

# Re-doing Rapunzel's Hair



Re-doing Rapunzel's Hair:  
Viewing Subjective Cognition in *Fancifold*

By

Lisa Pavlik-Malone

**CAMBRIDGE  
SCHOLARS**

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P U B L I S H I N G

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**For my friends**



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As a child, I was captivated by certain (popular) fairytale images, such as *Cinderella's glass slipper*, *Sleeping Beauty at rest*, and *Rapunzel's incredibly long hair hanging way down a tower*. To this day, I still feel an attraction toward, and a curiosity, for these fantastical details. This current book is, essentially, a fruit of this ongoing personal fascination which, as of late, has become couched in the possibility of such memorable images having influence over adult cognition, subjective experience, and the creative imagination.

I want to thank many individuals for their help and support in writing and preparing this book: the editors at Cambridge Scholars Publishing for their continued interest in my work and for all of their help in preparing this book; doll artist Joanna Thomas for use of her *Rapunzel* photo; Addison Gallery Of American Art and Jim Sousa for the use of the painting *Sunday, Women Drying Their Hair* by John French Sloan; Valerie Vargas for use of her piece *Pink Hair*; the Bank of Austria Art Collection and Lisa Oetner-Kreil for the use of Gustav Klimt's *Water Sprites*, and Susanna from laks@laks; Dan Cortopassi for the use of his two pieces *Amanda* and *Redtail Moon*, and Inka Lohrmann at TASCHEN; Marguerite Sauvage for use of her piece *Cups of Tea*; photographer Bastian Werner and hairstylist Tanja Kern for the use of the photo that is illustration number 4.8 in this book; Olaf Hajek for the use of his piece *Untitled* that is illustration number 4.9; Eveline Tarunadjaja for use of her piece *Fungus*, and Koko Nakano for speaking to me on Eveline's behalf; Yuko Shimizu for use of her piece *Untitled* that is illustration number 4.11; Toril Baekmark for use of her piece *Untitled* that is illustration number 4.12; Annette Brunner at Gestalten; Diane Donovan for use of her poems *Her Hair* and *Eighty-Eight*; Ruth Moose for use of her poem *Blonde*; Joyce Odam for use of her poem *Leaning Down Into Green*; Concieri Taylor for use of her Haiku poem; Hans Van de Bovenkamp on behalf of Siv Cederling Fox for use of her poem *Dead Women*; Susan Mernit for use of her poem *Braiding*; my husband, Peter, for his technical guidance in preparing the visual for this project; Peter Simon for his help with the proofreading of the text; Gloria and Bill Kiprais for their continued support for this project.



Rapunzel (doll); Reproduced by permission of Joanna Thomas.

In the beginning, there were *ends*—

The woman now sets a trap for the prince, using a trick neither Rapunzel nor her lover considered: cutting off Rapunzel's hair and using it as a ladder. Had the young lovers thought of this, they might have escaped unscathed...The woman cuts it, stealing Rapunzel's beauty and sexuality. She now poses as the girl, lowering the hair to the prince...

The prince arrives, but now sees only the old woman. She tells him what has happened, and in despair he leaps from the tower, and is blinded by the briars below.

(From "Fairy Tale Rituals", 2011, by Kenny Klein)



## INTRODUCTION

### **In death *and* in life: (Rapunzel's) hair as linked to embodied meaning**

The “ends” referred to in the scenario just presented, are the long, detached strands of hair currently held in hand by the old woman. As a whole these ends, once natural parts of Rapunzel’s body, have historically served both women well—as a ladder for one, as a golden avalanche of sex-appeal for the other. Now, much to some’s dismay, it has been used as a luxuriously seductive weapon against the “life force”, the atavistic urge that encapsulates the ecstasy and agony of romantic love. After cutting off her hair, the enchantress banishes Rapunzel to a desert, where the blinded prince aimlessly goes, but where he eventually finds “his” Rapunzel. Kenny Klein describes,

The enchantress locks Rapunzel into a new prison, in a desert; the desert is devoid of life. Since Rapunzel sneakily let her natural urge to mate and procreate come through, the enchantress will lock her in a place where life cannot grow, where she will not have sex or make babies (2011: 201).

