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Gender Representation in Fairy Tale Film“

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1 Introduction

“Mirror, Mirror on the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?”¹

The above phrase will be easily recognised by many people despite possible alterations in wording. These are the words the Evil Queen utters to her Magic Mirror in the fairy tale “Snow White”. Some will know it from fairy tale books, from fairy tale films, or both, while others might only know this fragment, out of context from the tale. For example from advertisements which would be takeoffs of this particular scene, such as in the Diet Coke commercial with Diane Venora as the Queen asking the Mirror who is the fairest, while a young girl with a Diet Coke in her hand is shown to be allegedly fairer than she. Regardless of the way in which this phrase is familiar to different people, it opens a portal to the world of fairy tales.

In one form or another fairy tales have always been in my life; since my childhood I have been familiar with tales from the Brothers Grimm anthology such as “Snow White”, “Hansel and Gretel”, “Sleeping Beauty”, and other tales such as “The Little Mermaid”, “The Snow Queen”, and “The Little Match Girl” by Hans Christian Andersen or “Little Long-nose”, or “Little Mook” by Wilhelm Hauff, amongst others. Growing up I not only had them read to me but also started reading them myself later on, listened to audiocassettes, and watched a lot of animated films along with live-action films of fairy tales. I had my favourite characters and stories; and after two decades I find myself still watching and enjoying many of those films. As I watched the adaptations of the stories, I became aware of the distinctions from earlier stories and felt that the characters were different to the ones which I had known previously, although I could not say how. But no matter which version of the fairy tale I saw, or how (much) the story has changed; it was still easy to recognise the well-known story I knew from my childhood. This is because changes and shifts in the details of the story’s content are incorporated into the essence of fairy tales, hence are part of the genre. Therefore, due to the adaptability of fairy tales, the aim of this study is to explore not whether fairy tales/stories/myths have changed over time, but *how*. What struck me most amongst the changes in diverse fairy tale adaptations, however, is the manner in which the role of the female protagonist had changed. I remember watching *Snow White and the Huntsman* when it

¹ Cited from “Snowdrop” in the book *Tales from Times Past* edited by Bryan Holme.

came out in 2012 and how I noticed that the Snow White character seemed to resemble a warrior instead of the quiet princess figure I was used to from older versions I knew from my childhood. But still she gave the impression of an “innocent persecuted heroine” (Jones 1990, and Bacchilega 1993, cf. also Bacchilega 1997:29ff). However, not only Snow White had undergone a shift in character and significance; the prince figure had also become more pronounced, in that he obtained more time on the screen, and there was more to his role than only finding and marrying Snow White in the end.

My endeavour is to make existing gender roles and the (re)presentation of them in fairy tale film more transparent through a semiotic analysis of gender representation and the set of values that is linked to it in the context of film. For this purpose I will use “Snow White” as an example. The overarching leading question therefore is how gender is represented in the fairy tale film adaptations of “Snow White”, which is amplified by the following research questions: How do the changes in the retelling of the fairy tale affect gender images and the portrayal of the relations between the various characters? How are “femininity” and “masculinity” portrayed and performed in this scope? To what extent do the gender roles experience a transformation?

These questions will be answered through an assessment by means of analysing the following films: *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), *Mirror Mirror* (2012), and *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012).

There was and is much criticism about how women in fairy tales are portrayed in a limited number of ways, as either passive, or as the damsel in distress, or as mothers, or as the Evil Stepmother and villain (cf. i.a. Lieberman 1972, Rowe 1979, Bacchilega 1997, Harris 2000, Baker-Sperry and Grauerholz 2003). Not only is it limiting in ways that concern (the) gender (image) but also the genre. These portrayals perpetuate and influence gender images and patterns, of how a man or woman is seen or should behave or what is expected of either of them. Notions of character types and patterns in general and regarding gender are usually that the princesses and princes are good, stepmothers are bad or evil, female figures are rescued, i.e. princesses wait in towers, princes are heroes and go on adventures, etc. (cf. also Williams 2010b, England, Descartes, and Collier-Meek 2011).

In media and popular culture the portrayal of women and men at two opposing poles is the norm (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012), and therefore the attribution of being “feminine” and “masculine” respectively is also common. Understanding how characters in films are

presented can tell us a lot about how the role of a woman or a man is viewed. One can find meaning in what they wear, what they say to each other, how they treat each other, how they live, what morals they live by, and what they value and see as important.

Film is subject to interpretation and therefore polysemic which means that there is no solitary fixed meaning or one “correct way” to read it (cf. Nelmes 2007). For this rationale I am concentrating on recent films of Hollywood productions; because they are received worldwide, as Gray (2010:67) states “the one-way traffic of Hollywood blockbusters moving out to colonize the movie theatres across the globe is still happening [...]”. As a result it is my supposition that most people who go to the cinema and grow up watching films and are thus familiar with Hollywood movies. They are therefore also prone to its style and clichés and for this reason can “read” the movies better and appreciate the different meanings conveyed, as is suggested with “shared readings” (cf. Hall 1997). Consequently, I am bearing in mind that films are social constructs. There is a code of conduct developed in film which is supported by stereotypes which in turn supports restrictive labels to define people in a simplistic way (cf. Nelmes 2007), and femininity and masculinity as constructs as well as their representation was not questioned up until the 1970s (cf. Hayward 2001).

In the following I will give a short overview of the study at hand. Chapter 2 delineates the theoretical framework for this study. First, the relation between anthropology and cinema is addressed. Then the fairy tale and fairy tale film as a genre are discussed in order to provide the necessary contextual background (drawing i.a. on Jack Zipes’ various works, Maria Tatar, and others). Further the concepts of gender and representation, as well as the notion of femininity and masculinity are elucidated which are significant for the understanding of gender representation. Moreover the perception of “masculinity” and “femininity” also demonstrates that gender continues to be viewed as a binary. The works of Judith Butler and Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman were adduced in the main to expound on the theoretical framework of “Gender Performance” and “Doing Gender” with which gender as a constructed value and its upholding and development is outlined. The term of representation is explained following Stuart Hall (2010). Thereafter, gender representation in popular media is addressed to give an overview based on Milestone and Meyer’s book *Gender and Popular Culture* (2012), as well as the more specific representation of gender in fairy tales and fairy tale films referring to various scholars of mostly feminist (literary or film) studies which include works by Cristina Bacchilega, Greenhill and Matrix, Vanessa Joosen, and Jack Zipes amongst others. The film analysis also draws on Laura Mulvey’s

concept of the “gaze” to annotate the analysed sequences. Gender representation in “Snow White” is the main focus of this work and the theoretical perspectives are utilised as tools with which *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Mirror Mirror*, and *Snow White and the Huntsman* were analysed and interpreted.

The methods applied are described in Chapter 3, where an overview of the selection process of the “Snow White” fairy tale as literary text and its film adaptations is given, i.e. how the subject for analysis and films for that were chosen. Then the approaches that were employed to answer the research questions are illustrated; these include the coding process based on Strauss and Corbin (1996), and the manner of analysis which are rooted in a feminist and semiotic approach drawn from film theory combined with folklore and literary studies.

A review of literary sources of “Snow White” is given in Chapter 4, which also offers a summary of the Brothers Grimm version, as well as an impression of more contemporary literary versions of “Snow White”. The Grimm text will be dissected more due to its disposition as a leading point for analysis of the current study; there are various versions of this particular tale, and the similarities as well as differences will be highlighted at this point.

Chapter 5 is composed of the analysis of the fairy tale films and is divided into various subchapters which debate different themes that all influence the gender image and highlight the representation of gender. These themes include “Love”, “Beauty”, the juxtaposition between “Home and Work”, “Passivity” as a significant attribute of women in fairy tales, the resolution and endings of the story, “the gaze” and its implications for relations between men and women, and the rescuing scene which is understood to be reserved for the/a prince or hero. Furthermore the individual characters and the portrayal of their features regarding gender are reviewed. Now the overall impression of the change from the goody two-shoes Snow White to the fierce(r), warrior Joan of Arc kind of heroine leaves behind an impression of significant changes of gender roles in the fairy tale film. With the assistance of the themes mentioned above this analysis is designed to explore how far these certain gender roles are still persisting/existing, or if indeed the gender role mould is broken.

The conclusion of the work is given in Chapter 6 where the research question is answered synoptically by connecting the theories to the results of the recapitulated analysis.

2 Theory: Fairy Tale (Film) and Gender

The subject of my research includes three films which have a canonical fairy tale, i.e. Grimms' "Snow White" as a common ground. As the representation of gender in these films is the main focus of this study, there will be an intersection of theories that touch upon films, fairy tales, fairy tale films, and gender within fairy tale and film. Before the topics of fairy tale and gender specifically are discussed, the relationship between anthropology and cinema is addressed which is followed by an introduction to the inter-connectedness of gender and popular culture because fairy tale films are to be understood as part of popular culture.

Anthropology and Cinema

"Anthropology" and "cinema" seem to be two terms that are incompatible with one another, as expressed by Gordon Gray (2010:x) as, "[f]or many people the words 'anthropology' and 'cinema' go together like bread and gasoline". Gray (2010:x), however, considers this to be unfortunate because the two have a substantial amount to give to one another. He further outlines that the study of cinema can give indications on different perceptions of a certain time and place, or can disclose insights into historical changes of a certain time and place. John H. Weakland (2003:46) considers fictional feature films as a product of culture, and thus sees them as cultural documents per definition. He acknowledges that feature films are fictional but points out that they "may at times portray aspects of behavior accurately" (Weakland 2003:47) and for anthropological study they are viewed as "projecting IMAGES of human social behavior" (Weakland 2003:47). Moreover, "fictional feature film [...] can also act as a guide to cultural constructions of everyday life [...] and] can also give us insight into popular reactions to the issues and events of a particular time or place." (Gray 2010:xi) Thus what film has to offer for anthropology lies beyond "a new venue in which to investigate the human condition", and in addition provides space in which "so much of the unspoken (ideologies, taste and distinction, and other forms of embedded culture) come out on display" (Gray 2010:xvi).

While some researchers understand film as dealing with mythical topics and as having mythical content, others recognise movies as contemporary myth (cf. Drummond 1996, and Mader 2008:178f) where film, simply put, is another way and form to narrate, tell tales, and pass on stories. Following the latter's train of thought it seems hard to understand why (popular) cinema and film should not be appropriate and most relevant for anthropological

study. Krasniewicz (2006:9) speaks of movies as a “form of story-telling, myth making, and social production”, and criticises the way that popular movies are a scarcity among anthropological studies (cf. also Sutton and Wogan 2009:12). She states that “anthropologists for the most part have ignored or dismissed the importance of these cultural narratives.” Krasniewicz (2006:9) doubts that anthropologists would be “as dismissive of folk stories” as they are of Hollywood and its movies, considering that disregarding the former would “be seen as nothing short of professional neglect”.

For the reasons above, the study of films, including Hollywood Blockbusters, should be embedded in anthropological studies, rather than reluctantly included. Therefore, this study views film as a source of cultural and ethnographic data, containing social content that is ingrained in feature film (cf. Gray 2010:100, Sutton and Wogan 2009, and Weakland 2003), and uses gender as key analytic concept.

Gender and Popular Culture

As the connection between anthropology and the study of film was addressed in the section above, I will now turn to the inter-connectedness of gender and popular culture. In their book *Gender and Popular Culture* Milestone and Meyer (2012) deal with the ways in which gender, i.e. “femininity” and “masculinity”, connects to popular culture. Gender, Milestone and Meyer (2012:8) claim,

is one of the key social structures in contemporary culture and marked by power struggles and inequalities. Gender hierarchies and inequalities are maintained, among other factors, by meanings and belief systems, and these are in turn generated through representation. Representations are constructed through language, images and social practices, and possess a material as well as a symbolic dimension.

They assert that “gender and popular culture are connected in inextricable, pervasive and complex ways.” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:1) Further, they write that popular culture is an amorphous concept which covers a vast scope of cultural texts and practices “from cinema films to newspaper article, from designing computer games to playing music.” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:1) A lot of popular culture is media culture and it includes mass media such as radio, the press, film and television, as well as new media such as the internet and email. Thus popular culture also includes fairy tales as well as their film versions.

Moreover, popular culture, including the (mass) media, plays a fundamental role in “contributing to the maintenance of patriarchy by perpetuating gender ideologies” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:11) because “media images help shape our view of the world and our deepest values: what we consider good or bad, positive or negative, moral or evil.” (Kellner 2015:7) In other words, popular culture provides room for the bargaining of values in general which include values regarding gender, and as Villa et al. (2012:8) state:

Wesen der Populärkultur ist, ein Massenphänomen, eine Trivialität im Alltag vieler Menschen zu sein. Populärkultur ist damit ein dynamischer Ort, an dem gesellschaftliche und sozioökonomische Deutungen verhandelt werden; Populärkultur ist ein Feld der Auseinandersetzung. Geschlecht ist dabei auf allen Ebenen (in Diskursen, symbolischen Repräsentationen, Interaktionen und Praxen) bedeutsam.

Milestone and Meyer (2012:8) maintain that film is a “symbolic text containing meanings” and that the popular and mass media are “therefore producers of commodities and their meanings” because they produce significant representations and messages which are communicated to an audience. For this reason, they further explain that “consumers are audiences who consume these meanings as they listen, view or read the media.” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:8) Consumption therefore is not restricted to using (up) a product “but involves consumers in the active role of making sense of what they listen to, view or read.” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:8) Further, the discipline of cultural studies therefore understands consumption “as a process of making sense of cultural texts.” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:8) In consequence, it is not difficult to understand the derivation that fairy tales including fairy tale films can be viewed as a discourse “in which questions of proper gender behaviour, the treatment of children, the employment of power, standards of success, norms and values could be presented and debated.” (Zipes 1997:67)

Thus, this analysis, when applied to the case of the three “Snow White” films tries to negotiate different meanings, or possible ways of reading and understanding the fairy tales in the medium of film, as well the gender representation in said fairy tale films.

2.1 Fairy Tale: The Intricacy of a Genre

The endeavour to define fairy tales by academics has been controversial. Even some literary critics persistently confuse the oral folk tale with the literary fairy tale (cf. Zipes 1999:xv). Further, the different uses of “folktale” and the German term “Märchen” add to the confusion when some employ “Märchen” and “folktale” as a synonym, while others understand “folktale” to mean “myth, legend, and folktale” (cf. Bascom 1965). While definitions therefore might not be rewarding or successful it is useful to define the fairy tale in relation to other prose genres (cf. Stein 2000). In the following, a few perspectives on attempts towards a fairy tale definition are offered, not claiming or meaning that these are exhaustive.

William Bascom (1965) differentiates between three forms of prose narratives which as he states are “very basic terms in folklore” that he did not intend as universally recognised categories but as analytical concepts; these are myths, legends, and folktales (see also Mader 2008:17f). Bascom describes the folktale as follows:

Folktales are prose narratives which are regarded as fiction. They are not considered as dogma or history, they may or may not have happened, and they are not to be taken seriously. Nevertheless, although it is often said that they are told only for amusement, they have other important functions, as the class of moral folktales should have suggested. Folktales may be set in any time and any place, and in this sense they are almost timeless and placeless. (Bascom 1965:4)

He acknowledges that folktales have been called “nursery tales” or “fairy tale” but argues that in many societies the tales are not restricted to children and refuses to use “fairy tale” because he believes the term inappropriate due to the lack of appearance of fairies and because narratives about fairies are generally regarded as true; fairies, ogres or deities may be found in some tales but are usually a recount of adventures of animal or human characters (Bascom 1965).

Jens Tismar was one of the first German scholars who analysed the literary fairy tale systematically and has written *Kunstmärchen* (1977) where he stipulates the principles for a definition of the literary fairy tale (*das Kunstmärchen*) as genre (cf. Zipes 1999:xv) in the following way:

- 1) it distinguishes itself from the oral folk tale (*das Volksmärchen*) insofar as it is written by a single identifiable author

- 2) it is thus synthetic, artificial, and elaborate in comparison to the indigenous formation of the folk tale that emanates from communities and tends to be simple and anonymous
- 3) the differences between the literary fairy tale and the oral folk tale do not imply that one genre is better than the other
- 4) in fact, the literary fairy tale is not an independent genre but can only be understood and defined by its relationship to the oral tales as well as to the legend, novella, novel, and other literary fairy tales that it uses, adapts, and remodels during the narrative conception of the author. (Tismar 1977, cited in Zipes 1999:xv)

Other vantage points are not as elaborate, e.g.: Kurt Ranke, the founder of *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, defines the folk tale as “a magic narrative that is independent of the conditions of the real world with its categories of time, place, and causality, and which has no claim to believability” (Stein 2000:167), or Swiss folklorist Max Lüthi’s view (Stein 2000:168) who understood the *Märchen* to be a “universal adventure story with a clever and sublime style”.

Mary Beth Stein (2000) in the entry “Folklore and Fairy Tales” in *The Oxford Companion of Fairy Tales* states that the differentiation between “folk tale” and “fairy tale” must be made despite their frequent interchangeability for the reason that the two terms have distinct etymologies and meanings. While the fairy tale can refer to a category of oral folk tale as well as a genre of prose literature, the folk tale is reserved for those tales that either derived from or exist in oral tradition. Further Stein explains that fairy tale translates from the French *conte de fée* which is a form of oral narrative that became fashionable in the French court in the 17th century, and first emerged in the collection of tales by Mme d’Aulnoy in 1697 and has been in the English language since the 1750s. The word *Märchen* in comparison is a German diminutive form of the Old High German *mār* which means report or story. The term folk tale first appeared in the English language in the 19th century and is a translation of the German *Volksmärchen*.

In this study the term “fairy tale” is to be understood as *Märchen* as it is used in German both in academic and popular custom, and refers to the literary fairy tale as well as the traditional folk tale.

2.1.1 Towards a Fairy Tale Genre

The range of tales that remain and are a derivative from folk tales has remarkably shrunk and the comparatively small number of fairy tales that persevered and are still widely known nowadays within North America and Europe derive from the collections of the Brothers Grimm, Charles Perrault, and Hans Christian Anderson. While for example Andrew Lang's *Fairy Book* series which was published between 1889 and 1910 contained 12 volumes, the scope of retold fairy tales known today are reduced to about 15 tales (Stephens 2000:330). Zipes (1999) affirms that by the beginning of the 20th century it became apparent that a canon of 'classical' fairy tales had been established, including "Cinderella", "Sleeping Beauty", "Little Red Riding Hood", "Snow White", "Rumpelstiltskin", "Rapunzel", "Puss-in-Boots", "The Princess and the Pea", "Aladdin and the Lamp", etc. These tales he claims "served as reference points for the standard structure, motifs, and topoi of a fairy tale for readers young and old throughout the Western world." (Zipes 1999:xxviii-xxix) Therefore it is intelligible that "the tales of Perrault and the Brothers Grimm set the pattern for what was considered *the* fairy tale [...]" (Zipes 1999:xxix).

Fairy tales have naturalised some "formulaic ways of thinking about individuals and social relationships" (Stephens 2000:331), which are constructed around three assumptions. Firstly around gender and sexuality, meaning that "female" and "male" behaviour are arranged according to a patriarchal hierarchy. Secondly that good prevails and will conquer evil and the latter will be punished. And thirdly that the "meritorious individual will rise in the world, winning prestige, riches, and power." (Stephens 2000:331) This suggests that when tales are retold they may vary in focus or emphasis but that the result will generally be an arrangement constitutive of the matrix around these assumptions (cf. Stephens 2000). Jack Zipes (1999:xxvi) professes that "very few of the Grimms' fairy tales end on an unhappy note, and [further states that] they all comply with the phallocratic impulses and forces of the emerging middle-class societies of Western culture."

To sum up it can be said that "fairy tale" as a genre is always shifting and never fixed (this will be discussed in more detail concerning film adaptations in the next chapter); but that there are motifs and story elements that stay the same and make a fairy tale recognisable for what it is, no matter in what form it is found or told, and experienced.

2.1.2 Fairy Tale in Film – Film as Fairy Tale

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937) by Walt Disney is an adaptation of the “Snow White” fairy tale and amongst “the most popular films in the world and had a significant impact on cinema up through the present.” (Jack Zipes 2010:ix) Therefore it is odd that fairy tale films as such are not mentioned in *The Oxford History of World Cinema* from 1996 edited by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith which is rather astonishing as it was advertised as “the definitive history of cinema worldwide” – not even in the chapter on animation the term “fairy tale” comes up (cf. Zipes 2010:ix). In the following the problem of adaptation of fairy tale into a different frame, and defining the genre of fairy tale film is debated.

Reframing

“To grow and survive [the fairy tale] constantly adapted to its changing environment” (Zipes 2011:221). This process of “reframing” denotes the transformation of the tale into a different medium, i.e. into a different frame. Fairy tales have always been subject to perpetual change and reframing; new details have been added, others taken out, shortened, lengthened, told and listened to differently, written down and read another way, filmed, put into different contexts, and showed varying in yet a new way.

Marina Warner pointed out that shape-shifting “is one of the defining features of fairy tales” (cf. Tatar 2010:56). Warner’s assertion speaks of the everlasting transformation in fairy tale’s content being a part of its essence, while Zipes’ statement explains the casualness of fairy tales adjusting to current requirements. So it is no wonder that fairy tales also found their way onto the cinema screen, because “[...] the stories themselves function as shape-shifters, [are] morphing into new versions of themselves as they are retold and as they migrate into other media.” (Tatar 2010:56) The same as the oral folk tale was written down and evolved, the implementation of adapting fairy tale films can be understood and viewed as an independent genre (cf. Zipes 2010).

Framing the Genre

The above paragraph alludes to the issue of defining and categorising a genre. Such genre definitions can be very complicated for film which are challenging when it comes to fantasy films for example. These films have a disposition to contain motifs and characters, and plots that are perceptibly borrowed from fairy tales but which are in a strict sense not fairy tale films (cf. Zipes 2010:x). In contrast to literary adaptations however the source of fairy tales is

harder to make out due to the shifts and changes of fairy tale being part of its subject matter. Literary adaptations create new stories, they are not the same as the source texts, and the story “takes on a new life, as indeed do the characters. Narrative and characters become independent of the original [read source text] even though both are based – in terms of genesis – on the original.” (Hayward 2001:4) Since it is not always possible for fairy tales or fairy tale films to be traced back to an exact source because they “may derive from a myriad of indeterminate intervening retellings” (McCallum and Stephens 2000:161). This stands in contrast to for example “literary classics” which have a single author, in which case the criterion of “fidelity to the source” that is often discussed within the frame of adaptations is negligible for fairy tales. McCallum and Stephens (2000:160) state that:

Film is a relatively new medium for the fairy tale, and to a great extent might be considered a different genre in its own right, with its own conventions and its own principles, although it may employ many narrative codes specific to the literary fairy-tale schemata. The expansion of a story to run for an hour or more may entail enhanced characterization, introduction of subplots or additional minor characters, and the development of strategies for maintaining audience engagement.

When it comes to the standardisation of fairy tale adaptations for film the Disney Corporation has played a key part, and further also made it popular for cinema (cf. Zipes 1997, and Greenhill and Matrix 2010). Disney adaptations of fairy tales are so much embedded in popular culture that it is seen very often as *the* version of a tale, and are often believed and therefore said to be the “original” version (cf. Greenhill and Matrix 2010, Stephens 2000, Zipes 1999). Zipes (2010:xi) argues that due to masterful and highly efficient marketing and distribution of any product of the Disney Corporation, it has been close to impossible for filmmakers who were born after 1945 to not have seen or been in a way exposed to a Disney fairy tale film. Thus “[w]hen we think of the form and typical fairy tale today”, we tend to think not only of the paradigmatic Grimms’ fairy tale but also of the version that was modified by the Disney industry (Zipes 1999: xxvi).

In regard to revisions of fairy tale films, recent years have witnessed an outbreak of fairy tale adaptations in general. There were new interpretations of tales in Hollywood over the last 5 years only. Such productions include for example *Red Riding Hood* (2011), the ABC series *Once Upon a Time* (2011-present), *Into the Woods* (2014), *Maleficent* (2014) – a new uptake and live-action film on Disney’s animation *Sleeping Beauty* from 1959 by the

Disney corporation, *Cinderella* (2015) also a live-action adaptation by Disney Studios, as well as the live-action *Beauty and the Beast* also by Disney Studios upcoming in 2017, *Tale of Tales* (2015) – a Basile adaptation as opposed to another Grimm or Perrault revision, *Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters* (2013), NBC series *Grimm* (2011-present) and many more. A guess at the accumulated emergence could be the bicentenary of the publishing of Grimms' *Children's and Household Tales* in 2012 as Zipes (2014) suggests for various literary adaptations of the Grimms' tales. But whether or not this is the reason for this many film adaptations coming out of late remains susceptible to debate. Additionally 2012 was the year of the 75th anniversary of Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, which also was the year *Mirror Mirror* and *Snow White and the Huntsman* were distributed.

The proliferation of fairy tale adaptations has strongly influenced the form, content and reception of fairy tales. Nowadays many children or also adults encounter the fairy tale primarily through the transmission of their filmic versions, taking into account that film versions are “produced in the shadow of the commercial and cultural dominance of the Disney industry.” (McCallum and Stephens 2000:160). The boundary of the already elusive genre of fairy tale is taken even further by taking the tale into yet another medium.

