Review of Critical Concepts

With a group, identify and rank these Old and New School interpretations:

1. I liked the story about Rumplestiltskin. The story reminded me of my greedy neighbor, Randall; he is a really cunning bastard. Frickah always trying to cheat or scam me with me about anything, especially when we play Texas Hold 'Em. In this story, Rumplestiltskin is always making deals with everyone, and just like Randall, the small manikin is always trying to get something from the main character. Frickin’ Randall and Rumplestiletskin—they’re so manini.

2. Rumplestiltskin is an interesting piece. According to Wikipedia,

   Rumplestiltskin is a character in a fairy tale of the same name that originated in Germany (where he is known as Rumpelstilzchen). The tale was collected by the Brothers Grimm, who first published it in the 1812 edition of Children's and Household Tales. It was subsequently revised in later editions until the final version was published in 1857.

   The story has been retold in other countries, sometimes with the main character's name changing completely; Tom Til Tot in England (from English Fairy Tales by Joseph Jacobs), Pärönskatt (meaning “pear stalk”) in Sweden, Joaidane in Arabic (he who talks too much), Martínko Klingác in Slovakia and Ooz'Li Gootz'Le in Hebrew. (01)

   I found this particular picture off of Google Image search very interesting with regards to the story. In the picture, note how the girl with the long blond hair stares aimlessly off into space, constantly waiting for someone, something, to control her destiny. She is sitting right next to the spinning wheel, long associated, rather stereotypically, with feminine pursuits like weaving or quilting. I note the lustrous texture of her clothing; every aspect is very sensuous and flowing—beauty in the girl is emphasized. In the background, Rumplestiltskin seems to intrude into the larger space, bringing a lantern to light up the room. In this fashion, it seems that his ‘cunning’ is meant to light up the despair of the girl’s situation.

3. This story was absolutely abysmal. I don’t really want to waste my time reading a childish piece of crap like this; after all, as a college student, I moved beyond fairy tales a long time ago. In my mind, the miller’s daughter in this story was absolutely pathetic. She should have told her father, the king, and the little Hobbit ass to “F%ck off and die” because they were, just like this story, so exceptionally stupid.

4. Clearly, the story has a wide audience, albeit a global one, showing how the story has reached almost mythological status.

   And when the girl was brought to him he took her into a room which was quite full of straw, gave her a spinning-wheel and a reel, and said, “Now set to work, and if by to-morrow morning early you have not spun this straw into gold during the night, you must die. (Grimm’s 01)

   In this quote, the phrases "set to work" and "spun this straw" really emphasize the role of the girl: she is a slave to the king, no better than a factory worker who must work long into the night making products for her corporate master. The last verb phrase is even more haunting: “. . . you have not spun this straw into gold during the night, you must die” (01). This line is extremely problematic. If the miller himself was bragging about his daughter’s ability to spin straw into gold, should he as the liar and braggart put his head on the chopping block? The notion that the daughter has to be sacrificed for her father’s lies is appalling.

5. This story made me upset, especially towards the character of the king. What right did he have to dictate the life and death of the miller’s daughter? In the quote, the narrator explains that