...the prince represents life and love, while Rapunzel has always lived in the dark tower...and has been prohibited from creating new life. Now the prince must experience this dark, lifeless Underworld, as Rapunzel has, before he may be reborn...into our world...“Then he wandered quite blind about the forest, ate nothing but roots, and berries, and did naught but lament and weep...he roamed about in misery for some years, and...came to the desert where Rapunzel, with the twins to which she had given birth, a boy and a girl, lived in wretchedness.” (2011: 202; direct quote taken from the Margaret Hunt translation of the Grimms’ 1812 collection).

In this fairytale, the desert symbolizes what the ancient Greeks refer to as *The Underworld*, the place where all newly departed souls were believed to go, and so (it was believed) life could never exist. In Greek Mythology, it was also thought that human souls moved from the “living” world to The Underworld, but not from the world of death back to the world of life. The story of Rapunzel is, essentially, the triumph of *the continuation of life over death* in at least two ways. One, although this

desert is known to be a place where *physical* life cannot thrive—so neither can *psychic* life, nor *romantic* life, nor *spiritual* life, all four kinds of life forces are “played out”. And two, the prince brings himself, Rapunzel, and their two children back into the “living” world, the act that marks their eventual and complete triumph over the motives of the enchantress. Klein writes,

...the prince...is drawn to his love...his long time in The Underworld, blind, and relying on only on his inner senses, has given him a psychic ability to connect with dreams and inner urgings. His visions and instincts have guided him to Rapunzel in her desert solitude. There she with the twins he has given her; with the instinct of young women everywhere, she has broken through the deathly energies of even this dark, lifeless place and has brought new life into the world (2011: 202).

Rapunzel is now rescued from her Underworld prison. Her lover, the father of her two children, has come back to take her back to our world... Rapunzel is so emotional when the prince holds her that she cries: “Two of her tears wetted his eyes and they grew clear again and he could see with them as before.” (2011: 203).

Both Physical Life and Romantic Life are considered (see Table 1-1) to be “concrete” and “three-dimensional” because each contains energy forces that most would consider tangible in relation to the result or effect they produce, or are believed to produce. For example, one can literally see a baby being delivered or “see” basic sadness in the eyes of man or a woman who has been long separated from his or her “love”. Similarly, one can empirically study (and even manipulate to some degree) human reproductive processes from conception, into gestation, into childbirth. Also, the human ability to read emotions (particularly “basic” emotions, e.g., happiness, sadness, and fear) in the eyes is linked to heightened neuro-cognitive activity in certain areas of the human brain.

In contrast, Spiritual Life and Psychic Life are considered to be “invisible” and “not three-dimensional”, since both kinds of energy are not tangibly linked to experiential incarnations in the material world. Thus, one can only assume that one’s intuition *can be associated in some way* with a certain achieved effect or result, e.g., the prince believes that his intuition *led* him to find Rapunzel, yet any prototypic concrete form of his intuition eludes even him. The same can be said for Spiritual Life; no tangible, explanatory connection can readily be made between liquid tears of one’s love falling on said spot, and the sudden healing of the physical affliction.

### Four “life” categories (the Rapunzel fairytale)

<b>Physical Life</b>	Concrete, Three-dimensional	Rapunzel gives birth to twins, a boy and a girl.
<b>Romantic Life</b>	Concrete, Three-dimensional	During his journey through The Underworld, the prince longs for his love Rapunzel; when he finds her, she cries as he holds her in his arms.
<b>Spiritual Life</b>	Invisible, Not three-dimensional	Rapunzel's two tears fall into the prince's eyes, and this brings back his sight.
<b>Psychic Life</b>	Invisible, Not three-dimensional	The prince connects with his dreams and his inner urgings. His visions and instincts guide him to Rapunzel.

**Table 1-1 Four Categories of Life Represented in the Rapunzel Fairytale**

For this study, a fundamental question is, *How does Rapunzel's hair, including its severed “ends”, relate to each of, as well as all of, the four categories of life force represented in the Rapunzel fairytale?* In exploring an answer to this question, each of the four categories needs to be considered in detail within a conceptual context of *hair*, that includes, more specifically, what is known and/or imagined about *Rapunzel's hair*.