2.2 Social Constructed Value: Gender

The concept of gender is used to demarcate as a social construct in marked contrast to the biological sex, and is employed as an analytical category to pin down certain “socially imposed attributes and behaviours” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:12) or competencies as “masculine” or “feminine” (cf. Pilcher and Whelehan 2004:56). Although there might be a physical difference in the female or male body, the differences “are socially meaningless until social practices transform them into social facts.” (Lorber 1993:576) Gender further is not necessarily linked with sex although the understanding of gender being compliant with sex is still widespread. And as Lorber (1993:569) suggests, “[o]nce the gender category is given, the attributes of the person are also gendered: Whatever a “woman” is has to be “female”; whatever a “man” is has to be “male.” Hence gender is perceived as a binary concept of being male or female with a very limited scope of options; gender is taken at face value in everyday life and the dichotomous understanding of “femaleness” and “maleness” and distinction between “man” and “woman” are so familiar that they are seen as “natural” (cf. Connell 2009:5). But “the fact that certain attributes and behaviours are linked to men or women is not ‘natural’ but a matter of convention” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:12). Thus the

association of characteristics and a set of practices as being typically or appropriately “feminine” or “masculine”, such as correlating “women” with housework or “men” with sports (while men and women are equally capable of both) are “a matter of social construction” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:12). Gender images such as these are based on stereotyped ideas about gender-appropriate behaviour which are persistently circulated by legislator, parents, schools/teachers, media, peers, etc. and help induce gender difference. Consequently being a woman or a man is not “a pre-determined state. It is a *becoming*, a condition actively under construction.” (Connell 2009:5)

2.2.1 Towards a Concept of Femininities and Masculinities

The juxtaposition of masculinity and femininity is the outcome of the perception of gender as a binary system. Femininity and masculinity, respectively, are the sets of social practices and cultural representations associated with being a woman or a man (cf. Pilcher and Whelehan 2004:82). These two concepts are in relation to and are defined through each other; “masculinity” would lose its meaning without “femininity” to demarcate itself from and vice versa. One category is defined, then, only by not being the other. If one needs the other to distinguish itself from said other, and without that could not take on form, it should be an indication that there are no fixed position for either of the two, and that shifts and changes are possible. This makes the concept of femininity and masculinity as a binary system questionable because dichotomous thinking “forces ideas, persons, roles and disciplines into rigid polarities” (Sherwin 1989, cited in Pilcher and Whelehan 2004:25) which would leave no room for change. Pilcher and Whelehan (2004:82) state that “the plural ‘masculinities’ is [...] used in recognition that ways of being a man and cultural representation of/about men vary, both historically and culturally, between societies and between different groupings of men within any one society”, which must apply to “femininities” as well. As Connell states, “to speak of masculinities is to speak about gender relations. Masculinities are not equivalent to men; they concern the *position* of men in a gender order. They can be defined as the patterns of practice by which people (both men and women, though predominantly men) engage that position.” (URL1) Therefore “masculinities” and “femininities” are socially constructed patterns of gender practice (Connell 2011:10). The plural furthermore makes clear the possible shift between the two polarities of “being a man” and “being a woman”.

When it is said of someone that they behave “feminine” or “masculine”, people would usually know what is meant. This can be explained through gender stereotypes; attributes assigned to either the category of men or women. Stereotypes can be useful and helpful when thinking of them as a “cognitive method or procedure, used by our mind in order to simplify the complex barrage of information it experiences” (Pilcher and Whelehan 2004:166). A “typical” image of a social group or category “may be negative or positive, accurate or inaccurate, justified or unjustified” (Schneider 1996, cited in Pilcher and Whelehan 2004:167) but what is the matter of concern are the negative, inaccurate, and the unjustified ones (Pilcher and Whelehan 2004). Pilcher and Whelehan (2004) further point out that “an adequate understanding of a stereotype must also include the idea that stereotypes are not only contained within an individual’s mind, but also exist at a collective level.”

But stereotypical depiction of women and men feed into the existing gender ideologies and contribute in maintaining these, they stipulate the accepted code of conduct of what a “man” or a “woman” should do, or how they should behave, act, be, look like etc. which then is the established “gender ideal”. This means that there are ideal images of how women and men should behave or look like or even take interest in which then is assessed to be the standard, and therefore seen as appropriate or inappropriate, as socially accepted or not. This can be described as the normative dimension of gender ideology. Milestone and Meyer (2012:20), drawing on Pickering, state that “the characteristics and practices outlined as typical of men [or women] are also positively sanctioned as appropriate. Further, with recourse to Connell, they (2012:19), explicate that albeit the diverse masculinities and femininities “gender ideology reinforces only one type of masculinity and femininity, the traditional type, which is hegemonic.”

The concepts of femininities and masculinities are needed in this study to explain how gender is represented (also with the aid of stereotypes) in the fairy tale films, i.e. how men and women behave within the spectrum of these concepts.

2.2.2 Doing Gender/Performance

Drawing on Simone de Beauvoir’s often quoted phrase “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” this expresses not only the distinction of sex from gender, also Butler (1986:35) “suggests that gender is an aspect of identity [that is] gradually acquired”. Moreover it lays a foundation for the understanding of one not being born with a set of unchangeable and “natural” traits; it means that gender is not something that people are but that people do (cf.

Milestone and Meyer 2012:12). West and Zimmerman (1987:129) “argue that gender is not a set of traits, nor a variable, nor a role, but the product of social doings of some sort.” They (1987:126) propose an understanding of gender that is an ongoing routine, it is a methodical and recurring accomplishment which is embedded in everyday interaction and the social and therefore requires no thoughts (cf. West and Zimmerman 1987:126 and Milestone and Meyer 2012:13). Further West and Zimmerman (1987:137) argue that “doing gender means creating differences between girls and boys and women and men, differences that are not natural, essential, or biological. Once the differences have been constructed, they are used to reinforce the ‘essentialness’ of gender.” The difference is created already when we are born and are assigned a female or male sex. Then the socialisation and learning of appropriate gender behaviour of what is suitable for “men” or “women” to wear or how to walk, talk, move etc. All these practices are included in “doing gender” and help create a visible gender difference. “Doing Gender” then, is a theoretical approach that emphasises performative interactions.

For Butler (1988) gender is the effect of reiterated acting; “the action of gender requires performance that is *repeated*. This repetition is at once a reenactment and reexperiencing of a set of meanings already socially established [...]” (Butler 2008:214) and what acts or characteristics count as “feminine” or “masculine” has already been determined, whereas the “individual actions are not conscious but simply habitual and repetitive” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:14). Further Milestone and Meyer (2012:14) elaborate:

Differences between women and men that we may find [...], i.e. notions of masculinity and femininity, do not exist because of essential differences that cause men and women to behave in different ways, but are the result of the structural category of gender which produces the scripts of femininity and masculinity that men and women re-enact.

By “doing gender” or “performance”, by repeating these habits unconsciously, thus helps reinforcing the norm or normative conceptions of how gender is seen and lived, and makes the practices around gender invisible. But gender as an “act” is intentional and performative; and the “performative” suggests a contingent construction of meaning (Butler 2008:213). Morris (1995:569) drawing on de Lauretis states that “gender is a representation, and at the same time, that representation of gender is its construction.”

2.2.3 Representation and Codes

As Stuart Hall (2010) argues, there is a twofold understanding to the word “representation”; the usual and standard understanding being a depiction or image or a reflection of something, whether accurate or inaccurate, it works on the assumption that the idea of something was already there and then being merely re-presented. The other implies a concept of a more active role; representation then is a process and should be seen in relation to how people are making sense of the world or give meaning to things or images through language. Representation is therefore the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds, and correlates concepts and language that then make it possible to “*refer* to ‘real’ world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events” (Hall 2010:17). Hall suggests that the process involves two systems of representation: the system of concepts and the system of (a shared) language. The first system is one to help us interpret our surroundings in a meaningful way; one with which we can link objects, people, and events to a “set of concepts or *mental representations*” (Hall 2010:17) which he also describes as “conceptual maps”. To communicate or articulate the mental constructs or exchange these concepts and meanings with others requires a shared language; and language consequently is the second of the two systems. “Language” is used in a very broad sense and includes not only the “writing system” or the “spoken system”, which is to say what can be said or written verbally, but also visual images, sounds, words, or any “object which functions as a sign”, anything in short that is capable of carrying or expressing meaning (cf. Hall 2010:18-19). Thus film, a medium which communicates and conveys different meanings through (visual) images among others, can also be seen as a language. But languages are not universal and need a common ground of understanding; it depends on a shared socio-cultural and historical context to interpret meanings and signs in a similar way – to communicate or convey meaning for others to understand it therefore requires a set of “shared conceptual maps” (cf. Hall 2010:18ff). Thus in film depending on genre or context there are also different ways to represent and read the “text”.

Codes

Meanings are never fixed and always created; the meaning is not inherent in the thing or word but is designed by “the system of representation” which is a construction fixed by codes. These codes equip us to correlate between the conceptual and mental system and the language and sign system; hence codes manage the “relationship of translation” between the

“shared conceptual maps” and the shared language system, as well as fixate the relationship between said concepts and signs (Hall 2010:21). Thus “meaning” as a result of social, cultural and linguistic conventions is not something that is “naturally” given but something taught and learned as a social practice. This is not to say that meanings do not have to be fixed to a certain extent, insofar as to be able to communicate and understand one another. But on the whole the adjustability of meanings, depending on context and time, is indication for the social construction of it; codes are the result of a social convention, and representation is the result of a “signifying practice” (Hall 2010:24).

This hold true for film and gender representation as well: The gender binary and the characteristics of “femininity” and “masculinity” that emerge with it seem so “natural” out of habit and repeated performance (cf. Butler 1988). As for film, the filmic codes are used also as a means of conventional representation which are essential for the production of meaning (cf. Mikos 2003:52). In short, film as well as fairy tales as literary text have depending on the social and cultural structure they are embedded in a specific set of codes and meanings; they are readable by their audience through this recognisable system of codes (cf. Zipes 2007 for fairy tale, and Hayward 2001, Nelmes 2007 for film).

2.2.4 Gender Representation

Milestone and Meyer (2012:2) state that “popular-cultural products, or texts, are symbolic because they carry meanings. These meanings are produced through linguistic and visual representations.” In *Gender and Popular Culture* they explore the ways in which women and men are represented in popular culture, and draw attention to similarities and differences, as well as reflected on the creation of normative notions of femininity and masculinity and how these are sustained. Moreover, they investigate the relevance and connotations of “representations and gender norms in terms of status, power relations and gender (in)equality.” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:2)

Milestone and Meyer (2012:85) in examining how women and men are portrayed in popular culture come up with “three major themes which continue to dominate gender images” which are

- **sex(uality) and relationships,**
- **the body and physical appearance,**
- **and work and home.**

For women however they added a forth theme of **sexuality and morality** as they (Milestone and Meyer 2012:85) argue “this continues to be an important topic in the representation of femininity.” By and large they found “common historical trends of change” as well as an element of continuity in the representation of women and men, and that both notions of masculinities and femininities have diversified since the post-war period and are now offering several types and identities. However they made out that there has also been a backlash reaction, namely to a representation of men and women, that reverted to a more essentialist and traditional understanding of femininity and masculinity to a certain extent which insists on a “naturalness” in the differences of gender. These notions will be explained more fully in the following subchapters.

2.2.4.1 Female and Male Representation

“Popular culture has a history of representing women as centrally concerned with and in need of love, romance and relationship” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:87) which can be seen e.g. in (teenage) female magazines, as well as Hollywood mainstream films. The ways women are represented in various media are not very diverse. In films their portrayal mostly reinforces the already constrictive and “narrow range of stereotyped images of women [...] and encourage particular expectations which are extremely limiting” (Nelmes 2007:227), e.g. that they are based at home, that their life goal is to find “love” and be in a relationship with a man, and have a family/children (cf. also Milestone and Meyer 2012:87-93, and McRobbie 2000:67-117). These “normative milestones” in women’s lives are presented as a “to-do-list” and essential for any woman, and falls into the heteronormative frame as well as reinforce the conventional ideology of “femininity” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:88-91). The portrayal and counter-positioning of the female quest for romance as a response to the male quest for sex can be understood as a direct confirmation of the ideology of gender difference which lies down that men want sex and women want relationships and commitment (cf. McRobbie 2000 and Milestone and Meyer 2012). Moreover the question is not only how to get a boyfriend or man which would be the beginning of romance but the life-goals of females are marriage and a family. Overall “conventional femininity [is] marked by moderation, quietness, being nice” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:89). Angela McRobbie suggests (Milestone and Meyer 2012:87) that conservative and traditional teenage femininity circles around two key issues; firstly, how to get a boyfriend, and secondly, how to look good. Boys and men for this traditional and conventional gender concept are viewed as potential partners and “romantic objects” only, they cannot be considered as friends.

The conventional femininity which is supposed to be quiet, nice, and moderate stands opposed to the “new femininity” which is fun-seeking, aspirational, confident, and socially as well as sexually assertive. This type of femininity then is leading away from the “traditional femininity” and the understanding of femininity to be “ladylike”. The shift is one towards being able to enjoy oneself, having fun with friends (who are girls still), seeking pleasure and success, enjoying sex (inside and outside a relationship). So the newness of this femininity is mainly build on a new sexuality of women but it also gives women and girls the possibility to exhibit behaviour or engage in practices that used to be a privilege of men. And while there is this shift towards a ‘new femininity’ which is both socially assertive and more sexually confident (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012:88, cf. also Tasker 1995), as well as a greater scope of options in which women are represented, what is said to be the best kind of “feminine identity” still, is the “conventional” one which is “often framed as the most valid, appropriate and good one” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:93) which therefore reveals inappropriateness in “male attitude”, e.g. being loud, drinking excessively, seeking pleasure etc. for females and sets limits to what is compliant to social norms of “female” behaviour. Further this new kind of femininity is regarded as selfish due to the correlation of sensibleness, motherhood or being family-orientated, selflessness are features of conventional femininity and consequently are expected of women (Milestone and Meyer 2012:87-93).

Representation of men as well as other systems of representation has changed and diversified; there is no single masculinity but several diverse masculinities that are constituted through systems of representation of men in contemporary popular culture in Europe and the North America. Milestone and Meyer (2012:113) make out three major discourses of masculinity, which are the “old man”, the “new man”, and the “new lad”. These three types of masculinity are both referring to actual men as well as are used as concepts with which masculinities and their relevance in relation to the three discussed themes (body and appearance, sexuality, and work and home) can be analysed.

The “old man” is the discourse of traditional masculinity and has the conception of “women” and “men” being innately different, which makes it also the type of masculinity that directly contrast “men” and “women” as opposites. Traditional masculinity further correlates to manners, activities, and behaviour that have been judged as “typically male”, or what defines “men”. And what is seen as “typical” has been naturalised and the characteristics are then seen as immanent to any aspects of “men” and explained as a biological property. Men then are posed as active, aggressive, strong, powerful, hard,

rational, be deficient in emotions or sensitivity, whereas women are presented as weak, submissive, powerless, passive, emotional, sensitive, and caring. A muscular body (which stands for strength and power), and a tough mental attitude make up the “old man”; he would not express emotions because emotions fall into women’s domain, and is usually not interested in consumerism or fashion and looks (except for a physique because that enhances power and strength) that which all are considered to be of women’s concern; men would only be interested in an item’s function not in how it looks – if “old men” paid attention to fashion or consumption anyway, they had to make up for it in other realms, through violence or promiscuity for example. What is of utmost importance for traditional masculinity is that it is heterosexual, and women are seen as desirable sexual objects more than anything else (Milestone and Meyer 2012:114ff).

The “new man” branches out into two different types of masculinity as either “nurturer” or “narcissist”. The “new man as nurturer” compared to the “old man” also has and embraces his “feminine” side which means that he is learned in the realm of emotions, sensitive, caring, and takes part in household chores and childcare. Moreover his relationship to women is on a more equal basis; he sees them as human beings rather than sex objects. He too, is heterosexual but does not only consume women in the way the “old man” does but is also interested in women’s sexual pleasure, and has the ability to be friends with women. The second type, namely the “new man as narcissist” represents men as a consumer who is both conscious of fashion and of health, and puts value in appearances and looks; is spruced and sexy. The distinction to the “traditional masculinity” lies in the heightened prominence of sexuality, consumption, appearances, and emotions for men, as these things were seen as traditionally a woman’s domain. Still masculinity and femininity are situated as dichotomous opposites, only with more commonalities (Milestone and Meyer 2012:116f).

The third discourse of masculinity which is named “new lad” is especially coupled with British culture but has found his way into the US, and was a (backlash) reaction to the emergence of the “new man” and of the increasing gender equality. This type of masculinity is distinguished by his interests in a few things: football, drinking, and sex. Women are seen again like with the “old man” as sex objects more than equals or partners who are to be conquered. But he is discerned from the “old man” by his juvenile ways and a kind of “humour” that makes it possible for him to be sexist and homophobic without further consequences because it allegedly is just a joke (Milestone and Meyer 2012:117-119).

What unites the three discourses is that all of them define “masculinity” as heterosexual; all of the masculinity types are heterosexual and distinctly described by being sexually attracted to women. There have been changes in the discourses of masculinity and how men are seen, as well as the parameter in which they can and should be seen. Although the parameter in which it is possible to define oneself as male does change and can be shifted, it is also a framework which is very restricted (Milestone and Meyer 2012:119) as well as restricting.

2.2.4.2 Sexuality: Sex and Relationships

What is also central for the representation of femininity is sex and sexuality. There has been an “emergence of a new feminine sexuality, which actively seeks pleasure and is comfortable with casual sex, is paired with a more conventional approach, which associates femininity with the desire for love, romance and long-term relationships.” Milestone and Meyer 2012:126) But in spite of the emergence and promotion of “new femininity”, the aspects that continue to be substantial are men, romance, and a relationship with them; a permanent relationship or marriage with a man seems to remain the ideal and desired life “achievement” for women (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012, and Tincknell et al. 2003). This is why at the side of the new femininity, “the ideology of romance and the centrality of romantic relationships to femininity continue to thrive. This is highly ideological in that it reinforces heterosexuality, with its milestones of wedding, marriage, pregnancy and childbearing.” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:92) This kind of ideology that stresses the romantic aspect amplifies a restricted and dependent on male validation and opinion; for the reason that what remains central to “normal” femininity is the ability to attract a man as a “potential romantic and sexual partner” (Tincknell et al. 2003:59, cf. also Milestone and Meyer 2012:92).

For the construction of masculinity, however, sex and sexuality have a different notion, albeit it being significant as well. Women are seen as sex objects more than potential partners; in men’s magazines for example sex is not linked to romance but is displayed more as a conquest. Therefore masculinity is build around “looking at women, judging them for their physical appearance and attract them in order to get sex rather than love or relationships” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:127). Drawing on Tincknell (2003), Milestone and Meyer (2012:129) write that those magazines even go further not by omitting the talk of committed relationships but by deliberately present relationships as a dangerous thing that one might get trapped in. Being single is correlated to independence and having fun whereas a long-term relationship is tantamount to boredom, limitations, hardship, and unwanted

responsibility (cf. Jackson et al. 2001, in Milestone and Meyer 2012:129). The simplistic “solution” that is offered in popular culture (e.g. in romantic comedies as well as teenage magazines) to this problem of masculinity being unfit for the concept of “love” (which leads to a relationship) is to split men into “good” ones and “bad” ones (cf. McRobbie 2000, and Milestone and Meyer 2012); the “bad boys and men” who supposedly only want sex and the “good boys and men” who are interested in more than sex and are willing to commit, and have and take care of a family.

In sum it can be said that concerning the representation of women and men sexuality is represented in men’s and women’s magazines respectively as important for both. Only for women the constant occurrence of sex and sexuality is in connection to relationships while for men women are sexualised objects and objectified as such. Thus the dichotomy of women wanting commitment and romance while men want sex is maintained, and this directly feeds into ideologies of gender differences. Moreover, the gender representation of femininity and masculinity concerning relationships advocates that the two are incompatible because women are portrayed to supposedly want love, romance, and a long-term relationship while men are depicted as being attracted only to casual sex, as well as evading commitment and relationships.

2.2.4.3 Appearances and Beauty

Different physical attributes and staging or presentation of the body can be interpreted in different ways depending on social and cultural context, times, and taste (cf. Görtler 2012:13), therefore beauty, and looks, and appearances are aesthetical preferences which cannot be predetermined or universally established. Consequently it can be said that beauty and its ideals are a constructed concept. That said in contemporary media “[t]he beauty ideal [for female assigned people] is very narrow: girls should be small thin, have silky hair and be conventionally pretty.” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:93) Appearances seem to be relevant for femininity as well as for masculinity albeit in a different manner. While women are often reduced to their looks men also have to comply with certain standards, such as being muscular, or having or not having body hair (beard, chest hair, armpit hair etc.) depending on the social and cultural or historical context (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012), as is also reflected in the emergence of the “new man”.

Thus, women have an affiliation not only to love and romance, but have also been “closely associated with and scrutinized in terms of their physical appearance” (Milestone

and Meyer 2012:93). “Even a casual flick through any women’s fashion magazine will reveal a preponderance of thin, long-legged, and high breasted young women with *smooth and perfect skin*” (Tiggemann and Lewis 2004, emphasis added). Thus the important things in a woman would be their skin condition, silkiness of their hair, their state, shape, and size of their bodies, or how old they look. Consequently, how to look good is a central topic in teenage and women’s magazines (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012:93). Milestone and Meyer (2012:93) argue that “[w]omen are defined by their physical appearance in a way that is simply not the case for men.” Angela McRobbie concludes (Milestone and Meyer 2012:94) that what it comes down to, is that “natural” beauty is proclaimed to be the ideal and what men want. Thus, women are practically told to concur with men’s suspected and presumed wants and desires. While the endeavour and time spent on the pursuit of beauty is demonstrated as being worthwhile “because getting a boyfriend or husband is the ultimate quest in life.” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:94) So in the end, ‘looking good’ and ‘being beautiful’ is only a plea to ‘look good/be beautiful for men’, which connects physical appearance and looks back to romance in a complex way (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012:94) which then feeds into the notion of the social significance of ‘feminine beauty’ per se and the taken-for-grantedness of the aspiration for ‘beauty’ for men (see also Baker-Sperry and Grauerholz 2003). Tincknell et al. note (Milestone and Meyer 2012:94) that this need of male approval of female beauty “undermines any messages about a new femininity marked by confidence and independence” (see also Baker-Sperry and Grauerholz 2003).

Men’s appearance is central to masculinity in a different way; their appearance revolves more about muscularity than thinness as is the case with women. And although men’s bodies are more and more displayed to be looked at, as can be seen with the focus on their appearance which is represented by popular culture as “muscular, lean and sculpted, and increasingly naked” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:119), and brings about sexualisation and objectification which is rather associated with women. When the male body is displayed e.g. in men’s magazines to ensure the heterosexuality which is so important for the construction of “masculinity”, it is done so with an emphasis on work out, fitness, and diet – the body then becomes a site for regular exercise, and discipline and restraint (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012:119-123). And looking good for men then as to not be feminised means that it is presented as hard work and gained through exercise and not as a pleasurable activity (Milestone and Meyer 2012:123).

2.2.4.4 Home and Work

Work and the domestic are another area that has been long established to be counted as being central to the representation and the position of women in society (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012:99). In women's magazines and films it is recognised that women are working but is still only subsidiary or at least of less importance than motherhood, or relationships; so even though women are "allowed" to pursue careers and jobs outside the home, they are still given the feeling that the domestic is more essential to the "right kind of femininity", and that there is more fulfilment to be found as a mother or a wife. And here again male opinion seem to be a crucial factor; like with appearance and looks that are of essence to find a partner or attracting one, what is prevalent throughout popular culture is that women's success in her career or her confidence are not the aspects that attract a man, rather it is her prettiness or lack of confidence, and her endearing way (cf. Tincknell 2003, Milestone and Meyer 2012). Mostly women are shown in a "low-status" or low-paid job, as well as with no ambition to follow another career path and are coupled with a man who is in a "superior" job position. If they are portrayed to be career-driven which does not fit the image of conventional femininity they are mostly depicted as missing the "real important things" in life; either their career is delegitimised by displaying them as leading an unhappy and unfulfilled life or they are having careers and then realise that they are not satisfied by it which makes them retreat (cf. Negra 2009, cited in Milestone and Meyer 2012:101f). In both cases the career path and authority of a woman, and consequently the increasing equality is illustrated as causing a romantic conflict which poses the actual problem. In the first case women's career are portrayed as clashing with family life and therefore their femininity. The second case of being unsatisfied and then retreat is a case of powerful, career-oriented women who come to realise that the job which is part of the "world of work" and symbolises superficiality and ruthlessness, is not satisfying which is why they retreat to rediscover their "true nature" which are all found in the idea of conventional femininity of being caring, loving, considerate, and family-orientated. There are also female figures in film that are presented as tough, inconsiderate, ruthless, ambitious, and very powerful, these women exhibit behaviour that is linked to masculinity and therefore are just right in the sphere of work, which is why they do not need to retreat. But these masculine female figures serve to emphasise the incongruousness of the female protagonists who do retreat. With this narrative, women's professional roles and status are minimised (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012:99-107).

So in both cases what is problematic is that women would not be able to have a relationship and a family because their careers are in the way or because men do not like women in power, or because women in power are not seen as “womanly”; which again all link women to the relationship to a man. Although nowadays women are not only positioned in the home anymore they are continually linked to the domestic sphere with all its duties which is still seen as feminine (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012:100).

The main point Milestone and Meyer (2012) suggest that persistently connects femininity to the domestic sphere is probably motherhood. They state that “[p]arenthood has historically been understood as motherhood in the sense that bringing up children is a woman’s job.” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:105) Consequently the meaning of motherhood is important in a different way to women’s identities than fatherhood is for men (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012:105). Although men are gradually more shown in the roles of fathers, they at the same time are still occupy full-time jobs and it is yet their work that is more likely to define them than their being a parent (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012:137ff). When men are shown at work, then mostly as professionals, especially when comparing to women or women’s position; men’s jobs or interests are more on a professional level than women’s. When for example men are put in the context of something that is closer to the domestic, like cooking – they are likely to be portrayed as chefs where cooking is done as a professional function, “which distances them from women, who tend to fulfil domestic tasks in their private capacities as mothers or housewives” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:145).

The three discussed themes of sexuality and relationships, physical appearance, and home and work are helpful for the reason that they are found in the films in question as well. And in addition to these, there are other topics that have been made out which also influence the gender image and turn up in the films as they do in fairy tales such as the climactic rescue, the rivalry between (step)mother and (step)daughter, the passivity or activity of the female figures, “love”, “beauty” etc. In a way all the themes are more “differentiated” for women; as women are depicted as being in need of relationships to be happy, and they have to be beautiful in order to get a man in order to have a relationship with a man in order to be happy, and moreover they are portrayed as domesticated (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012: 85ff), whereas men’s activities and interests are revolving about themselves; in other words, everything that is central to the representation of “femininity” revolves around men – how to

get them, how to make them happy, how to make them want one, how to be (sexually) attractive to them, how to please them etc. while what is central to the representation of “masculinity” is what makes men look/seem/be more “masculine”, still more, since women for men are objectified to embody sex, having sex (with a woman) is also assessed as “masculine”, and looking good for men means to have worked out which is also to be understood as “masculine”.

