

Preface to the Story

Sir Mouse by Holly Adams

I have always been fascinated by fables and fairy tales. I love to get lost in fantastic lands and captivating stories. I have enjoyed the recent resurgence and reinvention of these classic stories that have made their way into the popular media today. The Grimm brothers are a common source of inspiration for many of those stories. But I have always wondered why these stories are so popular.

Some of the original Grimm brothers' tales often have dark themes, and yet they persist (albeit with lighter tones for the most part). I don't think it is these dark themes that ensnare the participant in the storytelling experience, but rather the way the story is told. As Calvert Watkins has said, "the formulas themselves [act] as the actual vehicle for the long-term preservation of tradition" (299). There are key philological and linguistic features that make these stories so compelling. First, they follow Nigel Fabb's macro-structure of narrative forms (165–166). They each have an orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution, coda. The Grimm brothers use this structure to form their stories into a ring composition, creating a circle that is easy to follow and a closure that brings satisfaction to their readers.

The Grimm brothers also make use of triads. The number three has important and symbolic meaning in literature, often going back to the Christian tradition (Liabenow, *The Significance of the Numbers Three, Four, and Seven in Fairy Tales, Folklore, and Mythology*). Whenever three of something is done or said, it often indicates importance. This could be the three drops of blood in *Snow White*, or the three-day limit the king gave for a person to discover what his daughters were doing in *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* (Grimm and Grimm).

However, triads and ring compositions are not the only things that make the Grimm brothers' stories so great. They also employ a variety of linguistic and rhetorical devices. I believe that the best way to truly understand all of these features (ring compositions, triads, and linguistic and rhetorical figures) a person must seek to use them. Creating an original story employing these devices and figures allows me insight into how and why they are used. Thinking ahead about how to use these devices means that I have been able to understand, just the tiniest bit, how impactful and powerful these devices can make writing.

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Sir Mouse

There once was a kingdom in a far-off land.¹ The king ruled from his palace in the center of the kingdom.² There he lived with his family. One of his favorite parts of his palace were the gardens. The gardens³ were the favorite part of another creature, a little mouse named Peep. Peep⁴ loved the gardens just as much as the king did, and he loved to run through the rows of flowers, climb up the rose bushes, and slide down the tangles of vines.⁵ But his favorite part of the living there was seeing the princess.

The princess⁶ shared her father's love of the garden and spent as much time as she could there. Peep liked to watch her run through the garden, picking flowers as she went. Once when she reached for a flower in the rose bush, he climbed inside the bush and gave it a push,⁷ moving it just within her reach. One day as Peep was helping inch yet another flower her way, the princess saw him. Peep was afraid that the princess would scream and call for a cat to be let loose in the garden, but he was pleasantly surprised instead.

“Oh, you cute little thing,” said the princess. “Won't you come closer that I may see you?”

Peep slowly crept out of the bush and looked up at the lovely princess. She then knelt on the ground and put out her hand.

“My name is Lily. How do you do little mouse?” she said with her most polite voice.

¹ Orientation phrase for the opening

² Polypoton: *kingdom* and *king*

³ Anadiplosis: *the gardens* (lexical cohesion by word repetition).

⁴ Anadiplosis: *Peep*

⁵ Triad: three things Peep likes to do—run, climb, and slide

⁶ Anadiplosis: *the princess* is repeated

⁷ Internal rime: *bush* and *push* end the two short clauses

Peep moved a little closer to the princess and extended his paw out just like the girl. Lily took his little paw with her finger and thumb and shook hands with him.

“It is so nice to meet you little mouse. Have you been the one helping me with the flowers?” asked Lily.

Peep nodded his head. He then scurried under the rose bush and brought her another flower.

“Oh!” she exclaimed. “Thank you! This will help nicely with my flower crown. Will you stay and play with me little mouse?”

Peep nodded once more. She motioned for him to sit on her shoulder, and then she started weaving her crown. She started talking, mostly instructing him in the ways of weaving.⁸ When she was finished, she stood up and placed the woven⁹ flowers on her head. She took Peep from his place on her shoulder and held him out in front of her.

“How do I look dear mouse?” she asked, posing and tilting her head to give him different angles to look at.

Peep smiled and applauded. Then Lily sat down and started to frown. Peep was upset that his new friend looked sad, so he cocked his little head to the side with a questioning look.