**Physical Life.** Here, *physical* life refers to energy forces that center around and encompass human *hair* (on the head). In his 2012 book, *Hair: The Long and The Short of It*, Dr. Art Neufeld writes,

Technically, the filament that you see emerging from the scalp is called the hair shaft. For simplicity, we call it hair. There is a part of the hair above the skin surface and a part that penetrates into the upper layer of skin, the epidermis. On average, there is a density of about 1600 hairs per square inch of scalp...the density is not uniform and can vary on different regions of the head... (2012: 16).

The hair shaft, which has no living parts and is made up of inert, complex proteins, is constructed by specialized living cells in the skin, that are some of the most active, hard working and tireless cells in the body. They have their own independent work schedules. For whatever reason we have hair, we grow a lot of it (2012: 21).

Thus, in hair, we have the synergistic juxtaposition of death and life, of the *hair strands deceased*, alongside the living cells out of which they have grown. Neufeld continues,

The hair follicle is the factory that constructs the hair shafts growing from the skin...The hair follicle is an organ. Other organs include your brain, heart, liver, eyes and kidneys. The hair follicle...has a blood supply, an internal lining of cells, an innervated muscle, a sebaceous gland and a cup of stem cells that sometimes are resting, sometimes are very active, and sometimes are dead. Each hair follicle...has a strenuous life cycle; it works hard for years to build the hair shaft, then shrinks, becomes inactive and rests, and later resurrects itself into a fully functioning organ (2012: 22).

Each one of the remarkable hair follicles in your scalp is a separate, independent, autonomous organ. Think about a blade of grass in a lawn...It is not in communication with the individual grass...next to it and there is no external, overall control for the growth of each blade of grass in the lawn. Every blade of grass does its own thing and a beautiful green lawn is produced. Just like a plant producing a blade of grass is autonomous, each hair follicle has its own cycle and schedule, and doesn't take orders from anyone (2012: 22-23).

The hair follicle is located beneath the skin surface...that extends into the dermis...The hair follicle undergoes cyclical changes in size, activity level and structure...When awakening from its dormant state, the cells of the...follicle release, locally within each hair follicle, many chemical signals that orchestrate the self-rebuilding of the hair follicle into an active organ. Rebuilding and reactivation...of the hair follicle is not due to extrinsic factors from the bloodstream or the environment. Control is local, intrinsic and, again, autonomous...a hair shaft emerges from the hair follicle... (2012: 23).

So, each hair cell or hair follicle continually restores its own vitality; neither internal conditions, i.e., the person's own bloodstream, nor any conditions of the external body environment, including neighboring follicles, contribute to the growth of each strand or shaft. The self-organizing nature of the hair follicle organ has implications for imagining how Rapunzel's strands of hair might have fared all those years in the desert, where her body managed to carry both her developing

children to term. *For instance, did her hair also continue to grow? And if so, when the prince finally found her in the desert, was her hair luxurious and brightly golden as before, when he secretly visited her by climbing “the golden stair”?* Thus, certain alternate scenarios of the fairytale that potentially include Rapunzel's hair, might allude to synergistic activity between life and death, where life continues to develop (in the forms of a boy and a girl) in the “Kingdom of Death” (the desert).

**Romantic Life.** Here, *romantic* life refers to energy forces that center around and encompass human *lovemaking*. Of course, these forces include dynamics of sexual attraction as well as sensual pleasure and allure. In his book, Klein states,

Hair is...extremely sexual, and holds a woman's power to seduce and delight...In Rapunzel's case, her hair carries both sexuality and power. Locked in her tower, unable to express her sexuality to society in any other way, she is allowed to grow her long, beautiful hair. Like her name, it is an expression of her femininity, her lure. But the enchantress uses the hair to reach the chaste girl, to protect her from the men her hair might attract (2012: 200).

In her book, *Rapunzel's Daughters: What Women's Hair Tells Us About Women's Lives* (2004), sociologist Rose Weitz describes how encouraging young girls to “play around with” their own (and their friends') hair, explicitly introduces them to its intrinsic sensual qualities.

