

Lisa Dotzauer
KurzGeschichten
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“Spieglein, Spieglein an der Wand,
Wer ist die Schönste im ganzen Land?”

“Frau Königin, Ihr seid die Schönste im Land.”

It feels like ages since someone has read Snow White[1] to me. My mum used to have a really “old illustrated and proper hardback” copy of all the fairytales by the Grimm Brothers. Schneewitchen was definitely one of my favourites, not sure why though... also liked Schneeweißchen und Rosenrot (Snow-White and Rose-Red) and Frau Holle (Mother Hulda), guess they are played around the same ideals and thoughts. Thinking of Schneewitchen and Frau Holle somehow reminds me of being at my grandmothers house – I used to love going there! She used to make up wallpaper paste in massive bucket loads and fill jam jars with it so I could glue whatever I wanted to glue. Well, it seemed like a huge bucket at the time, but was possibly just a common household bucket, but everything seems bigger when you’re a child. Knowing my mum, she probably still has the old book, will need to speak to her and might be able to borrow it. Quite scary actually that I don’t own my own copy!

“Mirror, mirror, on the wall,
Who in this land is the fairest of all?”

I never really understood how a mirror can tell her that she is the most beautiful person around. I mean, a mirror only tells what it can see. Ok, I never really liked the idea of magic, granted, but still, a mirror reflects what is in front of it. Unless you are Alice of course, and you are able to cross through the looking-glass into the world on the other

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side[2]. Let's face it; I'm not her, even if I wish really, really hard, so like I said, I never really understand how this nifty mirror knew it all...

On a normal get-up-go-to-whenever-you-need-to-be-day, how often do you look in a mirror or shiny surface to see your reflection? My budgie Sheila, who lives with my mum and sister, loves reflective surfaces; well, like any budgie I guess. I love that bird, so cute and intelligent!

During the summer I walk around and explore several shiny and polished surfaces, including a trip to the Serpentine Gallery in London to see the Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2009, designed by Kazuyo Sejima &

Ryue Nishizawa of SANAA[3] and great sunny day in the Millennium Park in Chicago, searching for my reflection in Cloud Gate on the AT&T Plaza[4] by Anish Kapoor. Also just found some other rather shiny sculpture by Kapoor on the world wide web[5], think I should re-visit his sculptures sometime soon, but back to my thought on reflection(s). It is absolutely fascinating to watch people interact with a shiny surface. You start touching it, jumping and observing, taking photographs, waving and pulling faces. It's like you never seen yourself in such a large mirrored surface, like the first time you saw yourself in a mirror. I spend hours in front of my parents' mirrored wardrobe or using a handheld mirror to walk on the ceiling, there where millions of games which involved mirrors. And even now I am fascinated by the effects of one, especially if I'm in front of a "mirror" that is as large as the Serpentine Pavilion or Cloud Gate. Another great "mirror" was one column near the Hundertwasser Haus in Vienna [<http://wp.me/pn5Ty-2m>]. But even if it isn't as large, I like mirrors. A few of my favourites are the one fitted to my Pentax K110D, my Pentax ME Super and my Mamiya J645M. I guess I never really got away from having fun with mirrors – it is my way of seeing the world!

I sometimes wonder though, whether we use mirrors to get out of the cave, to see the world through the looking-glass like Alice, or if we just glimpse at ourselves in this world without any reason...

A mirror could be seen as a connection between the Shadowlands and the Light. It is reversing what is set in front of it, so generating an equal copy of the original. That is, if the

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mirror sees the original and not the mirrored copy. And in order to get to "the other side" (in a Plato-and-the-Allegory-of-the-cave-kind-of-way) one has to "re-think the existing and re'see the obvious" – we need to find our way to "the knowledge", the light, through investigating and questioning, thinking and evaluating, in order to get on our feet and walk from the bottom of the cave up to the painful sunlight. After all, we can only see mirrored reflection, not ourselves as we are – left is right and right is left... or is it...?

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[1] Virginia Commonwealth University Department of Foreign Languages [WWW]
http://www.fln.vcu.edu/grimm/schnee_dual.html [Accessed 04.10.2009]

[2] Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass [WWW]
<http://www.sabian.org/Alice/lgchap01.htm> [Accessed 04.10.2009]

[3] Serpentine Gallery Pavillion 2009 [WWW]
http://www.serpentinegallery.org/2009/02/serpentine_gallery_pavilion_20_13.html
[Accessed 04.10.2009]

[4] Millenium Park Chicaco Art & Architecture [WWW]
http://www.millenniumpark.org/artandarchitecture/cloud_gate.html [Accessed 04.10.2009]

[5] Gladstone Gallery [WWW] <http://www.gladstonegallery.com/kapoor.asp?id=122>
[Accessed 04.10.2009]