“Oh, you wouldn’t understand little mouse,” Lily bemoaned. “You see, I’m not allowed to wear a real crown yet, except on formal occasions. Even then it’s just a little one.” Lily

⁸ Alliteration: “ways of weaving”

⁹ Polypoton: *Woven* goes back to *weaving*, binding the two clauses

suddenly stood up, causing Peep to latch onto her thumb for safety. “But one day soon Father will give me more responsibilities and then I can wear my crown all the time!”

Peep nodded in support. He then ran up her arm onto her shoulder. Lily rubbed her cheek softly against his and told him that she had to leave for the day, but that she would be back the next.

Over the next few months the two played in the garden together every day. They soon became the best of friends. Lily even took a stick and knighted him, henceforth calling him Sir Mouse. Peep liked that. After he was knighted he took to venturing outside the garden to see the real royal knights. He didn’t really know what a knight did, but Lily told him that they were the best men in the kingdom. They fought opposing armies and went on dangerous and daring missions.¹⁰ They rode fast horses and carried lances. Peep thought that these knights must have the most amazing and dangerous job in the kingdom.

One day Peep was sitting on top of the garden wall waiting for Lily to come play like he always did.¹¹ He waited a long time, but she still didn’t come. Then he noticed that the knights on the other side of the wall were all in a fluster. There were humans scurrying about every which way, and there was lots of yelling.

Peep wanted to get a better look so he scampered down the wall to the roof of the stable. He climbed down one of the posts and sat in a windows. Then a boy with a loud trumpet came and told three of the knights that the king wanted to see them. Peep thought that it must have to

¹⁰ Alliteration: repetition of /d/ in *dangerous* and *daring* used for emphasis

¹¹ Complication

do with why everyone was running around so much. He wanted to know too, so he quickly and quietly¹² followed the group into the castle.

Wow, thought Peep. He had never been inside the palace before. He had always been told that lots of cats lived inside the palace, and he had thought it was best to avoid them. But now that he was in the palace, he realized that it was bigger than he could have imagined. There were so many people too! Peep had to do his best to stay close to the wall and keep an eye on the group that he was following. Humans moved so fast with those long legs!

Just as Peep was beginning to wonder if he really wanted to know what was going on, the group of knights stopped in front of a big door. Peep dashed through the door¹³ as it opened and then found the nearest thing to climb. He did not want to be stepped on. The crowded hallway had been enough for him. He also wanted a better view. He was so small that all he could see were the feet of people and the feet of furniture.¹⁴ He scampered up a candlestick that was behind the row of knights he had followed, careful not stand where the wax was falling.

Peep had just gotten himself situated when the man with the shiniest flower crown he had ever seen rose from the chair in the center of the room. He must be Lily's father, Peep thought to himself. He looks dreadfully important. As these thoughts and more were going through Peep's head, the king began to speak.

“As you have heard, my daughter Lily has been snatched from this very castle and is being held hostage by our enemies,” the king said solemnly. “That is why I have gathered a team of my best knights to rescue her.”

¹² Paramoen pair: “quickly and quietly”

¹³ Binding: alliterative pair *dash* and *door* binds the verb to the destination

¹⁴ Binding: sense play (polysemy) uses the two meanings of *feet*

Oh no, thought Peep. This was terrible! Lily had been kidnapped! What was he to do? Peep looked at the knights in front of him. They definitely seemed strong and brave. He only hoped that they were strong and brave enough to save his friend.

“We don’t know exactly where they have taken my daughter,” the king continued, “but we have found some tracks that lead to the east. Start there, and bring my daughter back.”

The knights clapped a fist over their chests, their metal armor causing the movement to ring through the room. The noise resonated with Peep, and something within him began to rise.¹⁵ He wanted to help his captured friend, but how could he? Those knights are big and strong and brave. He was just a little mouse.

The king then resumed speaking again. “As you search for my daughter, I give you three pieces of advice. So first, be brave; even the most stalwart knight can succumb to fear, but to succeed, you cannot. Second, be smart; our enemies are clever, and to beat them we must be smarter than they are. And third, be kind; you never know where help will come from, and kindness can open a person’s heart.”¹⁶

He then looked at each knight with all the emotion and intensity of someone who is experiencing great heartache and great hope at the same time. This was the look only a father placing the fate of his daughter in someone else’s hands could give. And as he turned to look at each knight, Peep could not help but feel that look alight on him too. And with that look, the feeling that had been rising in him since he had heard of Lily’s plight broke to the surface. He just had to help her!