The pleasures of hair are many. At the simplest level, learning to spend time on hair offers girls a new toy, a continual source of cheap entertainment. Even girls who have many other toys still enjoy the sensual pleasure of playing with hair, either their own or others'. And for those who grow up poor, regardless of the era in which they are born, hair play can compensate partially for their lack of other toys. Those who have few dolls, or only cheap dolls with plastic-molded hair, can play with their own and others' hair, enjoying the artistic pleasure of experimenting...the opportunity to create new images for themselves and their friends to use in dress-up games (2004: 53).

As young girls become sexually mature, they naturally begin to “play around with” and “move with” their hair in kinesthetic ways that romantically excite not only themselves, but their potential attractors as well. In her book *Hair: Surviving the Fall* (2004), psychologist Sara Romweber describes her interviews with twenty individuals (ten of whom are women), between the ages 21 and 48, on the personal and social value of hair.

“The erotic appeal of a woman’s hair is a complex matter of texture, color, scent, and movement,” said Wendy Cooper, and a woman does have control over most of these elements. She can color her hair, and perfume it, and she can move her head in such a way, setting her hair in motion, so that it will swing in a graceful, sexy manner. She can also play with a strand or two, always an inviting signal. It is simply part of the performance. Angela spoke about women who, when out in a crowd and looking for guys, start playing with a lock of their hair... “It’s just a way of showing that she can be touched... You know, how many times have you seen that behavior... particularly among younger girls... girls who are nervous around boys... it’s like mane-shaking among horses.” (2004: 31).

In addition to the visual and tactile dimensions of hair, there is also the olfactory dimension. Romweber explains,

...the scalp hair is identified as one of the seven parts of the body that gives off secretions or odors related to purging and cleansing—natural odors, which are believed to be seductive through their delicate smell. In addition, W. Montagna wrote that larger numbers of sebaceous glands that are located “on the scalp, forehead, cheeks, and chin, and these glands are controlled by sex hormones.” Michael Stoddard, also, identified the scalp as one of the major scent-gland regions of the human body. He identified 17 sites of scent production... and wrote that “the quality of odour produced by human scent glands... links odour production with sexual communication” (2004: 100).

Thus, with the sight, touch, and smell of hair being integral to sexual allure, comes the realization that *physical* life and *romantic* life can, on some primordial level, become one and the same force. In line with this notion, is the fact that synthetic treatment of various kinds, e.g., dying, spraying, weaving, are frequently applied to produce sensorial improvements that others would instinctively gravitate their attention towards and find attractive, i.e., having blonde, black, brown, or red rather than grey hair, having a soft musky smell of hair rather than a more bland one, having hair that is thicker rather than thinner. Indeed, the sensory pleasure potentially gleaned from hair also relates to various ways in which it is styled or decorated, and can range from simplistic, e.g., having soft flowing waves or a delicate barrette, to highly detailed, e.g., having interwoven braids or a spray of flowers upon one’s up-do. In her book, Romweber describes how African women of the Malagasy Republic “...used elegantly designed hair to attract men” (2004: 66), whereas sexually mature (non-adolescent aged) women in North Africa “...wore elaborate and complex hairstyles... For ceremonial occasions they adorned these hairstyles with ornaments, such as shells and coins” (2004: 66). So,

in the felt need of women, in particular, to “treat” and “train” their hair in certain ways, may come the implicit sense of impending “death” to romantic life without doing so, even if the hair itself continues to re-grow. Indeed, this may be a primordial juncture, where physical life energy and romantic life energy go their own separate ways.

In his study of natural hair growth and re-growth, Neufeld mentions how hair follicles on the human adult scalp tend to die off as one advances in age; this happens on the heads of both men and women (but is, generally speaking, more extensive in men). And both Weitz and Romweber have written about the personal awkwardness and even emotional pain that women, in particular, can feel when their hair is “not right”. This “not-rightness” of one’s hair incorporates various physical characteristics such as color, texture, smell, length, movement, thickness, and so on. Weitz explains,

...for every pleasure hair brings, there’s a parallel pain. If hair offers girls an opportunity to develop their creativity, it also presses them to stifle their creativity, for in any time and place only a certain range of hairstyles are considered acceptable. Most of the time girls spend on their hair is devoted not to creating hairstyles on their own, but to making their hair look like that of their older sisters, their media idols, or the popular kids in their school (2004: 57).

