinguish between the time of culture and the time of nature no longer stands strong either. This false assumption has not only made it near impossible for humans to react well to drastic changes in nature in the first place, but it has also distorted our sense of urgency regarding taking actions. The idea that real-world cultural time is the same as the time of nature, is modified into the idea that the time of Fairyland also must adhere to that of the real-world. And because it does, it is inevitable that climate change adversely affects Fairyland, too. This impact of anthropogenic climate change on Fairyland was explored using Vachharajani and Eipe's book *When Fairyland Lost Its Magic*.

However, changes to familiar home territory, real or narrative, causes distress. Furthering Glenn Albrecht's concept of solastalgia, in the context of literature, narrative solastalgia is the emotional or existential distress caused due to environmental change in nostalgic literature, especially fairy tales. It is the inability to find solace in once-comforting stories, entirely due to the disparity between the pristine imagined lands and the real-world environment ravaged due to anthropogenic climate change. In a way, children and childhood is the demographic most affected due to climate change, since their entire future is under question. So, it makes sense that the narrative solastalgia is strongest in fairy tales associated closely with childhood, taunting generations of adults who gifted them a civilisation on the brink of collapse. Needless to say, Fairyland protests the Anthropocene, much like how Greta Thunberg did, with a heavy heart raising a single question; "How dare you?"

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