¹⁵ Binding: The repetition of the /r/ sound in *ring*, *resonated*, and *rise* binds these ideas together.

¹⁶ Isocolon: The three pieces of advice the king give to his knights has the same number of syllables.

The knights stayed and talked to the king for a few more moments, but by the time they left Peep had already vanished from the candle stick and flown down the hall and into the courtyard. Peep's first stop was the stables. He talked to all the animals and asked them for advice on his upcoming journey.

"You should head down the east road," said the horse. "I see people and animals heading east a lot."

"No, no, no," said the crow.¹⁷ "You should go toward the forest. There are always things happening in there."

"No, you are both wrong," said the rat. "Head west. All the important things happen to the west of here."¹⁸

Peep did not think that the stable animals were very helpful at all, but he thanked them anyway. As he was leaving the stable, he saw the three knights arrive in the courtyard.

"We should check the abduction sight for clues," said the first knight.

The others agreed, and they headed towards the princess's bedroom. Peep hurried up the stable drainpipe and unto the roof. From there he followed the knights, his feet going as fast as they could go.

Soon Peep arrived at the scene of the abduction along with the knights. As the knights were bent over looking at the tracks that headed to east, Peep was wondering how he could help. Peep didn't get much time to think however, because soon the knights had come to the

¹⁷ Internal rime: *no* and *crow*

¹⁸ Isocolon: The lines of each of the animals each has twenty-three syllables.

agreement that the tracks did indeed head east and they were ready to go. Peep¹⁹ followed them back to the courtyard and quickly hid himself in the first knight's saddle bag. He was definitely not going to try to keep up with a fast horse.

As the knights galloped off, Peep kept his eyes open for clues as to where his dear friend was taken. He was looking down at the tracks that the knights were following when he noticed that there was a small trail of flower petals next to the tracks. It must be Lily! he thought. He looked ahead and he saw more petals. The petals started to move towards the trees, but the knights were still going forward. Peep quickly came up with a plan, possibly the worst plan he had ever had. But he remembered that the king had told the knights to be brave, and he wanted to be brave too. So Peep threw himself from the first knight's saddle bag directly in front of the second knight's horse.

The horse, greatly surprised to suddenly²⁰ have a mouse right in front of him, reared up on his hind legs. This caused the second knight a great deal of fright as well. Peep ran in between the horse's legs and straight to the tree line, right where the flowers were.

The other knights had stopped at this point to make sure that their companion was all right. They were not even looking in the direction of the petals, so Peep started squeaking as loud as he could to get their attention.

“Did you hear that?” asked the third knight.

¹⁹ Anaphora: *Peep*, used here to create clarity

²⁰ Alliteration: The alliteration creates binding that ties *suddenly* more strongly to *surprise*, emphasizing the strength of the emotion.

They all turned their heads toward the sound, but they couldn't see Peep hiding in the bushes. Instead they saw the petals.

“Look!” said the second knight. “There are petals forming a trail next to the tracks. Could they be from the princess?”

“The princess is known to play in the gardens,” said the first knight. “These must be from her.” He then knelt down to examine the petals. “The petals²¹ are diverging away from the tracks and going into the forest. They must have taken her through here and left the rest of the party to head east as a diversion.”

That is exactly what Peep was thinking. So he climbed back into the first knight's saddle bag and decided to reward himself for keeping the search party on track by eating a piece of dried fruit he found in the bag.

The knights followed the petal through the forest until it became too dark to see. They decided to stop and make camp for the night, but Peep did not want to waste anytime searching for Lily. So Peep slipped out of the saddlebag and began following the petal trail in the twilight. The falling sun gave off just enough light that Peep was soon able follow the trail to where the petals ended. Unfortunately, they ended in a pile at the base of a tree, but his friend nor her captors were anywhere in sight. It was there that the little mouse stood with tears running down his cheeks. How was he supposed to find Lily now? There was no more trail!

As Peep was trying to come up with a new plan to find the princess he had the very unpleasant sensation of having a twig dropped on his head. Holding both hands over his head in an effort to prevent further injury, Peep looked up into the tree. There he found that the source of

²¹ Anadiplosis: Repetition of *the petals*.

the twig was a bird in a nest. Peep thought that the bird might know something about his friend, so he scampered up the tree.

“Excuse me Ms. Bird. My name is Peep and I am looking for a friend of mine. Have you seen a group of people carrying away a princess?” Peep asked hopefully.

