Comparing And Contrasting Versions Of Cinderella

According to news website Vox, the Cinderella story we all know dates back to around the 17th century in Europe. (Vox 1) The first version ever written is by the Grimm Brothers in 1812. (Wikipedia) The story has spread to many other different countries, and the earliest known deviation is the Egyptian version. (Wikipedia) This version is called Rhodopis, and it was recorded by Greek historian Strabo in the 7th century BC. (Wikipedia) Although these two stories are filled with similarities, the differences between the setting, protagonists, and antagonists will be compared.

The setting of the two versions are quite different, considering how unrelated their cultures are to each other. In the Grimm Brothers version, Cinderella takes place in Germany, presumably around the Middle Ages since there is a mention of wooden shoes in there. (Grimm 2) They also had castles and royalty which gave the story a very medieval and fairytale feel. The Egyptian version started in Greece, the reason being that is where Rhodopis is born. (Rhodopis 1) The story starts with, “Once upon a time, there was a girl who got kidnapped from Greece.” (Rhodopis 1) After she is kidnapped, Rhodopis crossed the Nile River and she is sold as a slave in Egypt, which is where the main story takes place. (Rhodopis 1) Rhodopis is probably from a time like ancient Egypt because the earliest version created is in the 7th BC, which is a pretty long time ago. (Wikipedia) The story also has indications of pharaohs, pirates, and slaves which existed back then. (Rhodopis 1) To sum it up, the two fairy tales are from very different places and have very diverse cultures.

The character of Cinderella has different names in many countries, but her character traits are usually very similar. As the character archetype of “damsel in distress”, Cinderella often ends set free from her sad situation. In the Grimms version of Cinderella, Cinderella is depicted as a “ good and pious” daughter who is also very obedient. (Grimm 1) Cinderella would do all of the housework and answer to whatever her stepsisters wanted. (Grimm 2) She also showed that she loved her dead mother very much by planting a tree on the grave and watering it with her tears. (Grimm 2) In Rhodopis, the main character’s name is Rhodopis and she is a slave. (Rhodopis 1) She too is very kind and hardworking by doing the work other servant girls were supposed to do. (Rhodopis 1) Rhodopis is also friends with the animals, and she often danced with them. (Rhodopis 1) In conclusion, both of the protagonists are mistreated, but they are still humble.

Even though fairy tales often end on a happy note, the character will still have to go through some kind of antagonist, and Cinderella is not an exception. But the good thing is that antagonists in stories are a stepping stone for the protagonist to achieve their happy ending. The Grimm brothers made Cinderella’s fathers, stepmother, and stepsisters the antagonist for this story. (Grimm 2-8) They treated her very badly by calling her names, taking away her things and lying. (Grimm 2) Her father, who is still alive referred to her as “Cinderella” not her real name. (Grimm 2) Cinderella’s stepsisters and stepmother were even worse, as the story describes them as “beautiful and fair in appearance, but at heart were black and ugly.” (Grimm 1) Her stepsisters took all of Cinderella’s pretty clothes away, and they made her do all the housework. (Grimm 2) And when it is time for the King’s festival, Cinderella’s stepmother promised that she’ll let her go once she picked up all the lentils. (Grimm 3) But that is a lie, and

the stepmother left Cinderella at home. (Grimm 4) For Rhodopis, the antagonists in this story were the servant girls whom Rhodopis worked with. (Rhodopis 1) Because Rhodopis looked different from them, they teased her and made her do most of the work. (Rhodopis 1) And when the kind master gave Rhodopis the pretty red sandals, the servant girls became jealous. (Rhodopis 1) They made Rhodopis stay home and do the work instead of going to the festival. (Rhodopis 1) These antagonists may have given Cinderella hell, but it all paid off in the end as Cinderella became a figure of high recognition.

The setting, protagonist, and antagonists of the two versions of Cinderella are compared. The settings of the two fairytales are in completely different countries and time periods, which separate the two from being very similar. Cinderella and Rhodopis both have a consistent personality by how kind and hardworking they are, but Rhodopis is a slave while Cinderella is more of a servant. The antagonists are equivalent to each other by the way they treat the protagonist, constantly giving her more work and mocking her, but in Cinderella, the stepsisters ended up with their eyes plucked out while the servant girls remained the same. The moral of Cinderella spread all over the world, and it is to remain humble because good things will happen.