And if lessons about the importance of hair persuade some girls to willingly sacrifice money, time, freedom, and physical comfort for the sake of their hair...Nor are those sacrifices guaranteed to bring the desired results. The more importance a girl places on her hair, the more vulnerable she is when she can’t control it. As a result, for every girl who gains confidence and self-esteem from attractive hair, another lose confidence and self-esteem when her efforts fail (2004: 57).

Sara Romweber also explains,

Women who have lost their hair seem to know that they are missing this sexual sign. Yolanda spoke about her fears of rejection. She said that she and her husband were not living together during the initial phase of her hair loss, and when she realized that he wanted a divorce, she said to herself, “Who...is going to want a...woman...who is going bald?”...And Sheila, who doesn’t let men get too close,” said that she’s afraid once a man finds out that she doesn’t hair any hair, “it might change things” (2004: 30).

In addition, there are things to be pondered on these matters in considering photographer Dina Goldstein’s work. Her 2009 collection

titled *Fallen Princesses*, is comprised of photographs of fairytale princesses such as Cinderella, Snow White, and Rapunzel, featured in psychologically comprised ways, that are meant to reflect the modern women's human condition. She states,

I began to imagine Disney's perfect princesses juxtaposed with real issues that were affecting women around me, such as illness, addiction and self-image issues (June 16, 2009: [absenceofalternatives.com](http://absenceofalternatives.com)).

These works place Fairytale characters in modern day scenarios. In all of the images the princess is placed in an environment that articulates her conflict. The "...happily ever after" is replaced with a realistic outcome and addresses current issues (June 16, 2009: [absenceofalternatives.com](http://absenceofalternatives.com)).

More specifically, the *Rapunzel* photograph seems to relate directly to *illness* and *self-image*. One can say illness, because the young woman appears to be in a hospital room. Although she is sitting on, rather than lying in, the bed, she simultaneously holds, in her right hand, the silver pole that includes her IV drip. In her left hand is clutched a part of the very long braid of her golden blonde wig; the entire wig spans from the bed, to her hand, and onto the floor for at least a few feet in front of where she is seated; hence, the image resonates with issues regarding her self-image as well, especially through her emotional need to hold onto her synthetic hair. In terms of replacing the "happily ever after" with a realistic outcome, it seems that a young woman of sexual maturity named Rapunzel, got sick. As a direct result of this illness and/or from the medical treatment of it, she lost all of her natural hair. In light of this scenario, one wonders what would be more traumatic for Rapunzel: *having her natural hair cut off (which took place in the actual fairytale), with no means of recovering this loss for at least a very long time...or being given an intact "Rapunzel" wig to compensate for her complete baldness?* Based on the ideas described earlier, it seems that, where romantic life is concerned, Rapunzel would not be particularly desiring of either of these alternatives.

***Spiritual Life.*** Here, *spiritual* life refers to energy forces that center around and encompass human *inner strength*. In her book, Rose Weitz states, "...when we talk about hair and romance, we talk not only about love but also about power—the ability to obtain desired goals through controlling or influencing others" (2004: 92). Also, Klein considers the potential power and influence of hair as directly related to its uncanny ability to regenerate itself completely anew. "...it is one of the very few parts of our body that we can lose and grow back...For this reason, hair represents regeneration and rebirth. It holds our strength, our power to

renew the world around us and to exert our control upon the world.” (p.199)