“A princess carrying away a group of people?” answered Ms. Bird. “No, can’t say that I have.”²²

“No, no, I am afraid you misheard me,” said Peep. “It is the other way around!”

“Oh, yes, well that makes quite a bit more sense,” said Ms. Bird. “A princess would have to be quite strong to carry one person let alone many people.”

Peep was becoming a little frustrated at this point. “So, did you see a princess?” he asked.

“Oh yes!” replied Ms. Bird. “She looked sad when the people made her dump all of her petals at the base of the tree.”

Success! At last Peep knew that he was getting closer to his friend. Excitedly Peep asked, “Did you see which way they went?”

Ms. Bird gave a one word reply that made Peep want to throw an acorn at her. Ms. Bird simply said, “Yes.” Fortunately for the bird, Peep didn’t have any acorns.

Feeling like he was dragging a branch through the mud, Peep asked, “Could you tell me which way they went?”

²² Antimetabole: Antimetabole is the repletion of clauses or phrases in an inverted order. Peep asks, “Have you seen a group of people carrying away a princess?” and then Ms. Bird responds, “A princess carrying away a group of people?” inverting the word order.

“Yes,” said Ms. Bird. And then she simply continued to sit on her nest acting as if this was completely normal.²³

“Are you going to tell me?” asked Peep, trying his hardest not to raise his voice and let the bird know just how angry he was.

“Oh, you want to know? Why didn’t you just ask?” Ms. Bird said, completely oblivious to Peep’s growing frustration.

“Yes, Ms. Bird, I would be very much pleased if you would show me in which direction the people took the princess.”

With each word Peep barely contained his feelings. But Ms. Bird never noticed. She simply got up and indicated that Peep should get onto her back. She then rose into the air and started flying in the direction she had seen the princess’s captors go. It soon grew to true night however, and the half-full moon was not enough to keep going. Peep inspected the site as best he could, and then he asked Ms. Bird to fly back, having come up with a plan.

Once they returned to the tree Peep returned to the pile of petals. He worked all night, but by the time the sun had risen he had created his own petal trail in the direction the bird had taken him. Peep made it back to the saddle bag right before the first of the knights woke up. Peep barely heard the knights as they got ready to resume tracking the princess. He was exhausted. The forest trail was too narrow for the knights to ride their horses, so they walked through the

²³ Here Ms. Bird violates Grice’s maxim, which states that one should always strive to be as informative, truthful, relevant, and clear as possible. Ms. Bird doesn’t do it on purpose, but because Peep is used to those he interacts with following Grice’s maxim, when Ms. Bird doesn’t Peep gets terribly frustrated.

forest, leading their horses behind them. This was the only reason that Peep was awake by the time the knights reached the end of the petal trail.

“She must have run out of flowers,” said the second knight.

“Agreed,” said the third knight. “Let’s look around and see if we can find anymore tracks.”

Peep did not waste any time. As the knights were searching, Peep jumped out of the saddle bag and started searching too. He scampered through the undergrowth looking for anything that would give him a clue to the princess’s whereabouts. As he was searching under a bush with little blue berries he found a bunch of swirls. Actually, they weren’t swirls, they were words! But how was he going to get the knights to look under the bush? I must be smart, thought Peep, just like the king said.

Peep quickly ran back to the first knight’s saddlebag and grabbed the pouch full of dried fruit. He quietly jumped down from the horse, and then when he was close enough to the bush he started to make lots of loud squeaking noises.

“That mouse has my pouch!” yelled the first knight. He then ran after Peep a lot faster than Peep had anticipated, making Peep think this idea was not so smart after all. So, Peep dropped the bag right under the bush with the hidden message as he ran. As the knight peered under the bush to find his missing pouch, he noticed the words in the dirt.

“There’s a message here! That princess is a smart one,” the first knight shouted. “Help me move the bush so I can read the rest of it.” His companions quickly helped him with the bush and he read the message.

“Well, what does it say?” asked the third knight impatiently.

“It says, ‘West City.’ That must be where her captors are heading!” the first knight exclaimed. “Hurry! We must rescue the princess!”

Peep rushed back to the first knight’s saddle bag. He most definitely didn’t want to be left behind. Soon the trail left the forest and the knights mounted their horses once more. The knights travelled until they reached West City. However, once they were there they had no idea as to where the princess was being held. Peep decided that it would once again be up to him to find the princess’s trail.