2.2.5 Gender Representation in Fairy Tales

Gender became significant in the study of fairy tales in the 1960s and 1970s with the women’s movement in the United States and Europe of that time (cf. Ragan 2009, and Jarvis 2000:158f). “[...] there has long been a tacit awareness of the fairy tale’s role in the cultural discourse on gender, and many fairy-tale texts constitute implicit critical commentaries on that discourse.” (Haase 2004:viii) Scholars like Ruth Bottigheimer, Kay Stone, Karen Rowe, Cristina Bacchilega, Marina Warner, Maria Tatar, and Marcia Lieberman amongst others criticised canonical fairy tales regarding issues of gender, their impact on socialisation, representation of women etc. (cf. Jarvis 2000:158).

Studies on fairy tales that inspected how the editorial practices generated a convention and how the story selection then perpetuates stereotypes of “women” were done mostly on Grimms’ *Children’s and Household Tales*. Kay Stone was one of the first to do research on the anthologising practices of the Grimms’ collection in the 19th and 20th century for North America (Jarvis 2000:158). Stone (1975) found that out of the 210 stories of the Grimms in total, 40 have heroines but very few translations offer more than 25 stories, which is why also the quantity of the heroines has lessened, with most of them being docile and falling in the range of “mildly abused to severely persecuted”. Other critics like Ruth Bottigheimer and Maria Tatar in the 1980s passed criticism on the inbuilt sexism and misogyny of Wilhelm Grimm’s editing and claimed that he intentionally edited it thus, and concluded that the *Children’s and Household Tales* were devised “to acculturate children and women into roles and models of behaviour patriarchy wanted to maintain.” (Jarvis 2000:159)

There were also feminist discussions in the beginning of the 1970s (which have been carried on to the day) formed around social and cultural effects that fairy tales had on children. Maria Lieberman (1972) for example argued that fairy tales cultivate girls to “believe that passivity, placidity, and morbidity, along with physical beauty, will make them the ‘best’ kind of girl to be” (Jarvis 2000:159). Karen Rowe (1979) in turn asserted that fairy

tales stipulates restrictive social roles for women as well as perpetuate the compelling figment of punishment and reward where “passivity, beauty, and helplessness lead to marriage, conferring wealth and status, whereas self-aware, ‘aggressive’, and powerful women reap opprobrium and are either ostracized or killed” (Jarvis 2000:159). Rowe (1979:237) states that the romanticising of marriages and waiting are “alluring fantasies” which embellish the inability of the heroine to act in a self-assertive way, the willing to subservience to the father or prince, the dependence on being rescued and the restriction to the domestic. And further she raises the question if women subconsciously transferred the norms from fairy tales into their lives by making “passivity, dependency, and self-sacrifice a female’s cardinal virtues”, and thus “perpetuate the patriarchal *status quo* by making female subordination seem a romantically desirable [...] fate.” (Rowe 1979:237) In a more recent study Baker-Sperry and Grauerholz (2003) also state that “a normative feminine beauty is maintained through cultural products such as fairy tales.” They further suggest that fairy tales highlight the passivity and beauty of women, and have gendered scripts which conduce the legitimising and sustaining of the dominant gender system.

In Grimms’ fairy tales “most of the male heroes are dashing, adventurous, and courageous” (Zipes 1999:xxvi) while most “of the female protagonists are beautiful, passive, and industrious.” (Baker-Sperry and Grauerholz 2003) Fairy tales are said to be missing powerful female characters, but as Bottigheimer demonstrated (Haase 2004:11) this was due to the Grimms’ editorial interventions to weaken once-strong female characters, demonize female power, and by imposing a male perspective etc. but “all in accord with the social values of their time”. Heinz Rölleke, Maria Tatar, and Jack Zipes have illustrated that the Grimms have reshaped the collected tales for the education of children, and left out or softened sexually explicit material but upheld punitive violence against women – powerful older women would have to dance in hot iron shoes (in “Snow White”), and wicked (step)sisters would have their eyes picked out (in “Cinderella”) (cf. Harris 2000); thus “women’s transgressive acquisition of knowledge and power is often severely punished.” (Harris 2000:480)

Further relevant for fairy tales is the equation of beauty with goodness. But not only in fairy tales does this remain valid as the “attractiveness stereotype” suggests which entails that people assign attributes the more positive the more “attractive” the person was (cf. Ruck 2014). The study of the significance of “feminine beauty” in fairy tales, as Baker-Sperry and Grauerholz (2003) argue can offer insight into the gender relations and also the cultural and

social importance of “beauty” in women’s lives. Baker-Sperry and Grauerholz (2003) draw attention to the frequently unmistakable connection between “beauty” and “goodness” and “ugliness” and “evil” in Grimms’ fairy tales, and that most of the time “beauty” and “goodness” are correlated to younger women. While younger women are much more often being described as beautiful, than older women, women’s beauty in general is much more emphasised than men’s attractiveness. And while “feminine beauty” can be seen as empowering, the notion of empowerment may be somewhat diminished by the impression that it links back to befuddling men’s minds. Although “beauty” can be utilised as a tool with which women might be able to manipulate men, everything still revolves around men and is dependent on their reaction which does not plead in favour of transcending the patriarchal system but again feeds right into it (cf. Baker-Sperry and Grauerholz 2003).

As already mentioned the Disney films are seen as the fairy tale film par excellence, and the Disney version of a fairy tale is often understood to be the “right” or “original” version of the tale which is why they are relevant and discussed at this point. In Disney films when evil is defeated by the “good” party, depending on whether the “instrument of victory” is male or female, his power would lie in “courage and resourcefulness”, while her strength would be “in her beauty, sensibility, and compassion” (Stephens 2000:331). Zipes (2010:x) claims that Disney when adapting tales of the Grimm and Perrault collection held fast “to the traditional plots and patriarchal ideology of nineteenth-century folk and fairy tales.” For example when producing *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* he sweetened the characters as stereotypes, developed more realistic human figures, and added cute comical animals to liven the plots. He continued with this custom until his death but this practice has established as a “model of conformity” that many filmmakers still pursue down to the present day. The fairy tale pattern Zipes (2010:xi) says consists of five stages:

- 1) girl falls in love with young man, often a prince, or wants to pursue her dreams
 - 2) wicked witch, stepmother, or a force of evil wants to demean or kill girl
 - 3) persecuted girl is abducted or knocked out of commission
 - 4) persecuted girl is rescued miraculously either by a prince or masculine helpers
 - 5) happy ending in form of wedding, wealth, and rise in social status or reaffirmation of royalty
- (Zipes 2010:xi)

Thus, Disney was part of exposing “ridiculous aspects of romantic love, [and] fixed gender roles” (Zipes 2010:xi).

Towbin et al. (2003) have examined among others the portrayal of gender, age, and sexual orientation in a sample of 26 animated Disney films. In their study they found that gender stereotypes are still persisting although positive portrayals emerged increasingly in later films. They detected that women's looks are appreciated more than their intellect, that they are "domestic and likely to marry", and are "helpless and in need of protection". Men in turn principally do not show emotions or use physical means to articulate them, further they are not in control of their sexuality, as well as "naturally" strong and heroic, and men have "non-domestic jobs".

So also for fairy tale films it applies that "film is a re-presentation of images, [and] is not reality but a series of shots with actors playing characters." (Nelmes 2007:221) Therefore gender images in film have a concentrated meaning, and are symbolic as well as intensely charged – they have "super-powered meaning" (Nelmes 2007:221) due to the performance of the female and male roles. This demonstrates well to what extent representation is an active process of creating meanings and which is why it is so significant.

2.2.6 The Gaze

Finally what defines gender relation as well as its representation and is essential for the analysis in this study is the theory of "the gaze". Laura Mulvey's much quoted polemical article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" published in *Screen* 1975, which has been influential for feminist film theory, introduced the concept of the "male gaze" for Hollywood cinema. For Mulvey (1975) the "pleasure gained from looking (scopophilia) is a male pleasure and 'the look' in cinema is controlled by the male and directed at the female; this is often referred to as the 'male gaze'." (Nelmes 2007:229) In her essay she discusses spectatorship and the construction of subject positions, portrayal of men and women in film, and writes about the objectification of women in relation to the "male gaze", and highlights the importance of the patriarchal viewpoint in the cinema. According to Mulvey (1975), the cinematic apparatus of mainstream Hollywood cinema unavoidably puts the spectator in a masculine and scopophilic position, i.e. making the "bearer of the look" male which automatically puts image on the screen in the position of to-be-looked-at-ness, which therefore is eroticised, as well as feminised. Further she elaborates on how (Hollywood) films underpin social patterns and how film reflects and reveals socially established interpretation of sexual difference which controls images.

Because Mulvey (1975) is exploring the mutual constitution of the movie and spectator, and “does that by examining the visual, spatial and temporal construction of narrative cinema [by which Mulvey means mainstream Hollywood cinema], and seeing how that effects both the representation of men and women in the movies and the gendering of the spectator” (Rose 2006:107) her theory and approach served as a guiding principle with which some of the gender relations in the analysed films could be elaborated on (see chapter 5.3.1 and 5.3.2).

The critique that gender is not binary and that Mulvey’s theory is built upon the binary opposition and therefore is less valid I find legitimate to some extent only for film due to the division into either “female” or “male” no matter what kind of spectrum gender has; the fact that people make sense of the binary system makes it understandable and in so far also analysable which does not necessarily postulate the belief in the gender binary. I only intend to say that by working with the concept of masculinity and femininity, it is necessary to accept that gender is seen in a certain way, and that one does not work without the other. One concept is only possible with its demarcation from the other. It is like analysing a concept one does not believe in but that still exists as a concept regardless of one’s belief in it. And as long as there is the idea of people being divided into beings that are either “female” or “male” in the portrayal and understanding of human beings, one can analyse it as such, even though one might not agree with the model.

3 Methods

The main focus of the present study examines fairy tale in film with particular interest in gender representation; the leading questions are how the fairy tale is represented in the medium film, and primarily how gender images are presented or have changed therein? Therefore the data will consist of film as well as literary text of fairy tale books although the literary text will serve more as starting point and reference. Seeing that fairy tales are a part of popular culture and carrier of meaning which shape everyday lives and in that respect also help form a certain value system, they constitute an essential part of conveyance of norms and standards, and everyone's perceptions/ideas (cf. Mader 2008). The fairy tale as literary text will be discussed in order to have a lead to go on in view of it being the basis of film adaptations. And seeing that films also are part of popular culture I find it appealing to see and in this case analyse fairy tales from more than one perspective, i.e. through a different medium than literature bearing in mind that film is a broad media to reach a majority of people in "society" today. The choice fell on "Snow White" due to the gender aspects I had in my mind, concerning (portrayal of) beauty, femininity/masculinity, and the set of values regarding these. As the story of "Snow White" revolves around beauty ("Mirror Mirror, on the wall, who is fairest of them all?"), I deemed this specific tale to be applicable for my research.

3.1 Literary Source – Why Grimm?

The Brothers Grimm version(s) of "Sneewittchen" or "Schneewittchen" ("Snow White") are not the oldest let alone only version of this story; tales with similar motifs date farther back. There are other versions with the same motifs for example "Richilde" in *Volkmärchen der Deutschen* from 1782 by Johann August Musäus (cf. Rölleke 2007:134) or "La Schiavetta" ("The Young Slave"), a story out of Giambattista Basile's *Lo Cunto de li Cunti* (*The Tale of Tales*) which is also known as *Il Pentamerone* (*The Pentameron*), published 1634-1636 (cf. Bacchilega 1997:29ff). Then there are comparatively newer retellings for example Angela Carter's "The Snow Child" in *The Bloody Chamber* from 1979, or Neil Gaiman's short story "Snow, Glass, Apples" published in *Smoke and Mirrors* in 1998, or Tanith Lee's book *White as Snow* from 2000, to mention only a few here (a more extensive overview of the written versions will be given in chapter 4).

So the question is why I am referring to the Grimm text and not any other. The reason is that it is the best-known version, as well as a source for most adaptations and retellings², or as Maria Tatar (2010:57) states, “The Grimms’ *Children’s Stories and Household Tales* has transformed itself from a record of local culture into a global archive” and “came to establish itself as the authoritative source of tales disseminated across many cultures [...]”. Since the Grimm brothers published more than one version of their *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (*Children’s Stories and Household Tales*), it is again necessary to demarcate different versions for reference purposes: There is the text from 1810 which is also known as the Ölenberg manuscript; it exhibits diverse variants of the “Snow White” tale, i.e. alternative beginnings as well as endings. It is also the only version by the Grimms that tells the story of Snow White’s birth mother (as opposed to the Evil Queen or *Stepmother* developed and used in later tellings) coming to despise and envy her child for being more beautiful than herself. The published versions after the Ölenberg manuscript are quite similar although they may differ from each other a little but not in the essentials, i.e. the structure of the story and motifs stay the same (the variations of the Grimms’ literary text will be discussed in more detail in subchapter 4.1 Written Text). These later versions are the ones that are (still) found in fairy tale books today, and therefore the ones that people are acquainted with. For this reason such a version is used for this study (a synopsis of it is given in subchapter 4.1).

3.2 Sampling of Films

Having decided upon research questions and topic, the assessment of which films to analyse had to be made. I decided on *qualitative/theoretical sampling* (cf. Atteslander 2010) where I pick those films out of the many of which I think that they are most suitable to illustrate my line of argumentation.

In order to choose films applicable for the present study I first watched films that had “Snow White” as a topic. To be sure not to leave out any major films, I was searching for “Snow White” films on the internet on the following sites: www.imbd.com, as well as on Wikipedia, which served as a reference points and were used to crosscheck information. In the first round of watching the films I was making notes for ease of reference and comparison later on.

² See opening credits of Disney’s *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* which clearly references that the story is adapted from Grimms’ Fairy Tales, or the *Snow White and the Huntsman* script (URL2) which claims to be inspired by the Brothers Grimm as well. In *Mirror Mirror* there is a “Grimm” reference in the closing credits when one of the dwarfs by the name of Grimm is said to have written a book of children’s stories.

After having watched all the “Snow White” screen adaptations I could find³, different kinds of Snow White films were made out and could be distinguished, in the following way: I divided them into three different categories (see Table 1). Most of the productions fall into category 1; they are a retelling of the well-known story as a fairy tale with possible twists in the plot, stretches to the story, or altogether different as well as new elements, e.g. *Mirror Mirror* (USA 2012), *Snow White and the Huntsman* (USA 2012), *Snow White: A Tale of Terror* (USA 1997), *Snow White: The Fairest of Them All* (USA 2001), *Snow White* (USA 1987), *Schneewittchen* (GDR 1961), or Disney’s *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (USA 1937).

Other films (category 2) again are a “modern” retelling of the story either with a change in context (for instance with the same motifs of a young girl and semi-orphan with seven helpers in an urban setting) while the story is still orientated towards the “old” fairy tale, or yet an utterly transformed telling of a tale that was merely inspired by the fairy tale, examples for this are: *Blancanieves* (ESP/BEL/FRA 2012), *Sydney White* (USA 2007), or *Snow White* (CHE/AUT 2005), or a reappraisal and new workup of the material such as in *Miroir mon Amour* (2012).

The last category 3, are films that only make use of the name or distort it and make the story into something quite different although some might use objects or motifs out of the fairytale, i.e. mirror, apple, dwarfs, etc. Examples for this category are porn, or sequels, or parodies, such as the German *7 Zwerge: Männer allein im Wald* (*7 Dwarfs: Men Alone in the Wood*) from 2004 and its sequel from 2006, or horror movies such as *The Snow White* (THA 2010) which have nothing at all or very little to do with the familiar story of the “Snow White” tale.

³ A chart of the “Snow White” film adaptations that were watched is listed in Appendix A (Chart 1). The listing in this study is by no means exhaustive.

Table 1 List of distinguished categories (*films chosen for analysis)

Category 1 – Retelling as Fairy Tale	Country	Year
<i>Grimm's Snow White</i>	USA	2012
<i>*Snow White and the Huntsman</i>	USA	2012
<i>*Mirror Mirror</i>	USA	2012
<i>Schneewittchen</i>	Germany	2009
<i>Snow White: The Fairest of Them All</i>	USA	2001
<i>Snow White: A Tale of Terror</i>	USA	1997
<i>Schneewittchen und das Geheimnis der Zwerge</i>	Czechoslovakia	1992
<i>Snow White</i>	USA	1987
<i>Schneewittchen</i>	GDR	1961
<i>Schneewittchen</i>	West Germany	1955
<i>*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i>	USA	1937
<i>Snow White</i>	USA	1916
Category 2 – Retelling of Fairy Tale Material		
<i>Blancanieves</i>	ESP/BEL/FRA	2012
<i>Miroir mon Amour</i>	FRA	2012
<i>Sydney White</i>	USA	2007
<i>Snow White</i>	CHE/AUT	2005
<i>Happily Ever After</i>	USA	1990
<i>Snow-White</i>	USA	1933
Category 3 – Parodies and/or “Name Borrowing”		
<i>Snow White: A Deadly Summer</i>	USA	2012
<i>The Snow White</i>	Thailand	2010
<i>7 Zwerge: Der Wald ist nicht genug</i>	Germany	2006
<i>7 Zwerge: Männer allein im Wald</i>	Germany	2004
<i>Coal Black and de Sebben Dwarfs</i>	USA	1943

Having obtained an overview of the range of films and having divided them up thus, I decided to only use films from category 1 because they are closest to the literary text and therefore most relevant and fit best for the case of this study. Other criteria for the choice of films are the range of people I assumed they could reach as well as their contemporariness.

At the starting point of my research I was thinking of whether or not to also take television films into consideration or only to work with cine films. Regarding telefilms, there are a few contemporary U.S. produced television series which I find interesting to look at, but in the end I decided to disregard them in view of the already extensive choices that presented themselves with only cine films included. Further I was considering taking silent films and short films into account (there is at least one short film from 1961 that tells the whole story of Snow White as in a fairy tale book) but I decided against it due to the above stated consideration and reason regarding the representativeness of cine films. Also silent and short films besides not being recent they cannot be measured well known, as for telefilms although they might be more current, they also lack the range of influence and coverage of mainstream Hollywood productions.

Since for my intentions for this research the use of only the newest films was considered to be best, this led the choice to fall on U.S. American productions. The motivation for this is their novelty and their recent development, as it is my interest to find out how gender representations and transformations of the fairy tale material are developing and changing contemporarily in the fairy tale films. But there was more to my decision than only the “up-to-date-ness” of the films; that is rather few changes regarding the field of attention of the study in the years from 1916 to 1997 in the U.S. American films have been found. As for the European productions (there are a lot of films on fairytales made in former East Germany) – although there are newer ones – these are produced more for television and are a mere retelling of the well-known story. The European material did furthermore not seem to be applicable for my research because most of them simply are newly adapted films of older films which are all very much like the Grimms’ literary text versions, told in the old manner and with no changes to characters.

Even though Walt Disney’s *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* from 1937 is from almost a century ago it was picked for analysis and as base material due to its renownedness and prominence; it is the version that many filmmakers have been exposed to because of the “powerful marketing and distribution of all products by the Disney Corporation” and thus are more prone to react or make reference to (cf. Zipes 2010). Or as Greenhill and Matrix (2010) state Disney’s versions “have become the modern source text with which any newer adaptations must engage” (as is the Grimms’ versions for literary text as well as screen adaptations). Seeing that the focal point should be more on the degree of (contemporary)

familiarity rather than squeeze the research into a chosen time frame, Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was chosen to be the initial point for analysis.

Additional to the Disney film two more films were selected that make the best examples so as to properly underline my reasoning. In other words films that have scenes which best bring out the beauty aspects and the notion of femininity and masculinity. Another point that made the decision easily fall on Hollywood productions as opposed to European productions was the fact that after having reread all the different versions of the literary texts again I realised how much I only remembered parts of different film versions – and rather U.S. American than others. Based on this cause alone I find it interesting to concentrate on the U.S. productions because they (after all this time) still are (more) present in my mind. I did remember one German film version where the Evil Stepmother has to dance in the iron shoes until she drops dead (as is what happens in the Grimm text) but other versions (U.S. American ones) where the Queen was somehow connected to her Magic Mirror and dies with its destruction seemed to have been more stuck in my memory. I have on these accounts chosen the newest “Snow White” films that came out in 2012, i.e. *Mirror Mirror*, and *Snow White and the Huntsman*.

3.3 After the Sampling – Coding Procedure

The next step was to select scenes I want to analyse from each film. I have watched the three films several times and coded them separately at first. Later on I looked through the codes of each film to find codes that were similar and could be combined. The coding process was based on theories of Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin and thus based on *Grounded Theory* (cf. Strauss and Corbin 1996). *Grounded Theory* is a qualitative research method or methodology that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived theory of a phenomenon. The coding thereby is a procedure, which breaks down, conceptualises and eventually reassembles the data again. There are three types of this method, although they cannot be clearly isolated. These are: open coding, axial coding and selective coding (cf. Strauss and Corbin 1996). Open coding is a process of breaking up, of comparing and examining the data. This is the first basic analytical steps to rename and categorise certain phenomena. Here the comparison and formulating of questions which are used to process the material are important as an analytical technique. The things that can be coded are single images, words, sentences, sequences etc.; the key is the allocation of codes to denote passages or scenes. Open coding breaks up the data, while axial coding connects

them again. During axial coding subcategories are related to each other. Open and axial coding are inseparable, and researchers commonly use both forms of coding as well as work inductively and deductively at the same time. This means that established the connections between the data are established and verified continuously and then these need to be confirmable by the data. By selectively coding recurring patterns and categories were identified and then developed further (cf. Strauss and Corbin 1996).

I used QDA Miner 4 Lite to tag and code specific scenes through. The content of the 3 films was coded for distinctions to each other and to the literary text, for gendered characteristics, for gendered behaviour by itself as well as between characters. Questions that were kept in mind during the process were for example: How is gender performance portrayed in Snow White films? How are fairy tales and aspects in fairy tales – for instance beauty – (re)presented? What can be compared/contrasted? How did the story line and content change?

Various themes emerged that were adjudged influencing the gender image of women and men, i.a. the concept of “love” in fairy tale, appearances and looks, assigned attributes to men and women in general, abilities and deficiencies, the indispensable rescuing, the rivalry between Snow White and her (step)mother, who “owns” the gaze. These themes were developed also based on or harmonised with the works of Milestone and Meyer (2012) who presented three themes in their research which are still dominating gender images: sex(uality) and relationships, the body and physical appearance, and work and home (see subchapter 2.3.4 above for details).

3.4 Analysis

The qualitative (and descriptive) case study of fairy tale reframing, albeit primarily gender representation in fairy tale films is the main focus of this research, will be illustrated by the example of Disney’s *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* from 1937, *Mirror Mirror* (USA 2012), and *Snow White and the Huntsman* (USA 2012). Hence subject to analysis is also the Grimms’ literary text as of 1812, because as explained above the texts after said time did not much change much in the essentials anymore; the Grimms’ “Schneewittchen” was only needed as orientation and starting point for the main analysis of the films. This also means that the fairy tale book(s) was (were) mainly examined for the aspects of the study dealing with reframing; the text was evaluated on a structural level to find out the similarities and

changes of what of the story was transferred from book to screen. Thereafter the films were analysed.

Film is part of (mass) media and thus popular culture (cf. Boyer 2012, Kellner 2015, Milestone and Meyer 2012). “Media texts construct meanings through the use of language and images.” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:4) The medium film as (cultural) text (cf. Dines and Humez 2015) is therefore data for analysis. Consequently the method employed was a content analysis approach merged with textual analysis with emphasis on feminist film critique which uses a semiotic approach to examine and reveal gender portrayals as well as gender roles, and assess changes and different depictions in and from the films:

Film sequences that are analysed were chosen by subject after having watched the films several times; the subjects had to occur in fairy tale (film), as well as exhibit a gendered pattern that could be distinguished, for example the heroic rescue that is usually executed by the male protagonist in the story. Further what was looked at were traits in general that are attributed to the various characters; i.e. whether they feature a more traditionally “feminine” or “masculine” behaviour. The portrayal of the characters themselves is also examined: the role of the Queen (as evil, female, [step]mother), the role of the prince/huntsman as partner of Snow White, of Snow White herself, and of the dwarfs.

To make sense of the various scenes after having developed the coding guideline and subsequently categories is the need for closer and different level of analysis. There are many methods of scientific examination of film and what they have in common is the systematic approach that enables to break down the film in its structure to further study its particular components and features, as to have a way to present arguments in a comprehensible and well founded manner (cf. Faulstich 1988:11). Film analysis facilitates an analytical and reflective handling of interpretation of data on the level of content as well as meaning (cf. Faulstich 1995:56f). Further “[s]emiotic analysis can be connected with genre criticism [...] to reveal how the codes and forms of particular genres construct certain meanings” (Kellner 2015:12). This is of use regarding the fairy tale film so as to attain distinction of its gender representation. Although a “semiotic analysis would also include study of the strictly cinematic and formal elements of a film [...]” (Kellner 2015:13), which would imply film techniques such as shots, lighting, cuts, focusing, montage, ratio, frame etc. this was not included in this study. Despite the belief that the incorporation of such techniques would enhance the gendered message of the scenes, in this case they are not necessary to make the

gendered images visible and would due to the vastness of the technique instead of helping to gain conspectus of the subject make it less clear. Therefore a sequence protocol which would be needed for compositional interpretation and would include film techniques was not deemed necessary.