These complex metaphors of “hair *as* strength *as* re-growth” and “hair *as* strength *as* rebirth” have been illustrated in a 2009 television advertisement campaign by the UK company *ghd* (stands for “good hair day”) for a flat iron, which is a styling iron that straightens hair. The advertisement slogan is you can *do anything with your hair*. The advertisement is a short narrative film that depicts “...an emancipated Rapunzel...” who “no longer relies on the knight in shining armor to free her from a towering prison: using a straightening iron, her hair becomes longer and helps her escape on her own” (November 17, 2009: SurLaLune Fairy Tales Blog). The advertisement is just a minute or so long. It shows a knight or prince looking through his telescope at Rapunzel sitting in her tower window taking note of his stare, her luxuriously long, straight, *red* hair flowing from her head down the tower. As if she knew to wait there at precisely that time for his gaze, she then goes to her mirror and applies the flat iron to straighten her hair even more. Immediately following, the knight gets on his motorcycle, fierce and determined, he drives to Rapunzel's tower, where he, presumably, climbs up the ladder she has made with her own hair, into the tower, to find her not there. At the same time, we see the flat iron on her dresser and then streamlined ends of her hair (presumably “ends” that she herself cut off) bound to an attachment on the wall. The next (last) frame shows her with now markedly shorter, though still graceful and flowing hair, getting ready to take off by herself on the knight's motorcycle, escaping from the tower—her prison—by her own hand, by her own independent inner force or spirit. Perhaps, all along, she did not want to depend on the prince to free her. Furthermore, she wants him to know this, as their eyes meet for a moment, from his presence at window in the tower above, and hers from below as she sits on the bike. The potential physical alterations of hair (in this case, from exceedingly long to even longer to considerably shorter) become integral to inner personal strength using sexual allure; hence, *physical* life and *spiritual* life and *romantic* life have, on some primordial level, become one and the same force.

However, a flip side of *cutting the hair shaft to express inner strength* may be its *continuous re-growth in the face of impending death*. This may be where romantic life energy flows can potentially bifurcate from physical and spiritual life energies intertwined. In the former sense (which refers to details of the narrative advertisement), romantic life energy may be sacrificed by Rapunzel in cutting off her long, flowing hair (that makes her physically attractive to the opposite sex), in order to confirm her inner

sense of self and her independence. In the latter sense (which refers to details of the fairytale), Rapunzel's hair may continue to grow despite her long presence in The Underworld. For all that time before she and the prince reunite, there is no romantic life. However, physical life that initially happens to flow by itself, not yet intertwined with spiritual life, is altered when Rapunzel realizes, in a moment of joy, that her hair is getting longer. From this point on, her inner (personal) strength continues to grow, which keeps her able to carry her two children to term and give birth to each of them. *Would Rapunzel have been able to carry and eventually have her children, if she was losing her hair instead of growing it? Also, had romantic life forces become part of the energy cocktail again? Early on (had the prince found Rapunzel in the desert as soon as he started wondering as a newly blinded man), would Rapunzel's inner strength have emerged at all, even with her hair growing?...And if so, would this emergence have been to a degree that was needed to keep her gestating children alive through to and including each one's birth?* It may be that spiritual life having merged with physical life, minus romantic life, produced an energy cocktail that led to a happy ending between mother and children.

**Psychic Life.** Here, *psychic* life refers to energy forces that center around and encompass human *intuition*. A few definitions that reflect this characterization include: *intuition* is “perception via the unconscious” (“Intuition in Jungian Psychology”, Wikipedia: 2013: 2); *intuition* is “understanding or knowing without conscious recourse to thought, observation or reason...a response to unconscious cues or implicitly apprehended prior learning.” (Gallate & Keen, “Intuition in Jungian Psychology”, Wikipedia: 2013: 2); *intuition* is “immediate insight or perception as contrasted with conscious reasoning or reflection...characterized...as the products of instinct, feeling, minimal sense impressions, or unconscious forces” (APA, 2007: 499). Based on these three definitions, at least two overarching qualities seem to characterize intuition: one, intuitive thought is immediate; and two, intuitive thought resides at a level of cognition that is below the momentary forefront of conscious. In this study, the psychological nature of intuition will be characterized, more specifically, as comprised of *nuance cycles* in the brain (Briggs, 1990), as part of a metaphoric *Global Workspace* of conscious experience (Baars, 1997), as well as the synergistic interplay between the two.

First, the term *nuance* refers to “...a shade of meaning, a complex of feeling, or subtlety of perception for which the mind has no words or mental categories...Since its richness isn't described by or contained in the normal forms of thought, it isn't easy to share with other people”

(Briggs & Peat: 1989: 194). Thus, what constitutes “normal thought” would include the presence of words that can be used to express, as well as create, mental categories; for instance, the statement “I don’t like his *spunk*”. In his 1990 book, *Fire in the Crucible*, Briggs writes about what he refers to as the “open brain”, in his consultation with physician William Grey and scientist Paul LaViolette on the subject of nuance.