Peep began by visiting the local mouse colony, but they had no knowledge of the princess’s whereabouts. They suggested that he find Big Mama, but to be careful because she could get real mean. They gave him some directions and he was off again. As he was crossing rooftops and running through crawlspaces Peep heard a cry. It sounded like a baby was stuck in one of the drainpipes! He desperately wanted to be on his way, but he couldn’t bear to hear the infant cry. Peep quickly located the source of the cries, it was a baby rat stuck in a drainpipe.

Peep leapt into action. He dove into the gutter and approached the baby rat, doing his best to soothe it.

“Hey there kid,” said Peep in his softest voice. “Do you need some help?”

“Please save me!” screeched the trapped rat. “Please!”

“Don’t worry, I’ll help you,” Peep replied. He walked over slowly, trying his best not to do anything that would get the poor baby stuck further down the pipe. “What’s your name?”

“Buck,” came a soft reply. He had stopped struggling and crying. Only soft sobs escaped as Peep approached.

“Well Buck, my name is Peep and I am here to help,” Peep said as he finally reached the end of the gutter. He then quickly evaluated Buck’s situation. It looked like he had merely slipped, so there was nothing dragging him down. Buck merely lacked the strength and a foothold to get himself back up. He was also afraid of falling all the way down the drainpipe into the street.

Peep looked around, secured his little feet by bracing them against the sides of the gutter, then Peep grabbed Buck’s front paws and pulled as hard as he could. Apparently, that was more than enough because Buck flew out of the drainpipe, knocked Peep over, and landed on top of his rescuer.

“I’m free! I’m free!”²⁴ Buck cheered. He also started to do a little dance in the gutter until Peep told him that the dance might cause him to slide into the drainpipe again. The two small figures crawled out of the gutter and onto the roof. Buck then gave Peep a proper hug and began to dance in earnest.

“Thank you so much for saving me! Come with me!” Buck exclaimed. He pulled on Peep’s front paw for a few steps. “I’m sure Mama will want to thank you too!” After that he started to run, and Peep felt compelled to run after him.

After running across rooftops, clambering over cobblestones, and sliding through shadows,²⁵ Buck turned into an alleyway and stopped in front of a large wooden crate. Seeing

²⁴ Epizeuxis: Repetition of *I’m free* to emphasize the euphoria that Buck feels.

²⁵ Alliteration: This is a triad of alliterative pairs.

that Peep was right behind him, Buck slipped behind the crate and disappeared. Peep rushed to follow him, not wanting to get left behind. He found that there was an entrance behind the crate and quickly ran down the dark, dark, tunnel. Peep soon ran around a bend in the tunnel and nearly ran snout first into Buck.

“Hurry! We’re almost there!” Buck squeaked. Peep couldn’t really go backwards, so he kept going, following behind Buck at a respectable distance this time. Light began to trickle into the tunnel and soon they had found their way into a large cavern. The cavern was filled with light coming from holes in the ceiling above and there were indents in the walls that were had food and chests. In the middle of the cavern, sitting on a pile of old clothes, was the largest rat Peep had ever seen.

As they entered the cavern Buck ran straight for the rat in the center of the room and screamed, “Mama! I’m back!”

“Buck! Where have you been!” yelled Mama. “I’ve been worried sick! You were supposed to be back an hour ago young rat.” With the last statement Mama had grabbed Buck by his scruff, raising him to be high level with herself.

“I was on my way back Mama, I promise,” Buck stammered, doing his best to avoid Mama’s piercing gaze. “I was running as fast as I could when I tripped and slid into a gutter.” This is where Buck drew on all of his skills to affect some realistic tears. “I slipped into the drain, and barely was able to hold onto the side. I would have fallen for sure if this kind mouse hadn’t stopped to help me,” Buck said, pointing to Peep.

And now, for the first time, Mama finally saw Peep, and Peep wasn't entirely sure that is what he wanted at the moment. Mama wasn't a small thing,²⁶ and she looked like she could eat a whole peach all by herself. She could squash him like a blueberry.²⁷

“You saved my boy?” Mama asked. Her eyes seemed to pierce right into Peep's soul.

“Um-m-m, yes ma'am,” Peep squeaked²⁸ out. “I did. But if you will excuse me, I must be on my way. I am searching for my friend you see, and some very nice mice told me that an individual by the name of Big Mama could help me. If you could point me in the right direction, I'll be on my way.”