Hence the combined approach comprises of content analysis for inventory purposes while semiotics was applied to provide more depth to the found out topics, as well as illustrate the results (cf. van Zoonen 2006:86). Summing it up the study is divided into different themes that were identified through coding and categorising; they were sorted depending on occurrence in the “Snow White” story as well as significance to gender representation and relation. First the selected scenes for each theme were described as to make plain what the scene comprises of and what the occurrences of the scene in question are. Then the film text was dissected for gendered representation of men and women. So after the delineation of the scene, the essence of same film sequence is analysed in regard to gender images and representation, whereby the chosen set of theories (discussed in the preceding chapter) have been incorporated for the purpose of analytical clarity and comprehensibility.

4 Snow White's Story

“Snow White” is a fairy tale that is well known, not least because Walt Disney made it so popular with his adaptation of the tale in 1937 (cf. Zipes 1999 and 2010). Other than Disney's version of the fairy tale the best-known version for books remains the one by the Brothers Grimm (cf. Tatar 2010, Zipes 1997 and 1999). But there are over hundreds of oral versions of the tale collected in the Americas, Europe, and Africa (cf. Jones 1990).

The story of “Snow White” has undergone many retellings and changes but the version as it is known today and also the version that is used as a reference is a Brothers Grimm version. Mostly those are quite similar and are geared to the Grimm version from after 1810. For an overview of the “Snow White” tales and storybooks I have gathered and examined, see Table 2. The first version of the tale that was published by the Brothers' Grimm in their anthology from 1810 is also known as the Ölenberg manuscript. But there are much older accounts of the fairy tale that have the same as the Grimms' version derived from oral tradition. The different tellings from oral tradition are that which influenced what would later become the established story of the “Snow White” in the Grimm collection that we know today (cf. Jones 1990, Zipes 2006, and Bacchilega 1997).

Table 2 Different editions of Grimms' “Snow White” that were used as reference text

Title of fairy tale and name of anthology	year published
“Schneeweißchen. Schneewitchen.”, in <i>Brüder Grimm. Kinder- und Hausmärchen: Die handschriftliche Urfassung von 1810</i>	2007
“Sneewittchen.”, in <i>Kinder- und Hausmärchen gesammelt durch die Brüder Grimm: Kleine Ausgabe von 1858</i>	1985
“Schneewittchen und die sieben Zwerge”, in <i>Das goldene Buch der Märchen und Geschichten</i>	1978
“Snowdrop”, in <i>Tales from Times Past</i>	1977
“Schneewittchen”, in <i>Märchenbuch: Eine Sammlung der schönsten Märchen aus aller Welt</i>	1964
“Schneewittchen”, in <i>Kinder- und Hausmärchen</i>	n.d.

Two tales that date further back than the Grimms' "Snow White" are for instance the ones by Musäus and Basile of which there will be a short account given here: "Richilde" by Musäus tells the story of a count and a countess in times of the crusades. The couple after a long period of barrenness have a child named Richilde. Shortly before the countess dies she gives her beautiful daughter a Magic Mirror that she should consult in times of need. While she mourns her mother, she forgets about the Mirror. But after some time the first question she has for the Mirror is "Spiegel blink, Spiegel blank, Goldner Spiegel an der Wand, Zeig mir an die schönste Dirn in Brabant" (Gleaming Mirror, shining Mirror, Golden Mirror on the wall, show me the fairest maid in Brabant)⁴ whereupon the mirror shows her her own reflection which makes her very happy. She has many suitors who court her but she cannot decide which makes her asks the mirror for the second time to show her the most beautiful man in Brabant. On this the mirror shows her count Gombald who is happily married but she does not want any other man to be her groom. As the count hears of this he abandons his pregnant wife who gives birth to Bianca and dies. Count Gombald takes Bianca and let servants take care of her in one of his castles and marries Richilde. Soon he regrets repudiating his wife and leaves Richilde and makes his way to the Holy Land to do penance but he dies on the way there. Meanwhile many new suitors court Richilde and she questions her Mirror again who the fairest maid in Brabant was and the Mirror shows her Bianca who she soon finds out is her stepdaughter. She attempts to murder her three times with a poisoned pomegranate, a soap, and a letter. Bianca is put in a coffin with a glass window and wakes up or can be revived every time. The last time the young count Gottfried revived her and makes his way to Richilde to employ a ruse – he arrives at Richilde's castle and Richilde has eyes for the handsome Gottfried only who pretends to want to marry her. On the wedding day a child comes and tells the story of his loved one being murdered by her jealous mother. Gottfried at this asks Richilde what the punishment for such a mother would be and with that enunciates her own verdict: she has to dance in fiery iron shoes. Bianca and Gottfried marry and Richilde's feet are healed and she has to spend the rest of her life locked away and in penitence. (cf. Musäus 1854:48-68, and see URL5 and URL6)

"La Schiavetta" ("The Young Slave") by Basile in turn, tells the story as follows: Lilla, the baron's young sister, swallows a rose petal to win a bet and finds herself pregnant; the fairies help her conceal her condition, and then bestow gifts on baby Lisa. On her way to bless the child, one of the fairies trips and curses her instead, declaring that when Lisa turns

⁴ My own translation.

seven her mother will leave a comb in the girl's hair and she will die. After the child does die, her mother entrusts the child's body, contained in seven glass coffins, to her brother and then dies of grief. After some time, the baron's wife discovers the girl, who has kept grown as the glass coffins lengthen. Thinking this beautiful young girl might be her husband's lover, the baroness pulls Lisa's hair: the comb falls out, and the girl awakens. Filled with jealousy the baroness beats the girl, cuts her hair, and treats her like a slave. Pitying the young girl, after having asked everyone else in the household, the baron asks her what she would like when he returns from a trip. Shortly after she receives the doll, the knife, and the piece of pumice she wanted, the baron overhears Lisa telling the doll her story and promising to kill herself with the knife she has already sharpened if she gets no answer from the doll. Recognising her to be his niece, the baron sends his evil wife away and marries Lisa to a good husband. (cf. Basile 1932:192-196, and Bacchilega 1997:29f)

Still the version that is told and best-known (in literature) until today is a Grimm version (cf. Bacchilega 1997, Jones 1990, and Zipes 1999). It goes roughly like this: It is winter and a Queen wishes for a daughter, soon after that she is with child and gives birth to a child, white as snow, red as blood, and with black hair. Not long after childbirth she dies and the King takes a new wife within the year; this woman was beautiful but very vain and overbearing, and could not bear for anyone to be more beautiful than she was. Years went by and Snow White [or Snow Drop or Little Snow White in some versions] turns 7 years old and now when the Queen asks her Mirror it would answer that Snow White was 'more fair' than she. This, the Queen could not abide and was furious – she calls the huntsman and gives him the order to kill Snow White and tells him to bring her lungs and liver as a token. The huntsman takes Snow White into the forest and is about to plunge his knife into her heart when Snow White pleads with him and begs him to let her go which he does because she is so beautiful but also he does so with a relieved heart. And so he kills an animal (fawn or shote) in her stead. Snow White runs deeper and deeper into the forest until she comes to the dwarfs' house where she eats a little out of every plate and then falls asleep in the only bed that fits her. When the dwarfs come home they let her sleep and in the morning she tells them her story, they let her stay but she has to keep everything in order and cook for them. They also warn her not to let anyone in and beware of the Wicked Queen, who will know by now that she is with them. Indeed, the Queen finds out and sets to kill Snow White herself. Three times she tries, disguised as an old pedlar woman selling laces, combs and lastly poisoned apples with what she is (supposedly) successful. The dwarfs put her into a glass coffin and

guard her. One day a prince passes through the forest and pleads with the dwarfs to give him the coffin with the dead Snow White. They give in and while carrying the coffin the piece of the apple falls out, Snow White wakes up, the Prince takes her to his castle and they get married. The Wicked Stepmother is also invited to the wedding. At first is shocked to see that the young queen is Snow White whom she had believed dead, and then she has to dance in hot glowing iron shoes until she drops dead.

All stories (as in Table 2) that were probed, were mostly similar to each other but had small variances in it which are listed below:

- Instead of the huntsman, a servant is called
- The Wicked Queen dies because she suffocates from her wrath when she sees Snow White alive (and does not have to dance in hot iron shoes)
- Snow White is sometimes said to be afraid in the forest and sometimes not
- The animal that is killed is sometimes a boar piglet and at other times a fawn
- In some the Prince would plead with the dwarfs for the coffin, in others he would offer them whatever they wanted first
- Distinctions in descriptions and details (e.g. Snow White is to be said a thousand times fairer, and in others ten thousand times)

The first Grimm version from 1810 for which it must be said that there are more than one version from that manuscript in Jacob Grimm's notes (cf. Rölleke 2007), contains subsequent differences to the version outlined above:

- The Queen wishes for a child and gets her wish; white, red and black-eyed (Snow White is blonde here)
- The Queen does not die giving childbirth or after
- The Queen lives to see her daughter growing up and takes against Snow White after she surpasses her own beauty
- The Queen herself (as opposed to transferring the deed to a third party in form of a huntsman or servant) takes Snow White out into the forest, bids her cut off roses for her and drives off in her carriage and leaves her daughter in the hope that the beasts might devour her
- The dwarfs do not offer her to stay but tell her to stay and cook for them
- The apple is not cut in half but given as a whole and Snow White bites into the red and poisoned half

- The King had left earlier in the story and comes back through the forest where the dwarfs had laid down his daughter in the glass coffin
- The King comes with an entourage of skilled doctors who are able to wake up Snow White by taking her corpse and binding a rope in every corner of a room (in the other variant the dwarfs take out magical little hammers and knock 32 times and Snow White comes back to life)
- In an alternate beginning a count and countess in their carriage drive by three mounds of snow and the count wishes for a maid as white as that, then drive by three pits of blood and the count wishes for a girl as red as that, then three ravens fly pass them, and he then wishes for a girl with hair just as black. Lastly they encounter a young maiden just like he wished for and the count takes her with them. However, the countess does not like her and let her glove fall out of the window and bids the girl get it and drives off...

The most blatant differences here are that the Queen is Snow White's birthmother who tries to get rid of her daughter, and that she does on her own instead of entrusting the task to a third party. Also in the story is more focused on the relationship between the two women, and there is no "romantic" involvement in form of a prince. Snow White is nevertheless rescued by the male figure of her father or the doctors he brought with him or respectively by the dwarfs. In the alternate beginning, however, the genesis of Snow White is more emblematic and leaves much room for even more interpretation of how Snow White came into being, and the countess could again be seen as a woman who has to rival for her husband's affection with a female stranger.

Change and Reframing

The changes to the "Snow White" story did not stop with the Brothers Grimm although their version, as has been explained, is still the most common and well known. There have been relatively contemporary re-visions such as Angela Carter's "The Snow Child" in *The Bloody Chamber* from 1979 which is reminiscent of the alternate beginning of the Grimms' anthology with a countess and count, Donald Barthelme's novel *Snow White* from 1965, or Anne Sexton's poem "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" in her book *Transformations* which was first published in 1971. Other examples that deviate even more from the Grimm version are Neil Gaiman's short story "Snow, Glass, Apples" published in *Smoke and Mirrors* in 1998 which is told from the Queen's perspective, or Tanith Lee's book *White as*

Snow from 2000 a retelling that is interwoven with the story of Demeter and Persephone, or 8: *The Previously Untold Story of the Previously Unknown 8th Dwarf* by Michael Mullin from 2010. Further reworkings of the “Snow White” tale are “The Dead Queen”, and *Fables*. Robert Coover’s “The Dead Queen”, originally from 1973 published in *A Child Again* in 2005, tells the story in flashbacks from the Prince’s point of view; the narrative starts just after he had married Snow White. *Fables* is a comic book series (2002-2015) written by Bill Willingham that features Snow White as one of the main characters alongside Rose Red as her sister, and many characters from other fairy tales who all live in contemporary New York City.

But there are not only new reworkings of “Snow White” as a fairy tale story but also re-contextualisations by using only some elements of the story (cf. Mieder 2009, Tatar 2010, and Preston 2004). Tatar (2010) pointed out that often what is known of fairy tales today is e.g. the “red cape” as in the Pepsi commercial with Kim Cattrall as “Little Red Riding Hood”. As Tatar (2010) and Preston (2004) have indicated for fairy tales in general, this is also the case for “Snow White”. Across popular culture there are elements of Snow White’s story that have been re-contextualised in advertisements or parodies or consumer products, or newly interpreted as a whole in novels. Examples for advertisements are such as the following: a print ad by the Portuguese organisation “Ajuda de Mãe” (“Mother’s Help”) that shows a woman, dressed in the colours of Disney’s Snow White, and seven children cluttered around her in the kitchen while she is multi-tasking (being on the phone while cooking and holding a crying toddler) – and the caption “An early pregnancy is no fairy tale”. Or Kellogg’s “All-Bran” print ad from 2008 for cereal that is captioned “More fruit than before” and is depicting a violet dressed Snow White (the same colour as the packaging of their product) with a many apples scattered in heaps around her. Another would be the hair care product manufacturer *Ghd*’s 2011 ad campaign with Katy Perry featuring Snow White. An example for a mash-up product of *Jurassic Park* (1993) with Disney’s Snow White would be a T-shirt designed by Laura Cooper (see URL4) dubbed “Velocisnow” displaying a velociraptor in Snow White’s dress saying “someday my lunch will come” hinting at Snow White’s song “Someday my Prince will come”. Whitney Avalon’s “Princess Rap Battle” published on 17 September 2014 on YouTube which has more than 104 million views (as of 17 March 2016) is another example for a contemporary interpretation. In this video the Disney female protagonists Snow White and Elsa from *Frozen* (2013) have a face-off. Snow White is critiqued for being the “weakest role model” or eating an apple that is given to her by a

stranger, or the need to be saved and kissed by a man (see lyrics of *SNOW WHITE vs ELSA: Princess Rap Battle* (Whitney Avalon ft. Katja Glieson) **explicit** in Appendix A, and URL3). Mostly in these contexts the Snow White character is newly portrayed in parts, or criticised or parodied.

Often the changes in fairy tale depend also on the translation or translator (cf. Joosen 2014) who took or takes poetic licence – for whoever tells the tale also forms it, and in the case of film the writers and directors do. This brings me to the next point of film adaptations.

5 Snow White on Screen

In this chapter the three film versions are analysed. They all are easily recognised as a “Snow White” narrative through the similar structure and plot themes albeit the variations (cf. Jones 1990); fairy tale books as well as the respective films present the protagonist (and their story and problem), the journey/adventure which leads to the problem’s solution and/or to a statement. The similar structure does not exclude the variations in the story-telling, story line, or ideas and different styles and messages which are assumed as a given. However, these particular distinctions are speculated to keep within limits. For the reason that in general the literary fairy tale that are rather short and where the characters are two-dimensional (cf. Carney 2012, and McCallum and Stephens 2000) and that films have the possibility of giving more depth to its characters depiction. There will be many scenes in the films that cannot be compared to the literary text due to the length of the films and changes in adaptation. As a result the possibility of the existence of a more complex gender portrayal which relate to the concepts discussed in Chapter 2 is more probable.

The general picture is that of the transformation of Snow White from the damsel in distress to(wards) the self-sufficient, toughened, and emancipated Snow White. In how far has the representation changed? With the help of the concepts of Doing Gender and Gender Performance discussed in Chapter 2 previously, this study should facilitate to understand the displaying of behaviour, actions, looks, and characteristics that are attributed to “masculinity” and “femininity” that can lead to a specific gender image or pattern.

Summaries of Films

All the versions that are covered could be summed up in one sentence as follows: The Queen and also stepmother of Snow White, a young beautiful princess, tries to kill the latter and in the attempt or as a result of the attempt dies.

Disney’s *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*

A book opens to tell a “Once upon a Time”-story; before the audience can dive into the animated fairy tale two written pages explain that a vain and wicked Queen fears that her lovely stepdaughter by the name of Snow White will surpass her in beauty which is why she dresses her in rags and uses her as a scullery maid. The cruel and jealous Queen also has a

Magic Mirror whom she asks every day who the fairest of all is; and as long as the answer was that the Queen is the fairest, Snow White will be safe from her cruel jealousy.

At the film's opening the Mirror tells the Queen otherwise, namely that Snow White is fairer than she. Snow White is cleaning and telling the pigeons about her wish to be found by her love when the Prince comes by, hears her voice, and climbs over the wall to see who the voice belongs to. They fall in love. The Queen witnesses the scene with the Prince and delegates the hunter to kill Snow White and to bring her the Princess' heart as proof. Out in the woods the hunter takes out his knife but does not have the heart to kill her and before telling her to run away, discloses that the Queen wants her dead. After running for a while she breaks down crying and a lot of animals come out to see what has happened and to "talk" to her. When she sees them all gathered around her she stops crying, explains her situation to them and asks them for help. Thereupon they bring her to the house of the dwarfs. She knocks but when nobody answers the door, they enter. Upon seeing how dirty the house is they start to clean up. Thereafter they go upstairs to rest. The dwarfs are working in a mine and sort out gemstones, then make their way home where they find Snow White sleeping in the bed and get to know each other. In the interim the Queen finds out that Snow White is not dead and hatches a plan to kill Snow White – she goes into the cellar and brews a potion to disguise herself as a peddler woman as not to be recognised and another to poison an apple for Snow White. The only antidote against the sleeping death is Love's First Kiss which the Queen disregards and sets out to the dwarfs' cottage. There the animals recognise her and try to drive her away but Snow White shoos them off. They run and fly to get the dwarfs – Snow White meanwhile bites into the apple. When the dwarfs finally come, they run after the Queen who tries to loosen a rock to hit the dwarfs. But then a bolt of lightning strikes the cliff she stands on and she falls to her death. The dwarfs build a glass coffin for Snow White wherein she lies until the Prince comes and kisses her. She wakes up, rides into the sunset with him and they live happily ever after.

Mirror Mirror

The audience is introduced to the story through an opening narration by the current Queen that comes to life with animated dolls to feature the telling. She tells of how a child was born to a King and Queen and after the death of that Queen, the King remarries and takes a new and beautiful wife, namely herself. The King leaves one day and is never seen again at which

Snow White is left under the care of the Queen and is confined to the castle, and the kingdom and its people are left to be mistreated with neglect and extortionately high taxes.

The story continues with Snow White's eighteenth birthday; the Queen has a financial crisis, a maid takes Snow White aside to talk to her about taking back her kingdom and how the people suffer because the Queen bleeds them dry to sustain her lavish lifestyle. All these years the Queen has kept her in the palace but this day she sneaks out to see the town for herself. On the way there she meets a prince and his squire, who were attacked by masked bandits (the dwarfs), hanging upside down a tree, stripped of their clothes, in the woods. She frees him and they go their separate ways. Meanwhile the Queen visits her Magic Mirror with whom she consults her problems. Prince Alcott after being robbed and saved is received in audience with the Queen who wants to marry him to solve her finances. On arriving, Snow White sees how come down the village and its people are and how poor they have become. In the meanwhile the Queen prepares for the ball she is organising to woo the Prince. At the ball Snow White talks to the Prince and when the Queen confronts her with party-crashing, Snow White confronts her about the state of the town and how she "runs" the kingdom. Thereupon the Queen sends out her footman to kill Snow White; however when the moment arrives he does not do so. Snow White runs deep into the woods and passes out in front of the dwarfs' house. Upon waking up she tells them her story and is allowed to stay. The Queen after having found out that Snow White is still alive tries to kill her and the dwarfs with giant puppets but Snow White cuts the strings of the marionettes and saves them all. The Prince is given a love potion by the Queen, however Snow White crashes the wedding, steals the Prince and breaks the spell by kissing him. The Queen then tries to kill her stepdaughter with the Beast that roams the forest but Snow White cuts the necklace on the beasts neck and it turns out to be her father who was under the Queen's spell. Snow White and the Prince get married – on the wedding day the aged Queen tries to give Snow White an apple (we can only assume it is poisoned) which Snow White takes, cuts out a piece and hands it to the Queen who apparently eats it because the Mirror and the house shatter and fall to pieces.

Snow White and the Huntsman

A Queen is longing to have a child and gets her wish. Few years later when Snow White is still a child, the Queen falls sick and dies. A darkness befalls the land and an army threatens the kingdom. The King destroys a bogus dark army and rescues the hostage woman whom he takes for his wife. In the wedding night she kills him and brings in her brother and a real

army with which she takes over the castle and the kingdom. Some of the Kings people – the Duke and his son William, Snow White’s playmate, amongst them – can flee but have to leave Snow White behind. Snow White is imprisoned from that time on but all believe her dead.

Ravenna, the new Queen, feeds upon others’ youth and lives to keep herself young (and beautiful). One day she consults her Mirror which tells her that she has to take Snow White’s heart to become immortal and never again have to depend on others to remain young. She sends her brother to fetch Snow White who manages to flee over the course of this. She runs into the Dark Forest, and the Queen’s men are not able to follow her. In the meantime William learns that Snow White is not dead and sets out to find her. Ravenna looks for someone who knows the Dark Forest in order find Snow White, and the Huntsman is brought to her. She strikes a bargain with him to give him back his dead wife if he brought her the runaway prisoner. So he and some other men of the Queen make their way into the forest and search for Snow White. But after finding her, the Huntsman and she flee from the others. After a while they meet eight dwarfs and being hunted by the Queen’s troop, they seek refuge in the faerie land together. However, the Queen’s men find them and the Queen’s brother as well as one of the dwarfs gets killed in the course. The rest of the group make their way to Duke Hammond’s castle. On the way there, Ravenna disguised as William gives Snow White a poisoned apple which she bites into and is dying when the Huntsman and the true William come to drive Ravenna away. William kisses the dead Snow White and they all make their way to Duke Hammond. There she lies in state and the Huntsman talks to the dead Snow White and spills his heart out to her. Then he too kisses her and leaves whereupon she awakens and goes outside. Snow White calls upon the people and prompts them to fight against Ravenna. At last she leads them into battle; they gain entry into the castle with help of the dwarfs and Snow White manages to kill Ravenna with a move the Huntsman has shown her earlier in the story. After the victory of the Duke’s army under Snow Whites lead, the kingdom blooms again and Snow White is crowned Queen.

5.1 Fairy Tale Retelling

With the changes from literary text to film the hybridisation of a new retelling can be distinguished through new combinations of elements. In this chapter some of the changes between the discussed Grimm text and the films are drawn attention to. This will be done while taking into account both, general alterations but in particular transformations that affect

the representation of gender. There are some aspects that were important in the literary text of “Snow White” which had or have a possible impact on the grasping of “gender”. As scholars have pointed out, numbered amongst these are: the sleeping of the female protagonist and with that also the passiveness of her (cf. Joosen 2004), whereby the necrophiliac portrayal of men is brought to light, or the possible reading of a narcissistic side of Snow White which can be perceived during the killing attempts of the Queen when Snow White lets herself be beguiled by being showed objects for beautification, namely the lace or the comb.

These factors completely disappeared in the films as is elucidated in the following: Firstly, the necrophiliac male protagonist is eradicated. All the films eliminated the “necrophiliac prince” who fell in love with a dead or sleeping but beautiful not altering princess. In *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* the Prince met Snow White once for a short period before looking for her in all the land to kiss her in the end; in the Queen’s book on the anti-dote page it is revealed that “Love’s First Kiss” will revive the victim of “Sleeping Death”. But the kiss itself or why the Prince actually does kiss Snow White is never explained; he simply does. Nowhere in the story is it hinted that he knew that a kiss would wake her again, and this is why it gives an odd feeling that he walks up to her and swoops down to kiss her, even though he met her before and knew her. It cannot be said of him that he fell in love with a dead woman as is the case for the Prince in Grimm’s “Snow White”. *Snow White and the Huntsman* in turn has William know Snow White from childhood which lets them bond in an even more innocent way than two adults who meet by coincidence. And Snow White’s love interest in form of the Huntsman gets to know her as well during their experiences together. These two clearly know nothing of a “redeeming kiss”, however, it seems so well established that “true love’s kiss” is what can save a life that one does not even stop to wonder why it would make someone wake up. As for *Mirror Mirror* the Sleeping Death is disposed of as a whole. Although the kiss still plays a crucial role in saving someone or breaking the Queen’s spell (the “kiss” as a means of rescuing is discussed in more detail in chapter 5.2.5 Of Rescues). Hence, with the prince not falling in love with a dead or sleeping princess anymore, there are changes in the vantage point on female passivity, which lessens the factors that support passivity for women as something desirable. Therefore also the frame to see women as victims, objects, and bodies is loosened.

Secondly, the narcissistic side of Snow White is another portion that has been left out of the films completely. The Queen does not get to outsmart Snow White twice by showcasing a lace and a comb where the interest in these two items are construed as the vain

side of Snow White, the part of her that appreciates objects for embellishment. What is left of the killing attempts is only the last one from the Grimm text, i.e. the poisoned apple.

What remained or was added and richly amplified on the other hand was the love story between the Prince and the Princess which became more meaningful; the Prince no longer only plays the role of rescuer in the very end but gains more prominence for the overall story which has an impact on the representation of the relationship between Snow White and the Prince. By letting them become acquainted or forge a friendship and let them experience different situations together offers a more balanced depiction of relationship development as well as more equal relationship between the two characters.

Regarding the general narration of the tale it can be said for *Snow White and the Huntsman* that it begins with the fairy tale formula “Once Upon a Time” which makes clear that it is a fairy tale. But due to its sombreness it gives the feeling that all that comes after is to be taken as the “real” story of “Snow White”, which is to say as “real” as Grimms’ version of it. All the threats in the story are “real” threats; the Queen, the forest, the creatures but all of it has a lot of magic in it. The Queen has mystical dark powers, the forest is called the Dark Forest and is feared by people because nobody is said to come out of it alive. And then there is also Faerie where the magical beings live which is a refuge and also a kind of regulator for the equilibrium of that world. So with that *Snow White and the Huntsman* actually takes the existent of magic or another world for granted more than *Mirror Mirror* where the forest is nothing to be afraid of because the forest is just full of trees and trees are merely wood (see scene description below), the dwarfs are “normal” folk with a job as opposed to magic healers, and fairy tales are something not to be believed but just stories that are told. With this the seriousness is taken out of the story because also here the fairy tale formula is used in the beginning to make clear that this is a fairy tale but at the same time in the story the concepts of fairy tale are reviewed and decided to be merely “children’s stories”.