...thoughts and memories may be coded or logged in the brain according to their “emotional nuances or feeling tones.” Feelings are basic...anger, rejection, fear, loss, joy, astonishment. Between and among these are a huge variety of possible shades and combinations: nuances. Thoughts containing a similar nuance of feeling are filed together, even if they aren’t logically or chronologically connected. This would account for the mind’s sometimes strange association of ideas....thought-emotions become associated together into structures vastly larger and more complex than  $2+2=4$ ...for example, our knowledge of mathematics as a whole...These “emotional-cognitive structures” become “organizationally closed” when the richness of their nuances are summarized by a simpler emotional response (such as liking blondes) or turned into thoughts which have a feeling of closure attached to them (1990: 48-50).

Thus, in the above *spunk* example, the word “spunk” refers to a mental category (of ideas about various behavior patterns and expressions) that exists in the mind of this individual. Presumably, the subtle shades of feeling or “nuances” that might lead this individual to make this statement about someone else, might be aroused by a quick glance in that person’s general direction, that produces a feeling sensation in this individual’s gut which the brain interprets as unpleasant. However, at a later time, this same individual may spontaneously think “flaky” (rather than “spunky”) in the presence of the same person, while having, essentially, the same emotional “gut” reaction. It may be minute differences or “nuances” felt in the gut and received by this individual’s unconscious (though barely, if at all, by his or her conscious), that leads to (what exists in this individual’s mind) as a slightly different word or concept than before. Thus, these two concepts—“spunky” and “flaky”—are *coded* in this individual’s brain with the same general *feeling tones* (that contain negative emotional feelings). However, it may be that the slight change in the gut (not registered much by consciousness) produced a thought in the form of the word “flaky” that the individual feels is “not quite right”, even though he or she is psychologically unable to grasp a “better” word. In such a case, his or her “emotional-cognitive structures” or feeling tones remain organizationally (more) open than if the applied word—“flaky”—had not been given a conscious thought when used by this individual. For this

reason, the individual may be in a better position psychologically for the “right word” to enter consciousness.

In addition, LaViolette characterized (to Briggs) what he refers to as “nuance cycles” in the brain. These neuro-cognitive energy flows combine perceptual and emotional patterns, and roam about the limbic system in two rotations or “loops”. Briggs describes,

loop 1...raw sense data passes through the thalamus into the limbic system where it circulates around and around in what is called the Papez circuit, a closed loop network of neurons connecting the limbic organs...there they trigger feeling-tone responses and generate what Grey and LaVoilette call an emotional ‘theme’...composed of an organized pattern of feeling tones...loop 2...the ‘theme’...enters a second loop communicating between portions of the thalamus and the prefrontal cortex...this loop abstracts and filters out certain nuances and amplifies them, reintroduces them into the Papez circuit...With each cycling through the prefrontal cortex, the idea...might be abstracted and amplified...The result would be a thought...The nuances, the complex of emotion and perception, are still there, but they now lie in the shadow of this abstraction (1990: 52-55).

Thus, in considering the “spunk” example once again, both words “spunky” and “flaky” are abstracted ideas used by the individual to describe someone else. If the individual *feels* that the word “flaky” is not “quite right”, his or her conscious experience is tapping into “the complex of emotion and perception” or nuances of his or her personal experience of the other person.

Related to this idea of nuance cycles in the brain, is the *Global Workspace Theory* of cognitive psychologist Bernard Baars. A fundamental assumption of this theory is that consciousness encompasses multiple areas or levels of the brain simultaneously. These areas include conscious experience (what the person is aware of moment-to-moment), as well as current neuro-cognitive activity at all levels below consciousness (also referred to as *the preconscious*). At each of these levels are multiple activated areas that are currently communicating with numerous areas of the other levels. These internally orchestrated neuro-cognitive energy flows relay various patterns or preconscious information into consciousness. Baar’s theory relates to the idea of “nuance cycles” in both structure and function; the prefrontal cortex (in loop 2) has a significant relation to conscious experience, while neural networks below the prefrontal area, including the Papez circuit (in loop 1) where “feeling tone responses” reside, are part and parcel of the *global* communicative brain activity that relays patterns of preconscious information into consciousness.