Mama just laughed and said, “No need to go little mouse, Big Mama is right here! I'm not normally so inclined to work during the day, but since you helped out my boy here, I will help you find your friend—and wave my usual fee. Who are you looking for?”

What luck! Who knew that by showing kindness and answering the cry in the drain that he would be led to his best shot at finding Lily?

“Oh, thank you Big Mama!” exclaimed Peep. He then went on to describe his friend and all that he knew about what happened to her. He told Big Mama about the kidnapping, the trip through the forest, and the clues that lead him to the city.

Big Mama listened and then sat pondering. The look on her face made it clear that Peep should keep silent. She then let out a long whistle and a rat came running in from one of the side

²⁶ Litotes: = “Mama wasn't a small thing,” meaning that “Mama was large and intimidating.”

²⁷ A triad of fruit relates descriptions, though *squash* is being used as a verb, not a noun, making it a sort of pun.

²⁸ Internal rime: Peep (/pip/) and squeaked (/skwikd/), rhyming of the /i/ sound

tunnels. She asked the new rat a few questions, then she had him open one of the chests and bring her a sheet of paper from inside. The rat handed it to Big Mama and she quickly read it.

“You’re in luck little mouse,” said Big Mama, snapping her head up from the paper she had been reading. “According to the latest intelligence, a suspicious looking group of men and a little girl recently entered the town. Some of my operatives followed them and learned that they are staying at an inn called the Black Briar. If you’ll follow Simon here, he’ll take you to it.”

Peep was about to jump for joy when Big Mama put up a hand to stop him. “I’m telling you know, don’t get your hopes up,” she cautioned. “This information is a few hours old, so they may not be there anymore.”

“Thank you, but this is as close as I’m going to get,” Peep said. And with that Peep motioned to Simon to lead the way. The two of them ran through what seemed like miles of tunnels, but finally they stopped in front of what looked like a side tunnel.

“This is the underground entrance to the inn,” said Simon, pointing to the tunnel. “At the end of this tunnel you’ll need to squeeze past a box, but once you do you’ll be in the cellar of the Black Briar. You’re on your own from here. Be careful and good luck mouse.” Simon gave Peep a pat on the shoulder and then he ran back towards Big Mama’s cavern. Peep was on his own once more.

So Peep ran down the tunnel and squeezed past the box. He ran up the stairs and squirmed his through the gap between the wall and the door, finding himself in a large room filled with tables. Peep ran under each table, hoping to overhear any information about Lily. It was while he was under the table in the darkest corner of the room, furthest from the door, that he finally heard what he was looking for.

“How much longer are we staying here Scut? I’m afraid someone will find the girl up there. The sooner we get rid of her the better,” said a deep voice.

“Don’t worry Farkus, the boss will be here in an hour to pick her up,” Scut said. The he gave a low, malevolent laugh and said, “Then she’s not our problem anymore.”

The two men shared a laugh, clanked their glasses together, and then started talking again. Peep didn’t stay to listen though, he had heard enough. He dashed up the banister of the stairs. Once he was on the second floor Peep’s heart dropped. There were so many doors! Where could his friend be? But he could not give up, his friend needed him! Peep stopped, took a deep breath, and then he got an idea. Peep²⁹ decide to be smart about this and use his head, his nose and ears to be specific. He started by going to each door, sniffing, and then listening for any sign of his missing friend. Finally, when he had reached the last door and almost given up, he sniffed. He sniffed³⁰ and found the familiar scent of his Lily!³¹

Peep then squeezed himself under the door and came face to snout with his lost princess. Her hands and feet where tied together each other and to the bed. There was a gag over her mouth and tear stains on her face. Peep ran up onto the bed, using the banister to get himself onto the mattress. Lily’s eyes showed surprise at seeing a mouse, but then the shone with happiness at seeing Peep bow to her, recognizing that it was *her* mouse.

Peep then went to work chewing through the ropes around her hands. As soon as he got them loose enough Lily was able to take over, freeing her feet and removing the gag.

²⁹ Anaphora: Repetition of *Peep*.

³⁰ Anadiplosis: Repetition of *he sniffed*.

³¹ Evaluation

“Sir Mouse! Oh, thank you! I never thought I would be rescued!” she said in a happy whisper. “But now I need to find a way out of here. Has Father sent anyone else to find me?” she asked.

