

## Editor's Preface

We are often oblivious of the extent to which we think through and live by metaphors. These metaphors, if present in our lives since the childhood, frequently become the core of our identity. They become us, and vice versa, we become them. Even if in the future the various biography paths we tread on reconstruct them, the metaphors still constitute most important reference points which frame our thinking and doing.

A similar line of thinking applies to femininities and masculinities. In this case, metaphors constitute the crystallisation of diverse socio-cultural dogmas and anxieties, archetypes and hopes. These metaphors also form an inherent part of socialisation into femininities and masculinities, the basis of pedagogical practices which shape identities. And even though we are frequently unaware of the power of metaphors, they mould our feminine and masculine identities, at the same time being the source of strength or complexes—if, for instance, they are related to what we accept as ideals of femininity and masculinity. Here, of crucial importance is sensing the distance between who we are and who we would like to be in the context of these metaphorical crystallisations.

Fables and fairy tales are sources of powerful cultural metaphors which influence identities, even if this is only assumed or covert. A case in point is the figure of Little Red Riding Hood who is the source of an infinite number of interpretations and the struggle for the meaning of femininity. However, the cover of the present issue of JGP features a peculiar metaphor of the Cinderella metaphor. Here, a contemporary woman loses her beautiful slipper on the stairs while fleeing the (perhaps) royal ball. Looking at her, we still perceive a classic Cinderella. Even today the Cinderella metaphor can be applied to the discussion concerning the situation of women. In a broader context, we can place her in a lottery-like conception of success, which is gained through a stroke of luck in an almost immediate fashion—almost like the victory

of a talented yet underappreciated America Got Talent (female) singer—which contrasts with the idea of a self-made man.

Worth mentioning is also the Cinderella complex defined as women's fear of independence, one who is willing to submit herself to a strong man in control of her life. More radical versions of this interpretation reference feminist theories in which Cinderella is criticised for her readiness to subservient behaviour and the focus on appearance (beauty and youth), as well as setting her goals around finding the right partner.

It seems that most emancipated women—in their thinking and behaviour—have do not see the Cinderella metaphor as underpinning their identity. They do not seek success and happiness through sheer coincidence, they take their lives into their own hands and are active agents in choosing their partners, it does not happen thanks to a lost glass slipper. These women of strong personalities, sometimes powerful and fully aware of the determinants of their lives, seem to break up with the Cinderella myth. However, few of us would deny the fact that there are women who still are on the lookout for their Prince Charming, and permanently adrift, they lose something in the hope that the wonderful prince will find them through the lost object. One way or another, subsequent reconstructions and deconstructions of Cinderella, subsequent new versions of this fairy tale—in the form of a book, film, theatrical play or used in advertising—will testify to the fact that the Cinderella myth is still alive.

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