What is taken up by *Mirror Mirror* is the reflecting of fairy tale on a meta-narrative level; for one the Queen who is the narrator says in the beginning of the tale, “[...] this is my story not hers [Snow White’s]”. With this statement she is drawing reference to the story of “Snow White”, brings to attention that the story already exists – positioning her version as a different one from the one that is commonly known – and that this telling is from her point of view. Another such reference to consideration about the fairy tale in this fairy tale is when

Prince Alcott rides through the forest with Renbock who utters his concerns about their safety in the forest which the Prince waves away (08:46-09:09):

R: I certainly don't like the look of these woods, Sire. If you don't mind me saying, they seem very sinister.

A: They're trees, Renbock. Trees are just wood.

R: It's not the trees I'm afraid of, Sire. There are stories of a man-eating beast inhabiting these parts.

A: It thrills my heart to no end thinking that my travelling companion still believes in fairy tales.

Consequently, this scene puts "our story" in a frame that does not see itself as a fairy tale despite of its "once upon a time" beginning which clearly denotes a fairy tale (cf. Williams 2010a). So with the Prince's statement that brings out that fairy tales are not something to be believed in and with the narration that started off unmistakably as a fairy tale, it is hinted that this film does not take itself too seriously.

One more conversation between Snow White and the Prince ties on what is expected of fairy tales (1:21:34-1:21:50):

S: You know, all the time locked up in the castle I did a lot of reading. I read so many stories where the prince saves the princess in the end.

P: Open the door. Open the door, Snow.

S: I think it's time we change that ending.

P: No, no, no, Snow. You're trying to mess with tried and true storytelling. It's been focus-grouped and it works. Just let me save you. Please open the door!

Here, Snow White sets her story as one of many and as a part of the existing stories with princes and princesses; and wanting to change the story or the ending, this extract questions the authority of fairy tale formulas. The tongue-in-cheek answer of the Prince emphasises the usual and well-known pattern of fairy tales. This scene also suggests a shift in gender pattern and in this regard is examined more closely in chapter 5.2.5 Of Rescues.

Lastly, at the end of the film all the dwarfs' "life journey", namely what they achieved or did after the story has ended is portrayed fitting to their names and character. And not by chance, the one named Will Grimm "wrote a book of fairy tales".

5.2 Gender Image Influences

There are certain characteristics that are attributed as being either male or female. To assign characteristic traits like being assertive, modest, passive, fearful, dependent, unemotional etc. to women or men is surely stereotyping and insofar problematic but it is useful to the extent of finding out whether or not these attributes are more evenly distributed for the performance of female and male characters in film, or whether they are only used to reinforce the well-established order (cf. England, Descartes, and Collier-Meek 2011, and Towbin et al. 2003). As already stated in the previous chapter, Disney's versions of fairy tale films are upholding and perpetuating the status quo. Thus, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* is elaborated on, to set a contrast to the other two films, and to make the changes or similarities of story elements, as well as shifts in gender image more visible and less obscure. Because "Snow White" is a fairy tale the structure and daily life differs from the life as "we" know it – and therefore there are areas in the tale that are covered by the discussed themes and some that are less present. One theme that dominates gender images is "Work and Home" in at least "Western" society (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012). And as there is no such thing as a "work place" in the fairy tale, or if there is, it is not very present nor is it the focus, it is to be handled a little differently; I argue that it is possible to draw a connection between "work" and "home" and the "going on and adventure" or the wanderlust and the "waiting at home" and doing chores at home that one is assigned to. Therefore within this aspect the fairy tale is comparable to the contemporary daily life and therefore the topic is representative also.

The figures' characteristics are not very differentiated and are superficial which fits the genre of fairy tales where characters are not built in a complex way and the two-dimensional types are common (cf. Carney 2012). They are divided into binaries which are mostly contrasted: there is either good or bad, beautiful or ugly, diligent or lazy etc. Being one automatically rules out being the other.

In *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* the Prince serves as the hero who brings Snow White back to life but other than that he does not seem to be of any importance quite like in the Grimms' version. And although the audience gets to see so little of him, he gets to save the day. Snow White on the other hand has plenty of characteristics to offer that are linked to the "good" kind of women and to female traits in general (cf. England, Descartes, and Collier-Meek 2011, and Baker-Sperry Grauerholz 2003); she is inter alia pure, innocent, helpless, gentle, content, diligent, and caring, has a "connection" to animals, and "housewife

skills". Through being all this Snow White qualifies as being "conventionally feminine" as discussed above (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012, and McRobbie 2000). The Queen who is to embody the "bad" type of women is evil, jealous, vain, and cruel.

Snow White in *Mirror Mirror* is also easily recognised as "good" although not as plain as her Disney forerunner. She too is humble, she is seen feeding a bird and talking to it, she is sensitive, she cries, is a moral authority, and gentle in general unless provoked. The Queen on the other hand is vain and superficial but not only that; she is also enjoying life and throwing lavish parties – she is wilful and knows what she wants. The Prince is gallant and "princely" but clumsy on the verge of stupidity, naive in his own ways (as is illustrated when he is talking to Renbock about the Queen's craziness), he is caught in clichés (about how he cannot fight girls, believes in tried and true story telling where the princess is rescued by the prince), and he is good looking.

With regards to *Snow White and the Huntsman* Snow White is gentle at heart, she is pure and has a special connection to animals and nature (as is noticeable by the magpies, the horse, trolls, fairies and all creatures in the film), she is defiant and beautiful (but needs the Huntsman to tease out the fighter in her). The Huntsman is "masculine" in a way that he is a drunk (but with an "excuse") but a good person at heart (he has a hard shell and a soft core). Ravenna is evil (with a handed reason), obsessed with beauty (for same reason), and powerful because she was weak before. Thus she is powerful out of insecurity and fear in a male environment where she is or used to be oppressed. She also inspires fear; a characteristic usually associated with men (cf. England, Descartes, and Collier-Meek 2011). William is gallant, brave, confident, good-looking, and skilled in archery; he can be seen as a prototype of a "prince".

The things that can be said to influence the gender image amongst others are not only assigned attributes for female and male figures but gendered patterns in the stories as well, such as: the resolving of the story, e.g. in marriage in the end which means that the story ends in romance, or the climactic rescuing (who is rescued by whom?), or love (who needs it or depends on it?), or the concerns with looks and appearances. In the following these themes are examined more closely.

5.2.1 The Good in Beauty

The importance of appearance and looks in media, and the relevance of “beauty” for women have been discussed above (see chapter 2.2.4.3); the value of beauty becomes apparent too, in fairy tale where most princesses or the female protagonist are described as beautiful. And if they are not thus from the beginning then at least they become so in the end, as a reward for being “good” or become “ugly” or “uglier” for being “bad” as “beauty” in fairy tales is a means of reward, punishment, protection etc. (cf. Lieberman 1972, Rowe 1979, Jarvis 2000, and Baker-Sperry and Grauerholz 2003) On the one hand there is a converse understanding of what is “good” and of what is “beautiful”; one is rewarded with “beauty” if one is “good”, and on the other hand the impression is given that if one is “beautiful” one cannot be “bad”; being “beautiful” without also being “good” will be punished in some way in the end.

In general women have been known to be reduced to their looks (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012). To be counted as beautiful in contemporary media (in North America and Europe) as a woman, one has to be young, have smooth and flawless skin, be thin yet curvy (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012) which the two newer films reflect. In this section I attempt to find out how these concepts are presented in the Snow White films, and what it means in the story (explicitly) to be beautiful (and what in the subtext).

Beautiful Are Those of Whom It Is Said

“‘Once upon a time there was a beautiful princess’ is a stylised beginning that invokes stereotypical female gender patterns” (Preston 2004), and this is also used to describe all three female heroines in the three films, in particular in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, and *Snow White and the Huntsman*, where the story starts with “once upon a time” and then the princesses are described as beautiful. In *Mirror Mirror* the Queen is the story teller and describes herself as beautiful. So in all three films “beauty” is utilised to describe a female character in the story.

Even though there is no common understanding of what beauty is, it can be assumed that we are supposed to see or at least understand Snow White and the Queen as beautiful in the context they appear in because it is said so in the narrative. In all three films we are informed about who is beautiful and therefore learn what being beautiful entails; in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* the textual prologue states that the Queen fears that Snow White’s beauty would surpass hers which leads to the conclusion that they both are beautiful. The opening narrative of *Snow White and the Huntsman* also tells us that Snow White is

beautiful, and when Ravenna is introduced, beauty is what defines her. The two films, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *Snow White and the Huntsman* have a narrator tell the audience about the Queen's or the Princess' – but definitely a woman's or a girl's – beauty. *Mirror Mirror*, however, lets the Queen tell her own and Snow White's story; and she describes herself in the beginning of the tale as beautiful, whereas she declares that Snow White must die if she, the Queen, wants to stay the most beautiful in all the land which lets the audience know that Snow White also is to be considered beautiful.

Youthfulness, Thinness & Beauty Work

Compliant with contemporary media coupling “female beauty” to the firmness and flawlessness of skin as well as thinness (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012:93-98) in *Mirror Mirror* the Queen is appalled about the idea of her having wrinkles, and it is something she can be teased with, an indication that she is bothered by the unevenness of her skin, as can be seen in the scene when she talks to her other self, i.e. her reflection in the Mirror: “I am after all merely a reflection of you. Well, not an exact reflection. I have no wrinkles.” – “[gasps] They're not wrinkles, just crinkles.” (15:45-15:58).

Although this is all told in an ironic tone, the gist of it still suggests that wrinkles are not something women wish to have. This becomes clearer in another scene in which it is displayed what is willing to do and does to be rid of her wrinkles and signs of old age; the way of how she improves and works on her looks is exhibited, as well as her attitude towards beauty and the work it involves: She stands in a bathrobe in front of a mirror, while adjusting her towel which functions as a headgear to keep away her hair.

Brighton: You look fabulous, Your Majesty!

Queen: Fabulous? I haven't even begun to get ready yet.

[...]

Maids: “The treatment is ready.”

Brighton: “Treatment? Isn't that a trifle excessive?”

Queen: “There is no such thing.”

With these words she walks into a room where she lies face up on a lounger. The treatment itself ranges from bird droppings smeared on the face, bee stings to plump up the lips, dragon fruit, rambutan, scorpion sting, snake bite, grubs etc. to clean, lift, or tighten different parts of the body. It is perceivable that the Queen is not particularly enjoying the treatment. (24:58-26:06)

Since it is noticeably portrayed that the Queen is not doing the treatment for fun, it can be said that she is taking the trouble to go through such an ordeal in order to be (more) beautiful and ready for the ball she is organising to impress Prince Alcott. The obviousness and the way in which the Queen goes on about her “treatment”, the statement that there is no such thing as excessiveness when it comes to beauty work is indicative for a norm of beauty and taken-for-grantedness of the procedure to attain or maintain it, and that it is presupposed of women to “groom” themselves. The Queen’s behaviour strengthens the sentiment that women have internalised an ideal kind of beauty and that trying to look younger, smooth-skinned, wrinkle-free and thin, in other words: beautiful. Thus beauty work and what makes one get closer to an ideal of youth and thinness “have come to be accepted as everyday and commonplace behaviours that [is considered a] ‘natural’ part of good grooming and go unquestioned” (Tiggemann and Hodgson 2008). Moreover it also puts an emphasis on the impression that this (beauty as well as maintaining beauty) is a woman’s domain.

Further to the quality of skin, thinness is emphasised. When in another scene she is preparing for her wedding: The Queen is standing between two rods while being helped by maids to wedge herself into a corsage almost too small for her:

Queen [agonised expression and voice]:

“Must .. look .. glorious! This is everyone’s special day.”

Maid: “Well how special can it be? You’ve been married 5 times.”

Queen: “Quiet! ..Happy place, happy place, happy place...” (1:07:36-1:07:54)

As Milestone and Meyer (2012) report of studies that examined how women are represented in connection with looks and appearance in the media which as well includes not only what is seen as beautiful but also what women should *do* to attain such beauty, or what they should do in order to be perceived as beautiful. Beauty in the end is merely a tool to get *the* or just a(ny) man. These aspects are also reflected in the films. Ultimately, the Queen wants to “sweep the kid [Prince] right off his feet” (20:12-20:16), to make him wants to marry her. There again “looking good” in the end means “looking good for men” which emphasises the correlation of women’s appearance with romance.

In *Snow White and the Huntsman* the importance of youth and firm skin is also stressed; although beauty here is uphold by magic. Ravenna is kept young and beautiful by sucking out the youth of other women leaving them grey haired, wrinkled – old. Old age and its implications, i.e. having a lined face and shrivelled skin, therefore are portrayed as

undesirable. Consequently youth or looking young is of essence to be seen as beautiful which is compliant with the supposition of feminine beauty that to be beautiful one has to if not *be* young, then at least be or *look* youthful (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012:98). Taking this thought further it means that one cannot be beautiful when one is old, especially if one is a woman – men’s age is not an issue in the film at all. This gets plainer in the film when Ravenna tells the King that men exchange older women for young(er) ones in a generalising way, as this is what has happened to her. In their wedding night she says to him, “I was ruined by a King like you once. I replaced his Queen; an old woman. And in time, I too, would have been replaced. [...] When a woman stays young and beautiful forever – the world is hers.” (7’07”-7’48”)

Hence getting old does not seem to have the same meaning for men as it does for women; men do get older but somehow it does not seem to matter. It could be argued that it is like this because beauty is seen as a feminine trait for one thing and further that “beauty” and looks are not something that men have to care about in themselves. So here again, “feminine beauty” is linked to men which in turn relates it back to romance. Moreover, it is indicated that being beautiful (and young) is a necessity for women, as it is a decisive factor by which they “get chosen” by men.

The following extract of a scene amplifies the connection between flawless skin and beauty: When Snow White comes out of the forest with the Huntsman she comes across a group of women and girls, all with scarred faces. Later one of them explains to her, “Our scars protect us. Without beauty we are worthless to the Queen.” (52’19”-52’23”) This elucidates that to be beautiful it is not enough to be young; the skin needs to be without blemish. The juxtaposition of scars and beauty like this signifies that scars make women unbeautiful.

Beautification, in *Snow White and the Huntsman*, does not seem necessary because the Queen’s beauty, which is to be understood as flawless, wrinkleless, and white skinned, is maintained by magic and by sucking youth out of other people, leaving them behind old and wrinkled. Despite that fact, she is still seen to be taking a supposedly rejuvenating bath in some sort of white liquid. (15’50”-16’10”) Regardless of the necessity of it she is portrayed to take care of her body which enhances the connection between femininity and beauty (care) even more.

Outside Vanity – Inner “True” Beauty

In all three films the outer and inner beauty is addressed. The looks of Snow White in the Disney film are marked by red cheeks, red lips and soft features of face for Snow White and the same for the Queen only with edged features. But there is an extension to looks – what matters also is the kind of behaviour that makes one (more) beautiful. Already when the storybook opens in the beginning the two (kinds of) beauties are contrasted; while Snow White is described as “lovely little princess” the Queen is described as “vain and wicked”. Bearing in mind that often in fairy tales “beauty” is equated with “goodness” (cf. Jarvis 2000, and Baker-Sperry and Grauerholz 2003), this adds to the implication of beauty not only being a superficial trait but also a characteristic. For example in Disney’s version the juxtaposition of the “definitive good” vs. “the ultimate evil” can be seen right in the beginning. Both are described as beautiful but one as “vain and proud” whereas the other as “sweet and lovely” which then can be seen as a form of “beauty” that has nothing to do with looks but with the figures’ characteristics (see also Figure 1).

Figure 1 Good vs. Evil



This notion can also be grasped in *Mirror Mirror* where the Queen describes herself as “beautiful, intelligent, [and] strong” (02:33-02:38), and throughout the story her obsession with beauty is emphasised. She is, however, not described as beautiful by outsiders but as vain, and even her Mirror-self instead of using the term beauty, says that she is supporting her “vanity” (15:33-15:35). The way the Queen is portrayed in dealing with beauty (as was discussed above) suggests that she is beautiful but the fact that she only gives value to that makes her vain. And in the end she has to pay for her vanity – and is destroyed; she used magic unwisely to support her vanity and is punished for this with rapid ageing.

The same goes for *Snow White and the Huntsman*; here beauty is divided into the superficial beauty and the “true” beauty. The first time “beauty” is mentioned in the narrative is when we are told that Snow White is “adored throughout the kingdom, as much for her defiant spirit as for her beauty”. (01:35-01:39) With this positioning of words – even though it might only be a subtle distinction – the defiant part of her character was declared first, and then it is stated that she is beautiful. Further an attribute is put adjacent to an outside feature, and in that is also contrasting the two. Later Snow White’s mother tells her when she brings home an injured magpie that she possesses “rare beauty” and puts her hand on Snow White’s chest, saying “in here” indicating her heart (02:24-02:29). Thus the prospect of inner beauty is brought up; and with that also the value of it which leads to the conclusion that value is set by “inner beauty”; this set of value is furthermore corroborated by mentioning her “defiant spirit” which is also an inner value as opposed to the superficiality of looks. Ravenna, as opposed to Snow White is not really talked about as anything except for being beautiful. When Ravenna’s mother talks to her about beauty it is about looks alone.

In all three films beauty is not directly contrasted with ugliness but with “real” beauty which is to be understood as a “good” characteristic trait. All evil is beautiful as well, albeit lacking decency, goodness, humbleness, appreciation, and then by being punished, the evil stepmothers grow old [read ugly] and die. This involuntarily reinforces the notion of being beautiful as equal to being “good”. Further not obviously caring about being beautiful is highlighted by the Snow White character in all films; she is not being aware of her own beauty. She is described as “beautiful” by others but never shows the slightest inclination of caring much about their looks or seen being concerned about it. The Queen figure on the other hand worries about this minor matter and strives after the status of being the most beautiful. This concurs with Milestone and Meyer’s (2012) findings that women should look “natural” that is to say “naturally beautiful” which includes youth, and that they should just

look beautiful but not do anything for that look or at least not too obviously. This is comparable with vanity in the films which involves much occupation with beautification which is sanctioned as well as when beautification becomes too apparent in the media.

Beauty – Power & Protection

The link between beauty and power reinforces the well established connection between beauty and femininity. Beauty is a woman's business and also her refuge, and sometimes life-saver. As already seen in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* where Snow White is often spared or trusted through her beauty which confirms the understanding that if one is beautiful one cannot be "bad". In *Snow White and the Huntsman* the advantages of beauty are forthrightly addressed. At one point the Mirror tells Ravenna that the reason her powers wane is due to another (Snow White) who has come of age and is now fairer than Ravenna (20:13-20:23) which clearly associates beauty with power. Further, the story of how Ravenna's mother tells her that her beauty is the only thing that can save her and is also her only hope it is told in a flashback: "Your beauty is all that can save you, Ravenna. This spell will make your beauty your power and protection." (56:42-56:50)

We can see how her beauty protects her also when the King fights the bogus army and takes her as his wife without any suspicion. "So enchanted by her beauty was the King that he forgot for the first time his broken heart. And the very next day she would become his wife." (05:29-05:39) Later in the monologue in bed with the King she says, "When a woman stays young and beautiful forever – the world is hers." (07:43-07:48) Although this portrayal strengthens the "beauty as saviour" idea it can also be read as a critique – in a manner that Ravenna criticises how she turned out to be, that is: what men made her to be. This is not a very emancipated way, and emphasises the outside pressure of how one thinks that one is perceived by others (in this case men). Besides, this is a view that would mean that one is not taking responsibility at all but only pin it on men – although it is understandable because she exists in a patriarchal structure and has to acquiesce. So in this case again, "looking good" is a "looking good for men" but not to be linked back to romance, as usually is the case (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012:94) but to power. It nevertheless leads back to the frame of patriarchy; Ravenna does use her beauty actively but only to manipulate men and this once to be more powerful than the male oppressor. So actively utilising the good looks to get something is again only a reaction to what men could do, and the active usage of one's beauty as a weapon becomes the act of passive protection once more.

Talk of Beauty in Men

How men are described in looks is prominent rather more by its absence than anything else. From the beginning of the films women are displayed as beautiful, and remarks are made about their appearance and looks while none of the men are described regarding their looks in any way, except for the Prince or the Baron in *Mirror Mirror*. The men in the stories are never seen to be occupied with their appearance; they are not unhandsome but none of them are bothered about their looks. Further, they are not mentioned to be good-looking or otherwise which also is the case in Grimms' fairy tales (cf. Baker-Sperry and Grauerholz 2003). They are, however, aware of women's looks and appearance and remark upon it (this will be reviewed in more detail in the next subchapter). Because *how* women look is much more often remarked upon, "beauty" continues to be linked to femininity. It, moreover, strengthens the notion of the "male gaze" because women are looked at more and consequently are and stay the object of the spectacle. By depicting women to care about their looks while men do not, divides the realms even more and again emphasises the link between beauty and femininity.

In *Snow White and the Huntsman* men were punished in two cases for letting themselves be confounded by beauty or by looks and looking. Ravenna's brother when he should have brought Snow White to his sister delighted himself with looking and touching Snow White in her cell which gave her the opportunity to injure him and break free (21'58"-23'36"). And the King is punished with death for falling for mere beauty. But not only does this put the King in a bad light, it can also highlight the "badness" of/in women.

Summing up, it can be said that *Mirror Mirror* and *Snow White and the Huntsman*, portray "beauty" in women as essentially connected to youth, and flawless, unwrinkled skin. Time consuming beautification is something that is taken for granted for women and makes the work around beauty seem "natural" as well as worth going through; the implicitness with which women operate to become (more) beautiful by making themselves look young(er) or have smooth(er) skin reinforces the "naturalness" of beautification and of "feminine beauty" itself, which makes "beauty" a woman's domain. By further relating the need or want to be beautiful to "be beautiful for men", and to get men's interest, links women's looks automatically back to romance, and when it does not link back to romance it still is linked to relationships to men. Youthfulness as well as beauty are crucial for the representation and identification of women only which makes it hard to see women beyond the matter of looks.

5.2.2 Mirror – Who Is Looking (Back)?

Appearances were discussed in the last section. Now beauty is said to be in the eye of the beholder, and this section is to find out who this beholder is, and whose appearance is evaluated and by whom. The frame in “Snow White” is one of a mirror and woman or mother and Queen who is obsessed with beauty. There is the inescapable mother-daughter relationship and consequently the contraposition of age and youth. The mirror or looking glass plays an essential role in the tale of Snow White; it is telling the questioner the “truth” about their appearance, more precisely: who is the fairest of all/in the land. Its significance lies in the notion of the gaze. The question that arises is: Is it the person who looks into the mirror who evaluates the self and what they see? Or is the looker seeing what other people (also) see? And then who are these other people? Or is it even the question whether the looker is seeing what they *think* other people are seeing? As already said in the theory section 2.2.6 The Gaze, Mulvey’s view on the “male gaze” approach is used only as a starting point, and the question is raised whether or not there is a break with the male gaze, and what the gaze – whomever it belongs to – reveals about the representation of gender relations in the films examined. There has been a shift towards men being the object to be looked at as well. As Milestone and Meyer (2012:121) assert, drawing on Nixon, “[t]he focus on men’s bodies and appearance entails objectification and sexualisation; men have become sexual objects to be looked at, judged and desired for their beauty and aesthetics”.

In Bacchilega’s study (1997), she already discusses the questions of “[w]hose voice we hear when the mirror says ‘You, my queen, may have beauty quite rare, / but Snow White is a thousand times more fair’” (Zipes, cited in Bacchilega 1997) and she has worked out answers by others as follows: Bettelheim suggests that the mirror’s voice is the daughter’s, whereas Giradot states it is the voice of truth, self-reflection, the mother’s, the father’s, the young woman’s and ‘society’s’ etc. in some versions the patriarchal frame becomes visible. Still Bacchilega maintains that the question arises that if it were the voice of truth, whose truth it is. No matter if it is the father’s, mother’s or daughter’s voice. What makes them see what they see? Whether it is the girl’s jealousy or the mother’s jealousy, or the father’s wish and fantasy – why are they jealous, and what are they jealous of? Some argue (cf. Joosen 2004) that what fuels the conflict and rivalry is the jealousy which only comes up because of the competition between the women for the man’s affection.

In Disney's version of "Snow White" the Magic Mirror makes an appearance twice in the film; it has a golden frame, and is addressed by the Queen as "slave in the Magic Mirror". This slave is summoned by the Queen to tell her who is fairest of all. It then takes the shape of a mask which supersedes the reflection of the Queen. This talking mask gives the Queen answers and has a deep male voice. This suggests that the spectator and the evaluator are male and that the Queen's jealousy relies upon the evaluation of this voice only. The fact that there are a very small numbers of characters in the film means that there is no one else to judge against, and makes interpretation hereof tricky. The Queen and Snow White are the only women and are both understood to be beautiful. The only other figures are the hunter, the prince, and the dwarfs who are all male, and the animals.

The dwarfs are depicted as positively affected by Snow White's beauty when she wakes up in their beds. Later they could not bury her because of her beauty. Beauty saves her from being struck down by the dwarfs, as well as from being buried alive, when she is poisoned and believed dead because she continues to be beautiful, even in death, so that the dwarfs cannot bear to bury her. In these scenes Snow White's beauty ultimately saves her life. Is the essence thus? That if one is beautiful, other women (like the Queen) will hate one, but all men (prince, hunter, and dwarfs) will love one. Of course Snow White also has a good heart, is kind. What matters here is the "male gaze" because it is the only one existing, except for the Queen's. But the Queen, while being scared of Snow White surpassing her beauty which is why Snow White is dressed in rags, does not seem to see the beauty in Snow White herself. She does not see Snow White as a threat until she is told to see her as such by the Mirror. Hence, her jealousy and the decision to kill Snow White are the consequences of the Mirror's gaze. Therefore, it remains debatable whether the Queen's gaze counts as her own when it is so compliant with and dependent from the Mirror's.

Altogether, the Prince comes along and hears a beautiful voice – then sees the beautiful maiden and falls in love instantly. The dwarfs do not strike because they are stunned by Snow White's beauty, and when she falls into Eternal Sleep they do not find it in their hearts to bury her. The Mirror judged her to be "more fair" than the Queen, and the Queen takes the Mirror (who has a male voice) by its word and decides to kill Snow White because of it. Therefore the gaze and voice that count here are arguably male.