Peep nodded and then ran to the window, hoping beyond hope that he could see the knights he had parted company with hours ago. Lily ran over to the window to join him in the search for friendly faces. Seeing none, Lily did not get discouraged.

“Well,” she said resolutely, “we will just have to find a way out ourselves, won’t we?” Lily started looking around the room for a way out since the door was locked and neither of them knew where to go looking for a key. Lily came to the decision that the window was the only option and attempted to open it, but the window was locked from the outside. That is when she noticed a hole where the ceiling met the wall.

“Sir Mouse, quickly! I’m going to lift you up to that hole, and then you will need to go to the window and unlatch it from the outside, can you do that?” Lily asked, a desperate quiver in her voice.

Peep put his little fist over his heart, slightly disappointed that it did not make an impressive ringing noise like it did when the knights had done the same in the king’s chamber. He climbed into Lily’s hand and she quietly moved a chair to the window with her free hand. She climbed on it and then gently brought Peep to the hole. He climbed through it and then peered out. It looked quite scary. He would have to hang from the hole he was standing in and then gently lower himself onto the window frame. Then he would have to lower himself once more and pray that he landed on the window sill where he would then have to figure out how to unlatch the window.

While Peep was bravely performing some thrilling acrobatics, Lily wedged the chair under the door handle in order to prevent someone from entering the room. At least she hoped it would. She was quite liking being able to move about on her own and was looking forward to being free from this wretched room.³² She looked back to the window just in time to see Peep fall from the top of the window frame. Luckily Peep had managed to land on the window frame, but just barely.

“Perfect Sir Mouse. Now push the latch from the right to the left,” said Lily. What she didn’t say was that she wasn’t sure if the little mouse would be strong enough to move what looked to be a very rusty latch. But luck was with them and the mouse was able to unlock the window. Lily then had to do her part and force the heavy window open. But she too was able to do perform her task. She then looked down at the ground. It was terribly far away.

But Peep had an idea. He climbed back onto the bed and pointed at the ropes that had been used to bind Lily. Lily³³ understood what the little mouse was trying to say and immediately started tying the ropes together to make a longer one. She then tried her very best to move the bed next to the window as quietly as possible, praying that no one downstairs would notice. She tied the rope to the bed frame and then threw it out the window. It wasn’t very long, but it got her a lot closer to the ground.

“Here Sir Mouse,” Lily said, putting out her hand. “Climb onto my shoulder. We are getting out of here!” She then lowered herself out the window, holding onto her rope very tightly. The rope brought her within a short drop into the alley behind the inn. She let go of the

³² Consonance: Even through *wretched* and *room* do not start with the same letter, they start with the same /r/ sound.

³³ Anadiplosis: Repetition of *Lily*.

rope and landed in a very unladylike manner on the ground. She was about to start running when Peep squeaked in her ear. Turning her head to see him, Peep shook his head and mimed a walk.

Trying her very hardest not to run, Lily walked out of the alleyway and into the street. Looking out from the alley, Lily had absolutely no idea which way to go. Peep piped up again and pointed left. That was the way to the stables the knights had left their horses in, or at least he thought so. Peep continued to lead his friend through the city until suddenly someone's arm gripped Lily's shoulder from behind.

"Princess! There you are!" exclaimed a very relieved knight. The princess was also incredibly relieved. She embraced the knight tightly and then he started leading her to where he was to meet his companions. Soon they were headed home. As they neared the palace, one of the knights rode ahead and informed the king that they had brought his daughter home. By the time the rest of the group had arrived at the main gates the king was there, waiting to embrace his daughter once more. Lily hopped off the horse, Peep still on her shoulder, and ran to hug her father. Tears spilled down both their cheeks as they embraced.

There was a feast that night to celebrate the princess's safe return. Lily made sure to sneak plenty of food into her lap for her favorite knight. The little mouse slept in his friend's room that night to make sure that no one else tried to take her away from him. The next morning though, they returned to the garden and collected flowers, and all was right in the world.

Evaluation

Writing my own short story is not an entirely foreign idea to me; I've done it once before. However, analyzing my own creative work was something entirely new to me. In regard to this reflection on one's own writing, Chris Werry said that some "consider their own rhetoric as an object of self-reflexive scrutiny, and reflect on the tropes, root metaphors, analogies and forms of argument they use," (81). Analyzing my own writing has definitely allowed me to reflect on where my writing is weak and repetitive, and strong and imaginative. I have learned that I unconsciously use a lot of anadiplosis and alliterative phrases. I also learned a lot through the purpose of this exercise, which was to recreate the style of the Grimm brothers by focusing on a few key linguistic and rhetorical figures: ring compositions, nested triads, anaphora, antimetabole, binding, isocolon, and litotes.

