

If the Leg Fits: Recreating Femininity in Marissa Meyer's *Cinder*

In a literary arena ripe with fairytale adaptations *Cinder* by Marissa Meyer stands apart in its use of intersectionality to circumvent common feminist pitfalls surrounding the genre of fairytale heroines. First, the novel centers the agency of the titular character rather than patience in the face of adversity. Comparing the ATU 510A entry to the plot of *Cinder* shows that the Cinderella character is typically expected to wait for assistance from outside of the self, whether this comes from a fairy godmother or the tree over the mother's grave. *Cinder*, however, shows initiative in finding her own dress to the ball and using her mechanic skills to get to the ball. Second, the novel reconstructs beauty by creating a Cinderella character with a disability. *Cinder*'s status as a double amputee is the cause for her to have a non-normative body which is often called "monstrous" over the course of the novel. Although she is not perceived as normatively beautiful within the realm of her story, it is arguable that she showcases an inner beauty similar to that mentioned in the ATU 510A description that manifests in kindness and passion. Therefore, *Cinder*'s inner beauty exists without the stereotypical outer beauty. Finally, the novel decenters romance by making the romance a minor plot, overshadowing it with *Cinder*'s drive to save the world. The agency that she takes is for the purpose of either leaving her abusive home or for foiling the plans of the evil queen, both of which pull her further from the Prince, making him an afterthought. The combination of these three separations from the original stories provide a fresh perspective on the adapted fairytale heroine.