The *Snow White and the Huntsman* version of the Mirror comes in form of a big golden plate, and when addressed by Ravenna, speaks to her in a male voice and comes out

of the plate taking on the shape of a golden liquid or molten figure which only Ravenna can see. When she asks the Mirror, she is relieved when it tells her that she is the most beautiful. Whatever the Mirror tells her she takes to be “truth”, and never questions its statements.

Ravenna is the pivotal character in this respect because she is the one obsessed with being beautiful, and this obsession is explained through a patriarchal frame. This can be discerned in the scene (already mentioned in the subsection above) where she holds her monologue in bed with the King: “I was ruined by a King like you once. I replaced his Queen; an old woman. And in time, I too, would have been replaced. [...] When a woman stays young and beautiful forever – the world is hers.” (7’07”-7’48”) This not only describes what being beautiful entails but also explains *for whom* one has to be beautiful and young for, i.e. for the King and consequently for men. Throughout the story Ravenna is defined by her beauty, like in the following moments: When the narrative voice says, “So enchanted by her beauty was the King that he forgot for the first time his broken heart and the very next day she would become his wife.” (5’29”-5’39”) Here she is shown and seen through the King’s eyes; her beauty is described by the narrator (in the male voice of the Huntsman) as what it is the King sees. Another scene that strengthens the importance of female beauty for men is when Ravenna’s mother tells her that her beauty is all that can save her, to have power and be protected from men, which leads back to her monologue scene.

In the film the talk is about “general” beauty as is suggested in the narrative from the beginning, it is a kind of “beauty” the whole kingdom agrees upon. So besides the Mirror of the Queen which also seems to be the voice of “truth” there is no hint as to whom one has to be beautiful for. For everyone in the kingdom? Or for the Mirror – although it is unknown who the Mirror speaks for. The only thing one has to go on, is what Ravenna judges important because she has the power to implement her beliefs and she is the only one for whom beauty seems to matter. This is why also in this film the “gaze” stays male because the only spectators who matter are Kings/men who choose women, and Ravenna who reacts to the male gaze is also an extension of it. Thus, also in the sequence with the Scarred Women, when one of them says, “Without beauty we are worthless to the Queen”, it is not indicative of a female gaze, namely the Queen’s, because the Queen’s gaze only functions in the frame of the male gaze and patriarchy as is illustrated in the above paragraph.

If taken into account being sexualised in the depiction, in this film it is also only women. Women are the ones talked about when it comes to beauty, and men never are.

Ravenna when she is rescued by Snow White's father from the bogus army is defined by her beauty, once she is shown naked when taking a bath, and another time she is shown as a grotesque figure who is completely thinned out when she is unwell. Snow White is leered at by Ravenna's brother who obviously lusts for her, and after coming out of the water after she takes flight her shoulders are bare and she shows a lot of skin. Men in the film are never mentioned in respect to looks, and there are no sexualised portrayals of them to be found.

In *Mirror Mirror* the "mirror" is the Queen's own reflection – it is her other self or her inner self, as the case may be. This could be an indication to a "self evaluation" but still the question remains if she evaluates herself only to be beautiful for herself? And if not, the question arises here too: for whom is she to be beautiful? Although she is supposed to be the Mirror, in one scene it is outspoken when the Mirror says "I am after all merely a reflection of you". But is she really? She knows things that the Queen does not, so while being a reflection of the Queen, there is the hint that there is more to the Mirror Queen. It is undisputed that the Mirror also in this case tells the truth but again it is not known whose "truth".

The description by the Mirror is interesting enough; she is evaluating beauty through how others perceive. The Mirror for example says, "Brighton fell victim to her [Snow White's] beauty like all the others" (57:26-57:29) which means that Mirror-she tells herself that another woman is beautiful and how men are susceptible to that, i.e. Snow White's beauty. Anyhow it can also be observed that the Queen does not take everything from the Mirror-self unquestioningly but also objects, contradicts and discusses with her Mirror-self which makes the "truth" the Mirror speaks a (or her own) truthful opinion more than a "general truth". In the beginning narrative the Queen tells the audience that the King was bewitched by her beauty which makes the judgement of her being beautiful from the King's point of view as well as hers because she is the one assessing that it was because of her beauty. However, later on we find out that the King fell victim to her love potion which puts the spectatorship into perspective again because it is revealed that the King did not marry her for her beauty, and thus was not the one whose gaze counts here.

The following scene is of importance considering the female as spectator and in which the gaze is explicitly female. When Brighton brings news to the Queen of having a visitor she is not very interested until she is told that, "He is young, handsome, and semi-nude" which educed a frisky, interested look from her. When the Prince tells her how it came

to his and his valet's appearance; that they were robbed by bandits the Queen's answer is, "Bandits? How awful! Absolutely terrifying, ...and smooth, hairy" which was a reference to his body and not the robbery. At this, the Prince looks a little uncomfortable and asks for a covering. The Queen looks a little dazed and says, "If you must". She then turns to Brighton, obviously bemused by the Prince's semi-nudeness, is lost for words, momentarily forgets Brighton's name, and needs a few moments to recover before is able to tell him to bring a covering for the Prince. (18:51-19:43)

In another scene when the Prince again stands before her semi-nude she exclaims, "Oh for the love of god! Can somebody please get this man a shirt so I can concentrate?!" This scene and the one described above not only puts the Queen in a spot usually kept for male characters, the "drooling" over bare skin but gives the possibility of a different reading of the gaze and hints towards a shift to another gaze than a male one. It shows that women too can enjoy men's bodies and objectify them, also outside of a romantic scope. Moreover the Queen is depicted as not being able to keep it together at the spectacle of his undressed upper body, an image or behaviour that is rather connected to male figures as it is regarded as being more masculine to be distracted by a sexualised object (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012). Further it is not deemed prudent for women to show interest in a man and it is required of them (to be feminine) to have self-control (cf. Towbin et al. 2003). In turn the Prince is put on the spot of being looked at and feeling uncomfortable too which is unusual because the male body is generally put on display with confidence and cockiness (cf. Nixon 1997).

Rivalry – Snow White and Her Stepmother, the Queen

As looks and appearances seem to matter for female characters only, as in how one sees oneself, the emerging rivalry that is a result from evaluating and comparing looks exists between women only. Some feminist theories (cf. Joosen 2004) on fairy tale debate the relationship between stepmother and stepdaughter and suggest that the rivalry is a product of being compared to each other by males, i.e. mirror and king, thus being evaluated by males and being seen through their eyes is what stokes up the feud.

In all the three films the relationship between the Queen and Snow White is mostly yielded by the Queen. The Princesses live their lives and hold no grudge against the Queen until the Queen starts to attack them. The Queen is the one who compares herself to others while no one else does. In Disney's version the rivalry is plainly about beauty while in *Snow*

White and the Huntsman it is about beauty but consequently for Ravenna also about power which for her derives from beauty.

In *Mirror Mirror*, however, at the beginning when she tells the story and says that Snow would have to fall if she wanted to stay the most beautiful in all the land. Later they are contrasted with each other; while Snow White is presented as humble and sweet, the Queen is portrayed as cruel and oppressing. The rivalry between the two, though, seems to derive from elsewhere. Although the Queen says in the beginning that it is about staying the most beautiful in the land, the pathway of the story indicates something different: the other encounters between Snow White and her stepmother are about the right over the kingdom, and thus is about power and status which is different from the power in *Snow White and the Huntsman* because it does not relate back to beauty. The first time we see the two together is also the beginning of the tale; on the day Snow White turns eighteen and sneaks down into the Queen's party when the Queen sees her and gives voice to her dissatisfaction – this is when we learn that Snow White never did anything to the Queen or caused any problems, in other words, never did anything to displease her yet there is something she finds irritating about her. She says it is the hair but could have also said anything else as she makes plain that she just does not like her for any special reason. As for the fight over the Prince's affection), there is no real dispute over the affection because the Queen is never interested in that. She merely wants the Prince to adorn herself and as a solution to her financial problems.

In *Snow White and the Huntsman* the fight for male affection seem to be dropped completely seeing that Ravenna does not care for men at all – for being mistreated in the past. But she does feel resentment towards Snow White as a child already when she sees that everyone is looking at Snow White instead of herself. Thus the rivalry is not about male affection but about power over the other. Theories about competitive feelings of older women towards younger ones in a patriarchal frame (cf. Joosen 2004) are the basis on which the issues of Ravenna are built on although this is not something expressed in narrative. In her indifference towards men lies the link to male judgement; although she does not care for them, they are the ones who rule. Again the part of her monologue is telling, “I was ruined by a King like you once. I replaced his Queen; an old woman. And in time, I too, would have been replaced. Men use women. They ruin us. And when they are finished with us, they toss us to the dogs. [...] When a woman stays young and beautiful forever – the world is hers.” (7'07"-7'48")

In so far it is the male gaze that counts; being beautiful in a powerful man's view means that the world is hers. If women stayed young and therefore beautiful forever, there would be no need to replace them by men. Thus, a general rivalry towards everyone who is younger exists because they are potential replacements for what one was once.

Overall, looks seem to be vital for women only. Men are not depicted to care much about their own looks. But when it comes to the evaluation by appearances it is not only women who are looked at. Men look at women and as well as women look at men, and both judge the other as being good-looking or not. Only women in addition, also evaluate themselves. In this sense they busy themselves more with their own appearance. Although the gaze is sometimes explicitly female it still seems to be more of an issue to be nice to look at as a woman. Not that the female gaze on men cannot be found but the problem is rather that the gaze is more focused on the "woman" – by both, male AND female gaze. This is more complex and cannot be eradicated by just bringing the man into focus. In other words, it is not the case that only men actively look and women do not; women and men both look. But women (still) are looked at *more*; they are not only objectified and evaluated by men but also by other women as well as themselves. The question that opens up is whether the gaze with which they look at themselves and other women is a male or female one. I argue that it is both. Since male characters do not care about their looks or who looks at them or feel that they should not care and therefore do not, the mirror is only relevant for women.

5.2.3 Home and Work

Household tasks or other things that fall into the domestic domain are connected with mothers in particular but also with women in general (cf. Connell 2003, Milestone and Meyer 2012). The conjecture that women are more suitable for house work is still prevalent; hence house work is seen as a "feminine" task, or is linked to "femininity" altogether. Men in popular media are still more seldom put in connection with the domestic and are defined more through their professional jobs (Milestone and Meyer 2012).

In *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* already the first thing that Snow White is seen doing is scrubbing the stairs of the castle. Later when she comes to the house of the dwarfs which is very untidy and dirty Snow White makes remarks about its untidiness and dirty state and starts saying, "You think their mother would.." halts and exclaims, "Maybe they have no mother!" (16'42"-16'46"). This alone makes plain that "having a mother" here means that the household would be in excellent or at least better condition, which is to say: tidy. Thus a

mother and with that all women (who are potential mothers) are thrust into the cleaning and caring of the house and home area. Coming into the house and seeing it in such a desolate state Snow White is horrified at first but then straightforwardly and without hesitation sets to work with all her animal helpers.

Figure 2 Snow White instructs animal on cleaning (left), insisting on dwarfs to go wash before dinner (right)



Snow White is seen cleaning or busy with household activities throughout the whole film, from the beginning where she was forced to do so but did it happily all the same, to later when she comes to the dwarfs' house and cleans of her own accord. She is cleaning, cooking, and baking for the dwarfs. Moreover, Snow White is never portrayed in a very confident manner unless it is related to the domestic sphere. Then indeed, she is assertive; telling the animals what and how to clean, or telling the dwarfs to go wash before supper. She is very clear about the fact that there will not be any supper if they do not clean up (see Figure 2). But not only Snow White's attitude influences the gender image but also the dwarfs' mind-set. The state of the house indicates that they do not value cleanliness and tidiness much, or that they are simply incapable of doing housework (properly). This depiction of men can mean that they either do not care or are unqualified. Besides the dwarfs there are no other men to judge by, except for the huntsman and the Prince. The latter two have a very marginal role and can only be interpreted in their lack of presence. Nothing is known of them except that one is a huntsman in the Queen's service, and the other is a Prince. It could be argued that the huntsman has a job through which he can be defined. The Prince on the other hand makes an appearance twice; first when he incidentally rides by, probably exploring or going on adventures – the point being that he was outside, in the “public sphere” as opposed to the “domestic”. The second time he appeared to kiss Snow White in the end.

Household chores and activities in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* are thus linked to womanness and motherhood, and therefore make everything in the domestic realm seem to be naturally a woman's domain. The fact that men are incompetent does not highlight the incompetence of men but further reinforces the domestic to the category of women.

In *Mirror Mirror* the housework in the palace is done by the servantry but some scenes still illustrate doings related to the domestic. The introductory narrative says that the King after the death of his wife was left on his own to bring up his daughter, and that he loved her very much. Snow White and the King are seen outdoors, doing activities together, the King showing things to her: being in the woods and on the meadow, riding through the town, putting her to bed. He raises Snow White by himself, and is grooming her to one day lead. "...but over time he realised there were some things he couldn't teach her, so he sought out a new Queen." With this sentence he is seen watching Snow White from behind a curtain while she plays with butterflies. He is looking down sorrowfully, and then looking sadly at two wooden swords he holds in his hand. (01:34-02:26)

This sequence is indicating that the King as a man feels unable in a way to give his daughter the things he thinks she needs. The conception that a girl needs a mother emerges because he sought out a new Queen. At the same time he looks at the wooden swords, and the assumption arises that swordplay is for boys. This can be understood as an insinuation about male beings not being able to teach daughters what mothers or women could or could supposedly do better. Therefore it shows ineptitude of men, in areas that are supposed to be a woman's domain. Child-raising is already categorised as something that falls into a mother's responsibility, and into an area women allegedly understand better. This is further affirming heteronormativity. On the other hand the narrative by the Queen in the beginning tells of how "the King raised the little girl by himself grooming her to one day lead" which can be understood as an implication that there is no gender bias to ruling the kingdom, and that the King would just raise any of his children to one day lead for just being his children regardless of their being female or male which does not discriminate against female reigning abilities.

In another scene when Snow White is at the dwarfs' house, she is waiting for them and has dinner ready for when they come back from work: The dwarfs come home and go on about their business. Snow White stands unnoticed and clears her throat to solicit the dwarfs' attention. When they all look round, she says, "Welcome home." And a table ready laid with dinner can be seen. The dwarfs are pleasantly surprised and then fall on the feast prepared for

them. One of them says, “I say she’s a keeper.” at which another says “Sure she is.” And they all happily start to serve themselves. (40:57-41:40)

Since Snow White was locked up in the palace and maids did the cooking there, it seems a little peculiar where she would have picked up on how to cook and therefore it gives the impression that it is something that women can do well without making an effort. And although quite unlike the Disney version, the dwarfs are fully capable of running the house by themselves but nonetheless appreciate being cooked for, and she appears happy to do it for them. This by itself is not saying much because she is showing her gratitude for them letting her stay with them. But seeing it in the context of Disney and Grimm in which Snow White also cooked for the dwarfs or in which it was requested of her to do the household chores respectively, it seems to particularly bring out the affiliation of women and the domestic. Moreover it gives the impression that cooking for Snow White is the only way of showing her thankfulness which again tightens the lace around the linkage between caring and household and women.

In *Snow White and the Huntsman* Snow White is not seen doing any house work, in fact nobody is seen doing anything of that kind. The only thing that is related to the domestic is motherhood and the upbringing of children. The King, after the Queen died, raises his daughter by himself after a while meets a new woman. In contrast to *Mirror Mirror*, the King was not looking for a new wife, he is not said to have felt unable in raising his daughter but was tricked into marriage, other than that the upbringing of Snow White is not addressed.

The Scarred Women who are depicted as self-sufficient, by being ready to fight when Snow White and the Huntsman come out of the Dark Forest and by the way they (can) look after themselves. But at one point they mention that they sacrifice their looks; hence the scars to raise their children in peace while the children’s fathers are at war (52’19”-52’34”). This is a display of women staying at home doing the child-raising while men “work” or defend the family or country.

Generally men are portrayed as able except for the Queen’s brother who is always in need of his sister’s help and power. But there are no real a contrapositions of the domestic and the public sphere; men in these films are similarly to the findings in Milestone and Meyer (2012) of “men at work” who are depicted as professionals in their jobs, namely skilled at what they do; the Huntsman survived the Dark Forest which is an accomplishment in itself,

and William has outstanding skills with the bow which enhances his profile. Men are portrayed as able, daring, and courageous.

None of the men in all the three films are connected to the domestic however. A “positive” thing which is mentioned above is regarding the dwarfs in *Mirror Mirror* who are capable of running and keeping the house by themselves before Snow White as opposed to the version by Disney where Snow White came to dispense them from household chores they clearly did not have the capacity to do. Overall it can be said that men are displayed in correlation to proficiency, inept only when it comes to a woman’s domain.

5.2.4 **Waiting vs. Adventure**

Snow White is the protagonist of the story and therefore is in the leading role or leading position. But can she be a leader? Or can she only sleep? Is it possible for her to take the lead after she has been sleeping for so long? Passivity is one of the main characteristics that has been linked to women especially in the fairy tale (cf. Rowe 1979, Lieberman 1972, Bacchilega 1993 and 1997, Jarvis 2000, Baker-Sperry and Grauerholz 2003, Jones 1990). It arguably is just a further characteristic that could be waved aside as one of many but since it was taken up so many times and the existence of a sub-genre of the “innocent persecuted heroine” (cf. Bacchilega 1993) are indicative of its significance for the gender image and representation of women. Therefore “passivity” is taken up as an individual theme, and understood to be more vital than properties which are also mainly linked to women such as “crying”, “weakness”, or “tenderness” etc. Due to its occurrence and frequent centrality in fairy tales, and its key role to how women are depicted and seen, it can be viewed as a theme the same as “Home and Work” where women are connected to the domestic still whereas men are more so to work and the public. Thus “passivity” for fairy tale is still especially a factor that should be highlighted.

As there is the emergence of “new feminism” which lets girls and women be more assertive (cf. McRobbie 2000, Milestone and Meyer 2012), there is also an indication of this conception for the princess character in the Snow White films analysed.

In Disney’s adaptation Snow White never does anything self-motivated; she does not act unless she is driven to (e.g. run into the forest after the hunter tells her to). When she eventually does something actively, it is cleaning with which she goes on about in a very serious manner. When her stepmother treats her badly she just sings, talks to the pigeons, and goes on with her business. She does however voices her wish to be found (in order to take her

away from her miserable life about which she does not complain otherwise) by her love. But also here the passivity shows in not wishing that she herself could pluck up the courage to do something but just to wait until she someday would be found (or not). When the Queen is after her life, she needs a new place to stay, and the animals show her where to go.

The times she actively does something is when she starts talking to the pigeons, or when she puts down the flowers to go and help a lost little bird, or cleans the dwarfs' house or any other "good" or "housewifey" activity. She also shoos away the birds when they attacked the Queen disguised as an old pedlar woman. In other words, she gets active only to be social with animals, or to do chores, or to help the helpless. All of these things enhance the picture of a helpful, nice, industrious, good-natured, and kind woman as an ideal which Snow White clearly embodies.

It is almost entirely unnecessary to discuss leadership in the Disney version due to its lack of occurrence. It is never mentioned and the only events that can be understood as someone taking the lead in a broader sense is between Snow White and the dwarfs, Snow White and the animals, and amongst the dwarfs themselves. When the dwarfs take orders from Snow White to go wash, she takes over in the home (only what concerns domestic issues) – the animals lead Snow White to the cottage and then again Snow White instructs them (in this sense leads them) what to do and how to (best) do it. All the "leading" she does, relates to housekeeping. These events are already examined in the above subchapter where they make a better fit (see 5.2.3 Home and Work).

The other two films tell quite a different story. Whereas *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* shows a consistent picture of a passive woman/princess/"good" female, the other two films make a move towards a more active heroine.

Already in the opening of *Snow White and the Huntsman* the narrator informs the audience about the defiant spirit of the Princess. But not only in the narrative is her spirit indicated. The way the story goes, Snow White is locked up in a cell her entire youth but manages to break out when she is 18, and runs away. When the Huntsman catches up with her and is finally on her side, she tells him that she wishes to go to the Duke's castle. This shows her decisiveness and her knowing what she wants to do. She is proactive; when meeting the dwarfs she tells them who she is, when the Huntsman wants to go away, she pleads with him to help her. This makes her dependent from others but she is nonetheless taking initiative and demanding something. In this case she is requesting help rather than just

letting things happen, as well as deciding for herself what she wants to do. Something else that speaks for her taking matters in her own hands is when she – in a split second – decides to jump at the troll and roars at it and with that saves the Huntsman life (see more on rescuing in chapter 5.2.5). She is also the one who takes initiative in kissing the Queen, whom she believed was William first, and did not wait to be kissed. Towards the end she speaks to a crowd of people, encourages them to defend themselves and rounds them up to fight, and finally leads them into battle against Ravenna. She as well broaches the topic of killing Ravenna, telling the people that she knows how to do it, and that she is the one who can and will. In the final battle Snow White plunges a knife into Ravenna with the only move the Huntsman has showed her earlier in the story. So although she gets encouragement from his side which can be read as approval from a male figure, she is seen as resolute in her plans all the same. Even though she is doubtful of her abilities and needs support at times she is not one to wait for things to happen to her but decides to do them herself when the time comes.

Mirror Mirror in turn in the beginning shows Snow White as being very diffident and meek. Already in the first scene in which Snow White is seen with the Queen, Snow White seems to be sweet and good-natured and comes across as naïve and docile even when she is not treated kindly. Baker Margaret, a woman who acts as a substitute mother figure, tells Snow White that she is only staying in the Queen's service to be there when Snow White takes back her kingdom, at which Snow White replies that it is not her kingdom. However Baker Margaret is adamant that it is, and says that the Queen makes everyone believe that Snow White is a good-for-nothing. Further she says to her, "[...] that woman has the entire kingdom convinced that you are a pathetic shut-in, incapable of leaving the castle ... and the worst is she has you thinking it". Baker Margaret gives Snow White the King's dagger which was a present from him to his daughter before he left – but Snow White does not know what to do with it. Baker Margaret then tells her of the state the town is in and how the townspeople live and that she needs to see how it looks for herself. Thereafter Snow White sneaks out of the palace and into the town and sees the squalor of which she only heard of before (12:55-14:18).

Snow White has her eyes opened on how the Queen spends money and with a nudge and a bit of persuasion from Baker Margaret's side Snow White goes out into the town although she is not allowed to. There, seeing the conditions the townspeople live in she is dismayed but also decides to act upon it. She takes strength from other people's suffering, and speaks up for them. So for the first time she takes action by going out to explore and then

also decides to do something. This puts her in a light where she can be strong for others while still doubting herself because her decision is about the people but not yet for herself. This then is already a turning point where after she begins to seek help which is more being active than she was before in as far as that asking for help is something she decided to do which stands opposed to waiting for something to happen or not doing anything at all and just letting things happen. When the Queen finds out that she had gone out without permission Snow stands up to her, asks about the townsfolk and looks determined as well as defiant which contrasts with the scene where she just sits there and let herself be mistreated by the Queen in the first scene.

After she is driven away she comes to the dwarfs' place by accident where she commences to be more self-confident. There she is free of the Queen's oppression, and for the first time is able to give full rein to her abilities; she speaks up more, learns and develops what has been in her but seemed to be suppressed before. She is rather firm and assertive when it comes to telling the dwarfs that stealing is not all right, she even takes the stolen gold and brings it back to the townspeople without the dwarfs' consent. Living with them she not only meets conditions but also sets some. More on Snow White's decisiveness and assertiveness is discussed also in the next section 5.2.5 Of Rescues.

At one point she wants to run away to save the dwarfs because the Queen is after her and therefore she knows she would bring danger to them. She is disheartened and about to give up thinking that the Prince does not love her and that she has no chance against the Queen. Then all the dwarfs comfort and encourage her by telling her what they see in her, her answer is even a little cheeky:

Napoleon: [...] Snow, you took seven thieving dwarfs who thought they had no other chance in life. And you gave them another choice. You were strong enough to do that.

Butcher: We don't see a little girl when we look at you, Snow.

Grimm: We see a princess.

Chuck: And a leader.

Butcher: Our leader.

Grub: Your kingdom needs you.

Half Pint: I need you. [gets a smack on the head from Butcher] I mean **we** need you.

[short silence]

Snow: Who feels like crashing a wedding?!

(1:09:14-1:12:25)

This scene shows how she takes initiative again to save the ones she loves, namely the dwarfs. Even though it is the decision to run away, it is a conclusion to which she comes and is acting upon it by herself. However, the dwarfs find her before she leaves and make her see her strength, and they pronounce her their leader. On the one hand this puts her in the position of the leader, on the other hand she is made thus by men which suggest a part of male validation.

One more scene that depicts Snow White in an active and more assertive light, is the kissing scene in which she makes up her mind to kiss the Prince to free him from the enchantment of the Queen against the Prince's will (see Figure 3) While she does the dwarfs wait, and two of them talk:

Half Pint: Do you think she's enjoying herself?

Grub: Yes I do.

Half Pint: A lot?

Grub: Yes.

(1:19:15-1:19:40)

Figure 3 Snow White kisses Prince Alcott against his will to break the spell



The kissing scene is a case in point for the “new femininity” and more assertive female figures (cf. McRobbie 2000, see also Milestone and Meyer 2012). Snow White is neither passively waiting to be kissed or rescued but actively starts the kissing. Further she does it although the Prince clearly does not want it and she practically forces the kiss on him. The

dwarfs' short conversation calls attention to Snow White reclaiming (her/female) sexuality, in enjoying what she is doing. This is one step further than the kissing in *Snow White and the Huntsman* where Snow White also takes initiative and steps up to William to kiss him first but who was not as reluctant to be kissed.