Sir Mouse begins and ends with a mouse and a princess in a garden, forming a ring composition. I also tried to incorporate a triad into the ring composition. When the king is talking to the knights he gives them three pieces of advice; be brave, smart, and kind. Peep follows that order as he journeys to save the princess. Peep throws himself between the horse's legs in an act of bravery, he is smart when he thinks of a plan to get the knights to see the message in the bush, and he is kind to the baby rat. However, it doesn't stop there. Peep uses his brain when confronted with the task of finding the room Lily is being confined in and shows bravery once again when he lets go of the window frame and lands on the sill. In this way Peep comes full circle with the advice the king gave.

Another triad was in the encounter with the stable animals Peep had when he asked them which way he should go as he was searching for the princess. The horse told him to go east, the crow said to go to the forest, and the rat said to go west. First Peep heads east and then jumps

between a horse's legs. Next, he goes into a forest where he has an encounter with a bird. Finally, Peep goes west and gets involved with several rats.

These large, overarching triads were not the only ones in the story, however. I also used triads to bind ideas or actions together, such as "he loved to run through the rows of flowers, climb up the rose bushes, and slide down the tangles of vines," and "running across rooftops, clambering over cobblestones, and sliding through shadows." The first set is a triad of things that Peep likes to do. The second set is not only a triad of verb-noun clauses, but each is alliterative, further binding the ideas together. Repetition of letters and sound patterns in other parts of the stories serve a similar binding function.

Another binding technique is anaphora. However, writing this story has taught me that anaphora needs to be carefully and craftily used, otherwise it sounds repetitive and dull. Both instances of anaphora in this story are repetitions of "Peep." This was because of clarity issues, which this helped resolve.

Antimetabole and isocolon were figures that had to be carefully and thoughtfully crafted. I used antimetabole with Ms. Bird to illustrate part of her personality and to frustrate Peep. I used isocolon to draw attention to my triads. Isocolon is used with the king's advice and the directions the stable animals give.

Litotes was a rhetorical figure that I found difficult to use, which I thought to be quite strange. Whenever I went to write a litotes, I tried to reverse it. Instead of using a double negative and understatement to emphasize a point by stating a negative to further affirm a positive, I wanted to use double negatives and understatement in the positive to affirm a negative. I wanted to say something like, "well, that's not great" instead of "well, that's not bad."

Using these different rhetorical and linguistic features helped me to understand what makes the Grimm brothers' stories so enticing. Ring compositions and triads give a structure to a story that is comforting and exciting at the same time. The reader is keyed into important plot points when he or she knows that the number three is important; he or she knows to pay attention when there are three of something. The ring composition gives a sense of completion of a story. Other literary and rhetorical devices serve to enrich the language and add variety. They also serve to queue readers to what is important and bind phrases together. All in all, the Grimm brothers collect stories that included a rich linguistic heritage that all writers, of both fiction and reality, should to incorporate in order to enrich their own writing.

Works Cited

Nigel Fabb, *Linguistics and Literature* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 1997), 166–167.

This book is about the particularities of language and how they relate to literature. I found the chapter that talked about narrative structure very useful for this project.

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, [*Grimm's Fairy Tales*](#), The Project Gutenberg, 2016.

This is a collection of the Grimm brother's collected fairy tales. I used several of these stories to get an idea of the common linguistic features that I could then use in my short story.

Alonna Liabenow, "[The Significance of the Numbers Three, Four, and Seven in Fairy Tales, Folklore, and Mythology](#)" (2014), *Honors Projects*, 418.

This is an article that explores the significance of numbers in fairy tales. It was useful to me in defining triads and why they are important in literature, especially fairy tales.

Calvert Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon* (England: Oxford University Press, 2001), 299.

A book exploring common themes and approaches across Asian and European cultures. His research on formulas in literature were helpful in evaluating the Grimm brother's stories and my own.

Chris Werry, "[Reflections on language: Chomsky, linguistic discourse and the value of rhetorical self-consciousness](#)," *Language Sciences*, 29, no. 1, 66–87.

This article reflects on the usefulness of rhetorical language and argues against Chomsky. This article helped me to understand the value of linguistic features in prose, not just narrative writing.