*Might perceptual information contained in Rapunzel’s singing voice*

*resonate, for the prince, with certain emotional nuances or feeling tones?* In the fairytale, we know that the prince did not fall in with her, at least initially, for her physical beauty. Instead, it was her beautiful, fairy-like singing voice, that he would listen to everyday in the forest, that captivated him before he even saw what she looked like. "It is the beauty of her soul that makes him want to ascend the tower" (Grimm & Grimm: 2003: 279). *If this is so, might the blind prince, connecting to his dreams, visions, instincts, and inner urging while roaming through the desert, have had emotionally-laced internal images of his love—Rapunzel—that included her beautiful singing voice and her long, flowing blonde hair simultaneously?* Indeed, it may be that spiritual life (connecting his mind to her soul) giving him inner strength to persevere, and romantic life (connecting his mind to her hair and body) giving him something to desire and dream about, become one with psychic life minus physical life. Without any physical trace of even a hair of Rapunzel's, the prince's profound focus inward—his persistent attention to nuanced feeling and his incessant keeping track of subtle changes in patterns of information in consciousness—guided him to her location in the desert.

### **Embodiment (A Case for Death *and* Life...and Hair)**

Here, embodiment includes not only interplays among the concrete, three-dimensional components of the individual, i.e., the physical realm of hair, the romantic realm of lovemaking, but also components that are invisible to the five senses, and so which exist outside the concrete, three-dimensional landscape of human consciousness. Both the *psychic* realm and the *spiritual* realm are being added, as two fundamental dimensions of the human experience embodied. Within each realm is the essence of both life *and* death, as death is the natural "flipside" to not only physical life (the *shaft* produced by the hair follicle) and romantic life (when the body stops having sex and/or being sexually attractive in some concrete way, i.e., in terms of hair), but to spiritual life and psychic life as well. However, when it comes to the latter two realms, the lack of "life" force or energy seems to elude instances of concreteness. While there may be "a sense" within the individual, that his or her energy is fading or dying, the particulars of this sense are not necessarily definitive, and so are difficult to characterize matter-of-factly, even when symbolic and metaphoric thought find a way.

A purpose of this study is to explore some of the cognitive psychological complexities of the four *death and life* realms of embodied experience. In doing so, there will be an attempt to characterize the

spiritual and psychic realms of inner experience as synergistically integrated with the physical and romantic ones, during imaginative artistic expressions of *hair*. This is so, even when one or more of the forces are negated or “not present” in the momentary dynamic (similar to when patterns of neuronal energy flow contain some neurons excited and other neurons inhibited at the same time). Imagery presented from Grimm’s fairytale *Rapunzel*, will continue to be an integral component of the study. In exploring the four realms of embodiment, it seems appropriate to incorporate the fairytale genre for reasons articulated by child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim some four decades ago, in his famous book titled, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairytales* (1976). In it, Bettelheim vividly articulates the central role of the fairytale in helping a child to understand and psychologically integrate unconscious forces that naturally exist within himself or herself, with conscious experience. He writes,

A child needs to understand what is going on within his conscious self... not through rational comprehension of the nature and content of his unconscious, but by becoming familiar with it through spinning out daydreams--ruminating, rearranging, and fantasizing about suitable story elements in response to unconscious pressures. By doing this, the child fits unconscious content into conscious fantasies, which then enable him to deal with that content. It is here that fairytales have unequalled value, because they offer new dimensions to the child’s imagination...the form and structure of fairytales suggest images to the child by which he can structure his daydreams... (1973: 7).

To use fairytale imagery that includes human dynamics may be psychologically beneficial not only for children, but also for adults. In doing so, adults can continue to learn about themselves and their psychological processes through their own continued motivation—personal needs, wants, and desires, to re-organize and re-interpret internal experience. Indeed, this seems to be what took place in the two alternative *Rapunzel* scenarios recently presented (Dina Goldstein’s *Rapunzel*, as well as the *Rapunzel* of the company *ghd*). Like the classic version of the fairytale (more intended for children), the implicit messages in these new, revised scenarios (more intended for adults) are meant to reach a wide audience of people on a subjective level. Here, one can speak of a “collective” unconsciousness merging with a “collective” consciousness, to create a new, socially shared experience or understanding of the meaning of *hair* for women that is more emotionally relevant, and so ultimately more emotionally satisfying.