“Gentlemen, I can think of no greater group of warriors to lead into battle but this is my fight.” This statement by Snow White precedes the last rescuing scene in *Mirror Mirror* and will be discussed in subchapter 5.2.5 Of Rescues. But concerning leadership I want to direct attention already at this point to a few things. Snow White at this stage in the story has enough confidence and takes over; she makes decision and is ready to lead – only she chooses to fight alone and not leading others into a dangerous situation which can be considered “heroic”, and an act that used to be reserved solitary for male heroes.

In sum, Snow White in both 2012 films is portrayed as being more active, and do not only wait for saving. In *Mirror Mirror* Snow White even takes back sexuality by enjoying herself while kissing (cf. McRobbie 2000), particularly as opposed to being asleep and being kissed without even being conscious of it. Also the Snow White character is more decisive and going out to find out things and see for themselves, fighting alone or amongst others as well as speaking up which means they are given a voice and they are using it.

5.2.5 Of Rescues

The rescuing scene in film and fairy tale is a telling scene concerning gender image due to its usually gender stereotyped content. It is also another fairy tale formula; the heroic and climactic rescue of the “damsel in distress” – ordinarily a princess – by another character, most commonly male and probably a “Prince Charming” character. In a recent study on Disney Princess films England, Descartes, and Collier-Meek (2011) found that “the princes often performed the climactic rescue of the movie on their own [while] no princess [...] did a final rescue without the assistance of the prince.” This is one of the “consistent portrayals of meaningful gendered patterns” (England, Descartes, and Collier-Meek 2011); so the 'classic', brave, heroic rescue that one is accustomed to is a reserved privilege for the male characters in the story. In fairy tales princes do most of the rescuing princesses – a feature which has already been criticised (cf. also Bacchilega and Rieder 2011, Preston 2004).

In *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* the frame for this is a clichéd one; in the end of the story Snow White is kissed and thus rescued by the Prince. Precursive to this event is a rescue scene that involves the animals rushing to the dwarfs for help, and the dwarfs hunting

down the Queen who subsequently falls to her death. Considering these activities as acts of rescue, Snow White is saved by and therefore dependent on everyone in the story; the hunter who lets her live, the animals she befriends and find her shelter, and later run for help, the dwarfs who get rid of the Queen, and the Prince who kisses her awake and takes her away to live happily ever after.

Snow White in marked contrast to this is of help and in this respect rescues only once when she consoles a little bird that is lost and comforts it. The bird is neither in mortal danger nor does anything threaten it. Snow White is plucking flowers when she hears and then sees the bird by chance. By helping the bird finding its parents she makes herself useful and is of help which only accentuates her relationship to animals and is proof for her good nature, sensibility, and kindness instead of expressing the actual capability to save a life.

In *Snow White and the Huntsman* there is no climactic rescue scene in which one person saves another, but a few examples concerning life-saving as well as the climactic scene in which the kingdom is saved from the Evil Queen. Snow White rescues two lives, once when she is a child and brings home an injured magpie to tend to it (01:50-2:23), and the other time when she is already older and rescues the Huntsman once by disobeying his orders: the Huntsman is fighting with a troll and is overpowered. When the troll is about to attack him again Snow White puts herself between the two, she and the troll both utter a roar, then look at each other, and thereafter the troll retreats. (47:30-49:07)

By doing this – by not heeding him – Snow White saves the Huntsman’s life, as well as shows bravery. At the same time, however, this bravery explains the connection between her and other beings (magical creatures as well as animals) and displays her innocence and purity. She is so pure (of heart) that animals and (faerie) creatures know that she does not mean them any harm. In this way the scene can also be read as drawing a connection between Snow White and the other realm to enhance the affiliation between her and nature. This then devalues her act of bravery by putting it off as a childish act, which makes the saving a coincidence because she saved him with her purity alone, not with strength or wit. It happened through a good intention but was actually a dangerous and in this sense a foolish thing to do.

Snow White’s life on the other hand is saved once by a dwarf who pushes her aside and takes an arrow in her stead (1:16:50-1:16:54). It is a sacrifice of his life for hers and cannot be repaid, and can therefore in terms of a value “hierarchy” be measured as even more

significant than the average saving. And the second act of rescue occurs when Ravenna decides to go after Snow White herself: Snow White goes off alone, away from the camp where the dwarfs, the Huntsman and William are still asleep. Ravenna disguised as William catches up with Snow White and they talk, and bogus William gives her an apple in which she bites. William transforms into Ravenna and is about to stab her with a dagger when the real William and the Huntsman come and manage to drive her away. William is kneeling on the ground and holds her, he kisses her and weeps but nothing happens. They all take her to the Duke's place where she is placed on a plinth in the middle of a room; she is clothed in a white dress. The Huntsman is alone with her and talks and tells her of his wife, and how she reminded him of her, and spills out his heart to her. Then he too kisses her and leaves. She wakes up, tears running down her cheek. (1:21:41-1:33:19)

First she is saved from being murdered by both the Huntsman and William; with driving Ravenna away they saved Snow White from *actually* being murdered although they and the dwarfs believe her dead. The Huntsman's kiss lifts the spell, therefore the Huntsman additionally saves her from eternal sleep, i.e. "really being dead". In the delineated sequence above, Snow White is hoodwinked by Ravenna and is utterly dependent on others to help her. But the rescues occur without much consideration on the men's side, as they just stumble in the situation with Ravenna and intuitively provided help. This seems to be as valid for the kissing scene, in which it was not the intention of the Huntsman to rescue her but only to express his affection for Snow White. As a consequence the kiss can also be seen as a saving by accident.

Snow White compared with the other savings performs a rescue of a different kind: She leads everyone into battle and in a fight with the Queen. Although being clearly inferior, she manages to prevail and kill the Queen. Hence she is the one saving future victims, the land from its devastation, and the kingdom from the power of the Queen. But she does so only with the help of an army (of men), and her last move resulting in the death of Ravenna has been taught to her by the Huntsman earlier in the story.

The frame and circumstances of the rescue occurrences are a little more distinct in *Mirror Mirror*; where Snow White rescues many people throughout the film, all of them being male: the dwarfs, the Prince, and her father.

In one scene the Queen attacks the dwarfs at home with two giant-sized marionettes when Snow White is a little farther away in the forest. When she hears unusual noises she

runs back and returns just in time to help. When she realises that the attackers are giant puppets on strings she cuts the strings and with that saves them all. (1:03:38-1:07:00)

At this point I want to accentuate that Snow White decides for herself to go back to help after she realises that something is wrong. In the course of that she measures up the situation, and having kept a clear head she sees the strings – something the dwarfs failed to see – and cuts them with what the puppets become lifeless. She shows courage in not thinking long before running for help and uses her intellect to manage the situation at hand.

In another scene with the help of the dwarfs Snow White crashes the wedding of the Queen and the Prince and in the course of this steal the Prince from the Queen. The Prince is enchanted with the Queen's "Puppy Love" potion and therefore madly in love with the Queen. They try to break the spell by hitting and screaming at him amongst other things until it comes to mind of one of the dwarfs that true love's kiss will break any spell. So Snow White kisses him against his will (he is under the influence of the enchantment), and with that she indeed breaks the spell. (1:12:33-1:19:59)

Here again Snow White is the decision maker and the one taking action; in a sense she forces herself upon him, albeit with good intention as well as understood that he is resisting owing to the spell only. Admittedly, Snow White does not save the Prince's life but she does save him from the Queen's clutches and gives him back his free will or mind. Furthermore it is the Prince who is dependent on Snow White's kiss) and in need of others to help him.

In the last rescuing scene Snow White saves the kingdom and the King/her father whom all believed dead: The dwarfs, Snow White and the Prince are together in the dwarfs' home when they hear a loud rumbling noise and feel a tremor. They deduce that it is the Beast. They all reach for their weapons and Snow White tells them that it is coming for her. They all – including the Prince – stop to look at her and listen to what she has to say, "Gentlemen, I can think of no greater group of warriors to lead into battle...", they all cheer but she concludes with "but this is my fight." She runs out the door, locks it, and leaves them all behind confused. The Prince runs after her and they have a conversation through the small window in the door:

Prince: Snow, open the door!

Snow White: You know, all the time locked up in the castle I did a lot of reading. I read so many stories where the prince saves the princess in the end.

P: Open the door. Open the door, Snow.

S: I think it's time we change that ending.

P: No, no, no, Snow. You're trying to mess with tried and true storytelling. It's been focus-grouped and it works. Just let me save you. Please open the door!

S: It was the perfect first kiss.

With that she leaves him still hammering and calling after her at the door and goes looking for the Beast. Snow meets the Queen in the forest who reveals that the Beast is under her control and that it does what she wants it to do, which in this case is to kill her. The Prince manages to get out of the house and goes after her. Both Snow White and the Prince fight with the Beast and are overcome by it when the dwarfs come to help. Finally, they are all overpowered, so that the Beast and Snow White face each other. Instead of attacking Snow White the Beast turns away from her, leaving its necklace and charm free to see. Snow White cuts through it and thus breaks the Queen's spell. The Beast turns into the King and the Queen alters rapidly. The King asks his daughter who the men are and she tells him, "The Prince who risked his life to save our kingdom and his most valiant soldiers." The Prince refuses to let it stand like this and says, "That's very kind, thank you. But the Princess is more than capable of handling things on her own." At this Snow White looks down humbly but content. (1:21:05-1:30:16)

There are various aspects in this last scene: Snow White is confident and assertive, as well as the decision-maker. She decides to do something about the situation she is in and takes action into her own hands. While the Prince still comes to help her, and without the dwarfs' help she would have probably not succeeded, she nevertheless holds the key role in rescuing them all. On a meta level she decides that she does not want to be the Princess who gets rescued anymore but wants to do the rescuing herself while the Prince argues that she should not mess with what has been well established.

By looking at a range of scenes what attracts attention is that Snow White in the two recent films is also rescuing male characters. The princesses do not go out after the prince in gallant chivalrous acts but neither do the princes or huntsmen. In the rescuing scenes there are certain things that stand out: The connection that is drawn between women and animals, the kiss as a means to save someone, and *how* the saving is done.

It is evident that Snow White has a special relationship to animals in all of the films; she treats them well and cares for them. In Disney's adaptation she consoles a little bird, and talks to it, in *Mirror Mirror* she feeds a bird, and in *Snow White and the Huntsman* she brings a hurt bird home to nurse it back to health; and with that the traits of being gentle and caring in Snow White (and in women) are emphasised. As a result, when Snow White consoles the lost baby bird in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, or the young Snow White in *Snow White and the Huntsman* brings home the injured magpie, it rather gives the impression that the love and care for animals is pointed out more than the (cap)ability to rescue someone. Moreover, grown-up Snow White, after having been locked in a cell for many years, has kept her gentleness towards other beings, be it adult, child, faeries, dwarf, or animal; she caresses all with her expression. Thus, what is illustrated with the rescues is her loving and caring side which is viewed as feminine. When women are displayed to be save animals while men are shown to save women, this further divides the realm of men and women into separate ones. However, in other scenes in the films from 2012 the situation is a different one.

In Disney's version the Princess is always being rescued and never does the rescuing. Be that as it may, the ones who put themselves in danger to save Snow White are the dwarfs. The Prince's kiss only saves her by accident with no risk for him at all. The same can be said for the kissing scene in *Snow White and the Huntsman*; it seems to be a mere coincidence that she awakens and it is unclear whether it was indeed the kiss or the speech that demonstrates the Huntsman's feeling for her (of "true love"; the kiss could be read as its manifestation) that brings her back to life. Disney's Prince turns up out of nowhere and we are to believe that he searched for Snow White all over the country, and when he sees her laid out he was struck with grief and kissed the dead Princess. While the reason for the kiss is less obvious in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Snow White and the Huntsman* tries for an explanation.

In all three films a kiss breaks a spell but only in two it brings Snow White back to life; in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *Snow White and the Huntsman* it ensures Snow White's waking up but in *Mirror Mirror* Snow White kisses the Prince to free him from the Queen's enchantment. One could argue that this is progressive and that finally there it is a princess who saves the prince from the clutches of the villain. Although in this case the Prince's life was not in danger, and it was his "heart" she saved. Thus, instead of lying in eternal sleep unknowingly waiting for the infamous kiss, she occupies an active role; she steals him from the Queen, and then kisses him. She also does so against his will – under the spell he was in love with the Queen but we can safely assume that in truth he wanted to kiss

her as much as she him since he kissed her back after the spell is broken. So even though it is due to the enchantment that he does not want to kiss her at first, it could be argued that she forced herself on him but always with the subtext of the mutual feeling we know he has for her. The kiss in *Mirror Mirror* is also the only one that is overtly intended to save the Prince from an enchantment rather than an accidental save like in the other films.

In *Snow White and the Huntsman* it is notable that Snow White does not seem to save lives by being clever or because she has the ability to save someone. It is presented more as a coincidence; when she saves the Huntsman from the troll, she deliberately disobeys him and in doing so saved his life. But rather than showing her ability to save him, although she admittedly shows bravery, this scene strengthens the image of purity and innocence of Snow White which enables her to save her male counterpart; without her purity she would not have come out of it alive.

None of the men in the films save Snow White with the intention to save her except for the dwarf that leaves his life for her in *Snow White and the Huntsman*. When Snow White fights Ravenna, the Evil Queen, in the final show down one could argue that this happens out of the Princess' intention to kill Ravenna and free the kingdom. However, she not only does that with the help of everyone else but also the most important strike and move with which she kills Ravenna is a move the Huntsman has taught her earlier in the story. What is more she is the only one who has the ability to get rid of the Queen, so it could be argued that it is not really a choice she has rather than a choice that was made for her by higher powers.

In *Mirror Mirror* Snow White locks in the Prince and the dwarfs to go fight her fight with the Queen alone; this could be counted as chivalrous but also one could argue that she is just being stubborn, even mulish because she would not accept help. This is an interesting point either way: When men ask for help it is more easily being regarded as strong because he shows emotion which supposedly is something not usually done (cf. England, Descartes, and Collier-Meek 2011, Milestone and Meyer 2012, Towbin et al. 2003). If women do not ask for help it could be argued that they cannot accept help and are being unruly, or even insubordinate. It seems that no matter what women do can always be seen in a negative light – either accepting or asking help which equates being weak and having to admit to needing help or being restive for not allowing help.

Snow White in *Mirror Mirror* is the only one in the three films that is never rescued by anyone but does the rescue herself. She has help from others and is guided along the way, and after she frees the Beast from the enchantment and gives the Prince credit for risking his life to save the kingdom, he is saying that “the Princess is more than capable of handling things on her own”, it could be argued that princesses still need male validation for their doings, nonetheless the character of Snow White seems to have come a long way to be autonomous and independent to this extent.

5.2.6 True/First Love

“Love” as well as romantic relationships, and marriage in women’s magazines and on TV is one of the factors that influence the gender image; women tend to be portrayed as dependent on “love”, in other words “love” is depicted to be central to a woman’s life. “Love” is linked to romantic relationships as well as a part of the “emotional realm” that is said to be women’s domain which is why “love” too is automatically connected to women; it is understood as a stereotypical woman’s need (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012).⁵ By contrast the general depiction of men is of conquering women for sexual desires, and not willing to commit to relationship and being unable of expressing emotions (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012).

In *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* “love” takes a romanticised view but in that it is actually very shallow; the Prince and Snow White fall in love at first sight – he hears her voice which makes him climb over a wall, and sing with her. With no more interaction at all they are in love with each other. This short meeting supposedly prompts the Prince to search “far and wide [until he] heard of the maiden who slept in the glass coffin.” He goes there and upon seeing Snow White kisses her without hesitation – which is also the second time they “meet”. What makes it evident that it indeed was “love” is the fact that she is saved by the kiss and woke up. This leads to the conclusion that what one has to do to get “love”, and consequently also the man, is nothing more but to wish and wait for it. This reinforces the practicability of passivity and the image of the “passive woman”, where women do not have to do anything but be “good”, and while waiting some housework would not go amiss.

“I’m wishing for the one I love to find me today. I’m hoping and I’m dreaming of the nice things he’ll say.” (04’19”-04’45”) This pronouncement by Snow White also indicates

⁵ See also the advertisement of the brand *Triumph* (URL7 for short and URL 8 for the full version) that used the theme of “finding the one” (love) and made something else out of it: Find the one bra, instead of the one man. Three women in the style of Disney princesses enter a shop and are looking for their perfect bra and sing and while doing it.

that she is content to live her life cleaning and with her stepmother until “love” takes her away. It also entails that she already loves someone who she has not yet met. Her life therefore is revolved around this hope and “love” which affirms “love” as vital for her life and therefore also in a woman’s life.

Mirror Mirror takes a little different stance on this. The Queen and Snow White both want the Prince and fight for him which makes him central to their love life. But not only is love not the reason for the Queen wanting to marry the Prince – he becomes her target because he epitomises money and everything else that would come with him, i.e. his kingdom, being able to afford her lifestyle, etc. Although this is not the sole reason the Queen sets her mind for the Prince. The Baron would also be able to give her all of that but attaches importance in good looks too. The Queen does not seem to love anyone except for herself, and as the Prince does not mean more to her than a good-looking money donor, “love” cannot be said to be of any importance in the Queen’s life. The Queen does not much care for love. She appears to be very practical, and has standards for looks. What the Prince means to her becomes clear in the following conversation she has with Brighton (20:03-20:30):

Queen: Send out the invites. Alert the caterer. I want you to organise a ball like this kingdom has never seen before. We’re gonna sweep this kid right off his feet.

Brighton: Uhh, forgive me your majesty but I don’t understand.

Queen: Brighton, the Prince is rich, he’s built like an ox, I’m going to marry him and then my financial problems will be solved.

She does not wait but actively does something to gain the Prince’s affection and attention. The Prince is clearly not interested, but she does not care for his genuine interest, and is happy to use a love potion. She only wants to possess him and his money. This displays the Queen as pragmatic and illustrates how she handles things. Most important to her are her beauty and lifestyle. For her the Prince functions as an adornment and a source of money. This does not depict women in a good light but it signifies a shift in the representation of women with more variables. It exhibits that love must not be central in a woman’s life. It can be important but it does not have to be only in a romantic frame.

Snow White on the other hand falls for the Prince albeit his shortcomings; although he is gallant and good-hearted, he shows signs of arrogance and has chauvinist features (in the he is behaving in a “masculine” abusive way towards her as well as the dwarfs, this is discussed in a later chapter 5.3 Evolution of Figures) while being clumsy. Both the Prince

and herself liked the other at first sight. But the Prince is depicted as excited when Snow White looked back. Yet not only romantic love is addressed, Snow White's love for the dwarfs which is understood as a love between friends is also brought up. In the scene where she wants to run away to save her friends, the dwarfs, writes a parting letter in which she states that she loves them all, and cherished their time together. In the song at the end of the film "I believe in Love", "love" is made an important factor but illustrates more than just one facet of "love"; there is friendship (dwarfs) and love between parent and child (King, and Baker Margaret and Snow White) and there is the romantic love relationship to the Prince. This makes it less focused on the romantic aspect in Snow White's life. Thus the romantic involvement with a man is not displayed as if it were the only thing that matters.

In this respect *Snow White and the Huntsman* brings in other aspects of "love" although, here too, it is romanticised; there is the love the Huntsman has for his late wife which is committing, there is Snow White's love for her surrounding and everyone and everything in it, and then there is how Ravenna sees "love" as always betraying and a weakness of women.

Ravenna's lesson learned is that men only use women; she comprehends "love" only as a weakness women have, because what men have is affection that is connected to bodily appearance which is secured as long as one is young and beautiful – this is compliant to the findings of Milestone and Meyer (2012). She does not love and denies it, and in exchange is powerful and dependent on no one.

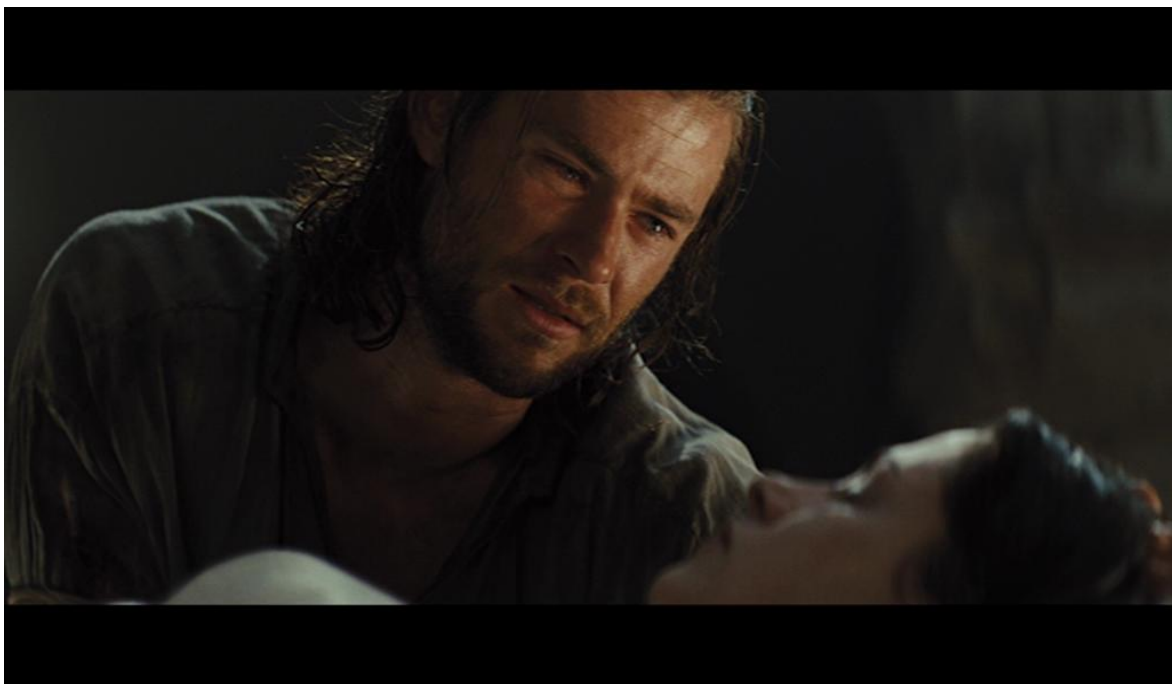
As for Snow White's possible love interests, there are two: for one, there is William, the friend she grows up with but who is separated from her at an early age, and they only meet again when she is 18. The other one is the Huntsman with whom she undergoes many adventures. Snow White does not appear to be uninterested in love but it is not the main narrative in the film. First she is trying to flee from her captor, then she meets the Huntsman, the dwarfs, and other people. It seems that she has a love for everyone she comes by; as in an appreciation for nature and the land, as she is also the one to restore equilibrium in the story. While being captive "love" was not what she busied herself with, unlike the Disney version where Snow White is fantasising about being "found by love". In contrast to Snow White, the two men are portrayed to love her and to think about their feelings for her more than she is.

The Huntsman is presented as being concerned with his feelings the most, and is linked to “love” through various facets. When all believe Snow White to be dead, he holds a monologue (he is actually talking to her) in the room where Snow White was laid on a plinth:

“Well, here you are. All dressed up, like you’re about to wake up and give me more grief. Am I right? You deserved better. I once had a wife, Princess. Sara was her name. When I came back from the wars, I carried with me the stench of death and the anger of the lost. I wasn’t worth saving, that’s for sure but she did so anyway. And I loved her so much. And I loved her more than anyone or anything. And then I let her out of my sight and she was gone. And I became myself again. A self I never cared for. Until you. See, you remind me of her. Her heart. Her spirit. But now you, too, have gone. You both deserved better and I’m so sorry I failed you. I’m so sorry. But you’ll be a queen in heaven now and sit among the angels.”

Towards the end of his talk to her (see Figure 4), he leans in having tears in his eyes, strokes her head, and finally kisses her and leaves the room. (1:30:28-1:32:56)

Figure 4 The Huntsman spills his heart to Snow White before he kisses her



Several points are addressed in this short monologue. We learn more about the Huntsman’s love for his late wife. His wife is an indicator if going along with the male representation in media today (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012) of the Huntsman representing one of the “good guys” in the respect that he is “husband material”. His former marriage

suggests that he is willing to commit to a relationship, although in this particular film it is hard to say because Snow White is the Princess and there are not many adversaries to her – because it is not about finding the “Mr Right”, although he clearly is one.

The grief she gives him seems tantamount to the good feelings she evoked in him, as in the nagging annoying way she has that he has come to love. This also relates to the grief he feels about her death. Besides talking about all his emotions – it could be argued that he is not communicating them and not really talking about them because he is conversing with himself and therefore he is not really *showing* emotions. In any case it is through this obvious that he “really” loves her, in addition to the simple reason that she wakes up after his kiss.

Further he speaks about saving – being saved by his wife emotionally – although he was not being worth saving but her love saved him and made him being his old self again. He then also speaks of loving her. All these things point to the significance and centrality of “love” in the Huntsman’s life more so than of any of the other characters. He is willing to commit, he can love, and he is also dependent in as far as that he was saved by his wife’s love, and therefore acknowledges the importance it has for him. And especially in contrast to Ravenna he is the opposite of what Ravenna thinks of men; the Huntsman never once speaks about his wife’s or Snow White’s appearance, it is mostly about “love”. Only twice does he make a remark to Snow White about how she looks. Once when he told her not to flatter herself, and once (after he already got to know her and came to love her) when he said to her before the battle, “You look very fetching in mail”. However, in his monologue he speaks copiously about the heart and spirit of Snow White and his wife.

In general the Huntsman is portrayed as competent and strong. Yet, in the scene where he is brought in front of the Queen to be sent after Snow White, he is displayed as gullible to deceit when it comes to love; in the hope that the Queen would bring his dead wife back to him, he strikes a deal with her.

Discussion of Love in the Films

Not once in the film is the talk of “true love’s” or “first love’s” kiss but due to our trained fairy tale reading we can safely assume that Snow White wakes up because she is kissed *and* because the kiss was given by someone who loves her truly which can be understood as love in a romantic way. And here what remains unclear is why she wakes up to the Huntsman’s kiss but not to William’s. It seems clear that William and Snow White share a love too but

what kind exactly is not elucidated. Consequently it is not apparent whether she wakes up because she loves the Huntsman back or whether it has to be solely romantic love. However, the fact that she only woke up after the Huntsman had kissed her implies that there can only be one who could have saved her. If it is indeed “true” love that saves her, it insinuates that William’s love is not true which was not presented in such a way.⁶ “Love” then, more than the kiss is the key to saving someone. But what the “kissing scene” makes apparent is that the scope for love comes with a “good old-fashioned heterosexual framing”. The love interest of a princess is always a prince – or at least male; the love between them always fit the heteronormative frame. The next section is about after having obtained the attention or love from the male counterpart. It is not enough to get love and the man, it is about keeping him. And that supposedly works best by marrying him.

5.2.7 (Happy) Endings

Love and marriage, love and marriage go together like a horse and carriage
This I tell you brother, you can’t have one without the other
Love and marriage, love and marriage, it’s an institute you can’t disparage
Ask the local gentry, and they will say it’s elementary
Try, try, try to separate them, it’s an illusion
Try, try, try, and you will only come to this conclusion
Love and marriage, love and marriage, go together like a horse and carriage
Dad was told by mother, you can’t have one without the other.

For many years *Love and Marriage* (Cahn and Van Heusen 1955) sung by Frank Sinatra was also the theme song of the U.S. American sitcom *Married ...with Children* (1987-1997), the point of it being that “love” and “marriage” are linked together intrinsically. This notion is still important for popular culture and also is a case in point of this as well as this subsection of “happy endings” which mostly is understood to include marriage which heralds in a “happily ever after”.

“...and they lived happily ever after” is a phrase quite like “Once Upon a Time” that is intrinsically connected to fairy tales; but the former specifically to the ending of one. A happy ending is “a crucial convention of most fairy tales” (Greenhill and Matrix 2010:15). Only what does a “happy ending” entail? What has to happen for a tale to have ended on a

⁶ See *Maleficent* (2014) for a different and more emancipated interpretation of “true love’s kiss” where the Fairy Godmother takes care of the young Princess and comes to love her, and as a result of that is the one able to break the spell by kissing the Princess.

happy note? In general and foremost in fairy tales it most probably is the victory of good vs. bad; if the villain is not in some way or other punished and the main figure continues to suffer despite their goodness, we feel something has gone wrong (cf. Stephens 2000). But what else has to happen except for the triumph of the “good” over the “evil” character for the tale to be an utter happy ending? What else is needed for the male or female lead for us to believe they are indeed happy and will live happily ever after?

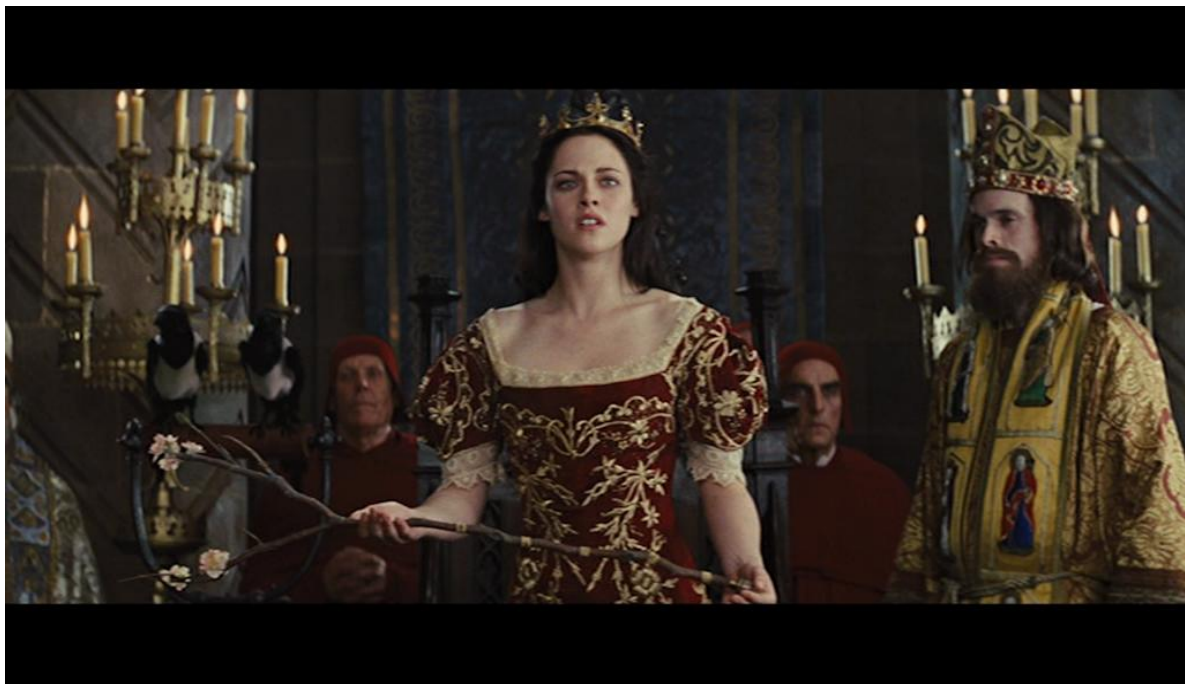
For female figures it is widespread over popular culture that it is the “getting the guy” and furthermore the guy who is willing to commit in the end which would then result in a wedding. Angela McRobbie (2000) for example writes about stories in *Jackie* a popular British teenage girl magazine, where a happy ending means a happy couple, whereas a sad one means a single girl. This cannot only be seen in McRobbie’s study of *Jackie* but also in many Hollywood films where generally the female and male protagonists get together in the end. As for Disney films up until 2009 England, Descartes, and Collier-Meek (2011) state that in the romance in the two most recent films, *Mulan* and *The Princess and the Frog*, developed over time, through the characters interaction with each other and fostering a friendship while often overcoming obstacles together. This they say suggest a more “balanced portrayal of relationship formation” in the more recent Disney Princess movies. Although the heterosexual romance is unaltered and is inevitable and repeatedly a central conclusion of the movie, and that except for Pocahontas, none of the other princesses remain single, and in the case of Pocahontas and her love, they remained romantically linked in the end despite their separation.

“Marriage closure” in fairy tales is a convention that like all endings is re-establishing the equilibrium of the story, and like many conventions this ending “offers the reassurance of familiarity” (Seifert 2004:67). This reassurance carried by familiarity also demands a heterosexual frame – and the ending in marriage then is only an “illusion of a mutually satisfying relation between men and women in patriarchy” (Seifert 2004:67). Not only the ending by itself but also what leads to this particular ending has an influence on the gender image; there is a difference in message in what leads to this “happy ending”. It is a statement about relationship formation, regardless of whether the Prince merely turns up and takes away the bride who is happy to be found, or whether they got to know each other before. The first scenario takes away the voice of the female figure in what she wants because the portrayal is such that whatever male comes along, it is good (for her) as long as she gets married.

The marriage resolution is doubtless reflected in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* where already in the beginning, we see the Princess sing about her wish to be found by the one she loves, and in the end is resolved when the Prince takes her with him, to make her his bride. Snow White gets the Prince, or actually the Prince came to get her, and in that they display a “happily ever after” couple. As the Prince character is absent almost throughout the movie, it is not him who is related to; the focus is not on him. Only Snow White’s happiness matters and thus only her character’s happiness is linked to the closure in a relationship. This resolution then automatically links to female happiness back to a romantic relationship to a man. This version of “Snow White” is also a case in point for voiceless and passive women, for all they need is someone to find and love them, and finally take them away to marry.

The only marriage occurring in *Snow White and the Huntsman* is the one of the King and Ravenna in the beginning. While marriage is supposed to be a fairy tale ending, here it is the prelude to the dark and main part of the story: the marriage heralds the start of Ravenna’s reign and is the end of the King’s life. At the end of the wedding day, during the wedding night, Ravenna stabs the King in the chest and thus making herself the sole ruler. Furthermore the story’s ending is not resolved in marriage; in the end Snow White is crowned Queen (see Figure 5). We see the Huntsman washed and clean for her crowning, the two of them exchange looks but nothing explicit is said or indicated, and the story ends.

Figure 5 Snow White is crowned Queen



Regarding the romantic conclusion pattern, this at least can be read as a happy ending for Snow White by freeing the kingdom, admittedly, with men's help, but she does not need a male partner for the ending. Nevertheless, *Snow White and the Huntsman* breaks the mould with another cliché – the love triangle. Instead of having one important man in her life, Snow White has two; one is her male childhood friend, the other is the Huntsman who is initially sent to catch her but develops into a loyal companion and love interest. Although she does not end up with either of them at the end and stands alone as Queen, they are both in her life and it is left open what will happen thereafter.

At the end of *Mirror Mirror*, the Princess “gets” the Prince, and they marry (see Figure 6). In this scene the King pronounces them husband and wife. He says, “You may kiss the bride”, whereupon the Prince asks Snow White, “Do I still have to say please?” Herein she smiles and just kisses him. (1:30:45-1:32:06)

Figure 6 Snow White and Prince Alcott get married



The resolution regarding the gender role pattern is eased and made less tense by the Prince's joke and reference to an earlier scene where he was at Snow White's mercy, and in need of her help; hanging head down from a tree. This puts them on a more equal footing although the finale fits with the conventional marriage ending, as well as a stereotypic female script. Although it can be viewed as a traditional gender resolution, it can also be argued that it would be restrictive, and less emancipatory to constrict the frame to not getting the Prince just for the sake of having an ending where the female protagonist stays alone in order to not

be compliant with the “stereotypic script”. The magnitude of the wedding day for women which is ingrained in the media as that it is just how it is and how “girls” are, and that it is “every girl’s special day” is much more reflected by the Queen’s behaviour in *Mirror Mirror* than by Snow White’s. The Queen has been married many times but is still portrayed as excited on her wedding day which goes unquestioned. And the significance is even more emphasised by the excitement about the wedding although the groom to be is neither in love with her – she had to use a love potion to win him – nor is she much interested in him as a person.

In all three films the Evil Queen dies in the end which is clearly a victory of “good” over “evil” with the difference that in Disney’s version the dwarfs hunt her down and she falls down a cliff while in the other two, Snow White is the one conquering her. As for the marriage conclusion it can be said that only the Disney variant fits the notion of an utterly unbalanced relationship. Despite *Mirror Mirror*’s marriage ending and the Princess and Prince being quite enthralled by one another from the first time they set eyes upon each other, the two protagonists get to know each other a little before falling in love. *Snow White and the Huntsman* in this respect is the most distant from the “typical female script”; Snow White is crowned Queen, remains unmarried and not at all unhappy in the end. Also she struck a friendship with the Huntsman and they get the chance to build a relationship.

5.3 Evolution of Figures

The static predetermined roles of fairy tale characters in the canon are usually not changed or challenged; the “good” stay “good” and the “bad” stay “bad” – as for example the figure of “the wicked stepmother”. In more recent revisions of fairy tales however, this portrayal shifts in other directions and there are recontextualised works of stories told from a different point of view, e.g. the stepmother’s, which then allows a different reading of the plot or changes the relations in the story as a whole (cf. Williams 2010b). Neil Gaiman’s “Snow, Glass, Apples” for example tells the tale from the Queen’s perspective and gives other explanations (as opposed to the usual reason of jealousy) as to why the Queen persecutes Snow White. Also the two “Snow White” films of 2012 exhibit changes in the tale; they challenge the narrative pattern or at least have an inkling of a different less clichéd portrayal of the stepmother figure. Over time the one dimensional – in terms of clearly being “wicked” – Queen gained more attributes than merely being wicked; she often gets more background story, her actions are explained or she is not wicked at all but utterly misunderstood. The representation of the heroine has undergone an alteration as well, from the persecuted damsel in distress towards the action babe (cf. Tasker 2000) as can also be noticed in the newer films. In *Snow White and the Huntsman* Ravenna was not always “bad”; she grew to be what she is in the parameters given to her, and Snow White although still undoubtedly “good” kills her stepmother in the end. In *Mirror Mirror* Snow White who is humble and well-behaved ends up bolder and fighting for her rights. These evolutions of the characters within the films are discussed in this chapter. Moreover the relationship between Snow White and the Prince is examined as it is significant for gender representation.

5.3.1 Snow White

Disney’s Snow White is a caring, loving, kind (to humans as well as animals, see Figure 7 below) person who is oppressed by her stepmother but happy. As the story goes on she continues cleaning and cooking with the difference of not being oppressed but doing it by choice. And never does her being kind-hearted and good-natured waver. While with the dwarfs she is lacking a love interest but is content nonetheless. It can be assumed that after the Prince takes her to his castle she would probably keep on cleaning and doing the chores happily ever after as a wife and mother but as a Queen she might not have to do anything anymore except for bearing children, and further on be caring, loving, and kind – as she is never portrayed to be anything but that. Therefore the reward for being a “good” girl seems to

be having a male partner and therefore the possibility of being a mother which appears as a woman's life goal and highest achievement. The development then is not in her character which stays the same – she is patient and “good” – but that the environment around her changes, from being subjugated by her stepmother, to living with the dwarfs where she is not tyrannised but willingly subservient, and finally when the Prince comes to take her away; she readily goes with him and stays docile which clearly constitutes a pattern that conforms to a restrictive female social role (cf. also Rowe 1979).

Figure 7 Snow White's bond and spiritual affinity to animals



There do not seem to be any real relationships between any of the characters except between Snow White and the dwarfs or between her and the animals. One could say that there is interaction between the Queen and the huntsman once when the Queen commands him to kill Snow White and he fails to carry it out, seemingly without any consequences. And the other time between Snow White and the huntsman when he does not have the heart to kill her and tells her to run away and hide. But there is no more to the huntsman character in the story. After the Queen finds out she is outraged but goes into the cellar and hatches a plan to kill Snow White herself. The short encounter between Snow White and the huntsman is denoted by the huntsman letting her live (for the reason that he could not bring himself to kill her) and telling her to run away and hide (from the Queen) and in that helping her firstly to keep her life and secondly to live a little longer.

Snow White is therefore constantly dependent on others in the story. The Queen wants her dead. First she is at the hunter's mercy. Then the animals show her the cottage, the dwarfs let her stay with them. And the animals go to the dwarfs for help when the Queen seeks to kill her. In the end she needs the Prince's kiss to wake her from eternal sleep.

In *Mirror Mirror* Snow White takes matters into her own hands – in this version a transformation of the character can be observed. At first she is depicted as a lovely, somewhat shy, and humble person. She does not talk back or question her maltreatment by the Queen. Later on she is being more assertive, and getting more confident – with encouraging by friends (Baker Margaret and the dwarfs). Only after seeing the suffering in her kingdom does she draw strength to challenge the Queen’s views and lifestyle.

Snow White and the Huntsman makes Snow White’s defiant spirit clear from the beginning of the narrative (i.e. from Snow White’s childhood onwards). But still she is depicted as having a rare beauty, i.e. being kind and pure. This purity she keeps throughout the film; she has special connection to nature, i.e. the magic faerie land, and is also presented to be the one to bring back equilibrium to the land. Her transformation into a warrior to fight Ravenna in the end occurs only as a reaction to Ravenna’s rule of terror.

Snow White is dependent on the animals and on the Huntsman as a saviour or helper but not more than the male characters in the films are dependent on her in return. In *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *Mirror Mirror* she is at the hunter’s or Brighton’s mercy respectively to spare her life. In *Snow White and the Huntsman* the Huntsman is sent after her to find her and bring her to the Queen and not only does he not hand her over but helps her through the Dark Forest. This role is taken by the animals in Disney’s version where all the animals guide her to the house of the dwarfs and help her out of a tight spot by doing so. But despite her occasional dependency on others Snow White in the new films is seen helping others in another way than by merely “cleaning the house”; in *Mirror Mirror* she is winning back the dwarfs reputation, helping and saving the Prince, is seen as more confident and assertive and standing up to people (the Queen mainly). As for *Snow White and the Huntsman*, Snow White also displays fighting spirit and rescues the Huntsman and then overcomes Ravenna in the end. In all versions she is still depicted as being linked to animals and therefore being kind and caring and as having her heart in the right spot. Nonetheless she is not only the caring and loving girl who waits but is more assertive and takes over parts of what was used to be the prince’s role.

5.3.2 The “Prince”

There is much more to the prince character in the 2012 films compared to the Grimms’ text or the Disney version. In the literary text an unnamed prince comes along and not the slightest thing is known about him, except for his being a prince (and the fairy tale code tells

that he must be “good”). In *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* it is just the same, we can assume that the one who falls in love with the princess is a prince – but he does not do much apart from singing one song and give the infamous kiss. Hence the prince exists for the big rescue only and does not get to be much of a character or to be anything else with the exception of being “princely”. This can also be read thus: princes do not need to have more to them to be seen as the hero and rescuer – they only need to be male.

In comparison the “princes” in *Mirror Mirror* and *Snow White and Huntsman* almost seem to be well thought out figures; they have more screen time and get to say more and also show more of themselves. They also get to have an opinion and a little personality be it stereotypical or not – the “hard shell soft core” (Hunts)man, the son who stands in the shadow of his father and who is a bit rebellious but brave and good (William), and the rather clumsy but good-hearted Prince (Alcott). *Mirror Mirror* even introduces two prince figures: the Huntsman and the Duke’s son.

Prince Alcott in *Mirror Mirror* seeks an adventure and finds it in the forest where a beast roams and is part of Snow White’s kingdom. In the beginning he comes across as quite pompous and is full of stereotypes and clichés: When meeting with the dwarfs he makes fun of them for being short, and treats them with disdain. However, he does not win the fight against the dwarfs, and is hung head down from a tree with Renbock his valet. Despite (or because of) his pomposity before he is afraid of losing face, and says to Renbock, “No one needs to know the details” (11:57-12:00), and when Snow White finds them dangling from the tree he tells her that they were ambushed by seven giants. After a few lost fights against the dwarfs as well as Snow White in the end he concedes defeat and apologises.

In *Snow White and the Huntsman*, William, the Duke’s son, and Snow White’s childhood friend occupies the role of the Prince. He is represented in a “masculine” light to the extent that he rushes to Snow White’s aid when he hears she has survived, he is skilled in archery, he helps the weak and the poor. If there is something he is unskilful in, it is speaking about his feelings: he does not know how. He speaks to the Huntsman about it but he cannot tell Snow White about the feelings he has for her. All these are viewed “masculine” traits as was discussed in the previous subchapters of 5.2. Gender Image Influences (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012, and England, Descartes, and Collier-Meek 2011).

Although there is still much space left for development, at least the character of the prince has become more pronounced in the later films rather than just a marginal figure that barely made it into the story. The augmentation of the prince character can be explained at the very least by the need for the “happy ending” which requires a couple fitting the heteronormative frame. It might be reprehensible when the female figure is judged only by who she ends up with. Nevertheless it is an aspect of how she can be seen; it reflects on the princess character when the prince is a featureless and vapid character but the princess falls for him just the same. From the fact that the prince was not an important figure the conclusion that can be drawn for princesses in those stories is that it is immaterial who the person is that they will spend (the rest of) their lives with, they have no say in this or simply do not care. So in making the prince character more interesting, the figure of the princess appears more selective in their affections. Even though this might also give him more opportunity to rescue, deride, or behave in a chauvinistic way, the change from a nondescript and exchangeable prince into a significant one is good in two ways. Firstly, the prince gets to be someone with substance which is good in itself. And secondly, the reflection on the princess a better one; the picture is not that of the woman being rescued by a characterless man but this someone is not necessarily her rescuer, she gets to know him first, and to like him, and have a meaningful relationship with him.

5.3.3 Snow White and the Prince

The relationship between the Prince and Snow White in the Disney film in particular shows how the Princess is dependent and in need of a man or more men to help her. And this is despite the very short time they appear onscreen together. For this reason one cannot really speak of a relationship between the two because they have none. They see each other twice in the film, once when they meet which is also when it is decided that they are meant for each other, the second time when the film ends and Snow White is rescued. Snow White from the beginning makes plain that she wishes for the one she loves – which is to say the Prince – to find her (and take her away from the wretched place and situation although her contended nature forbids her from being unhappy about it, and so she never utters a word of actual complaint). Therefore the only relationship is the one of rescuer and rescued and of lovers. This merely shows the dependency of Snow White – in every respect: she is helpless and in need of someone to take her away, she is in need for love from a man to have a happy ending. The fact that the two of them never get to know each other (they simply meet, and fall in love) and the lack of a tangible relationship amplifies the picture of women passively and

contentedly waiting and of “love” being the magic cure in the life of women – if women find love, they have practically made it. The undermining of complexity of human relations in general further intensifies the subordination of women; Snow White places no importance in a man or if she does, it does not matter because she is not given a choice – the first man that comes by is perfect and the one made for her, it could be anybody and she would be happy just to be in safe hands. So in regard to autonomy or reciprocity between characters, it depicts the Princess as dependent while the shallow Prince we do not know anything about gets to be the hero. Consequently the inequity of gender relations is also reinforced. The portrayal of relationship development between the two main characters which influences the gender image is more balanced in the films from 2012.

In *Mirror Mirror* the first encounter between Snow White and the Prince takes place as follows (see Figure 8): the Prince and his squire Renbock are tied up, half naked, and hanging head down from a tree. Snow on her way into town comes across them, and is visibly amused by the sight. Prince Alcott orders her to let them down whereupon she is startled and looks astonished. Then she says to him, “Only if you say please.” (16:34-17:16)

Already here the relationship between the princess and the prince character is depicted in an unusual light. He is at her mercy, and she is a little perky and lets him hang there a little before letting him down.

Figure 8 The first encounter between Snow White and the Prince



It is the reverse roles of the knight in distress and the damsel coming to help. It stands against what one usually expects from both genre and gender patterns (cf. Preston 2004). The image of the prince not being in control and needing rescuing instead of being the one coming to the rescue is unusual and even though it is not a climactic or heroic rescue it puts Snow White in a position where she has the upper hand. This stays like this throughout the story for Snow White is never the one to be rescued, and Prince Alcott is the one who stands beaten in front of the Queen more than once, is rescued by Snow White or loses a fight against her.

Nonetheless he is still portrayed in other scenes as being patronising and disparages her. “Men’s violence against women in the media is commonplace, and is often portrayed as a form of ‘heterosexual-based eroticism,’ in which women are seduced by masculine (and abusive) behavior.” (hooks 1994, cited in Towbin et al. 2003) This can be clearly made out in the fighting scenes between Prince Alcott and Snow White (51:54-55:09); he is deriding her and tells her that he does not fight “girls” which can be in a way mistaken for nobleness in his refusal to fight her while actually he is patronising and unveils a chauvinistic streak. This becomes even more pronounced when he slaps her buttocks with his sword and asks if she has enough of the spanking which is seen as a flirtatious behaviour and therefore labelled harmless while it actually is a stealthy way of familiarising unacceptable behaviour by men. Even though the Prince is depicted as clumsy and a bit dumb at times, his masculinity is never in question. It is always only femininity that is debated, which makes masculinity always superior. Despite Snow White’s winning the fight against the Prince it is only through his “acceptance” that it becomes valid: In the end when all the fights are won and the King is saved and turned back from beast into a human again he asks:

K: Who are these young men?

S: The Prince who risked his life to save our kingdom and his most valiant soldiers.

P: That’s very kind thank you. But the Princess is more than capable of handling things on her own.

[Snow looks down humbly but content] (1:29:11-1:30:16)

Although this scene hints heavily towards male validation the question arises whether it is not also possible to read this as portraying a male character as a reflective being who can realise the flaws in his ways and thoughts before. Insofar it can also be read as a critique but goes both ways. The way it is presented here it can be either seen as male validation or as a way to

address the problem and make it visible. Ignoring the problem or portraying the male character as equal to the female one could mean to close one's eyes to the root of the problem or make one overlook it.

They both take a liking to each other after the first meeting which is obviously because they liked what they saw. What comes forth in the dialogues is that she finds him "cute" but never mentions his good looks (as the Queen plainly does) while he is talking about her beautiful appearance. This exchange between Snow and Prince Alcott strengthens the notion that value is placed on women's looks more than it is on men's as discussed in chapter 5.2.1 above.

As for *Snow White and the Huntsman*'s portrayal of the relationship between the two it can be said that the Huntsman helps and guides Snow White in and through the Dark Forest. He is the one giving instructions while she is the following him. When they first meet in the Dark Forest she pleads with him to stick together because she is conscious about not being able to survive in that place without his help. But she does not always heed him as can be seen in the scene with the troll where without her he would have been dead. Nevertheless his behaviour is more churlish; he belittles women. When the Queen wants him to bring back the prisoner from the Dark Forest he says that the prisoner must be dead but when he learns that the prisoner is a woman he emphasises that "*she* is certainly dead". (34:03-34:04)

While they help each other out throughout the story, the Huntsman is depicted in a more "heroic" light, being the one to abandon Snow White but coming back for her when she is in trouble while being with the Scarred Women who help Snow White and the Huntsman. His coming back for Snow White is depicted as more significant because he knowingly puts himself in danger by going back to help and get Snow White out of a life threatening situation. Also William who has sneaked into the Queen's group at an earlier point revealed himself to be on Snow White's side and helps "heroically".

5.3.4 The Huntsman/Servant

The huntsman or servant character in the literary Grimm text is the Queen's henchman and fulfils the function of Snow White's should-be murderer. He lets her live, however, due to her pleading and her beauty. He then brings the Queen the liver and lungs of an animal and then no more is said about him. The Disney version is similar regarding the insignificance of the huntsman.

In *Mirror Mirror* and *Snow White and the Huntsman* the role of the servant and huntsman is a more substantial part, particularly in *Snow White and the Huntsman*. In *Mirror Mirror* Brighton is part of the staff. When the King disappears and the Queen assumes the reins of government he automatically falls under her command. He is her closest servant and she uses him do her bidding; to collect taxes, and every other task, including getting rid of Snow White. Like in the other retellings he does not kill her; in this version he is a weak and anxious character but lets Snow White live out of gratefulness towards her father who is said to have been always been good to him but also because he would not be able to hurt a fly. He is a wimpy character who is ordered about by the Queen. The relationship of the two is characterised by the Queen's boisterous, self-serving manner and his subordination. He does not show bravery, or any real "positive" male traits.

Snow White and the Huntsman makes quite a stretch with its huntsman character; while it still holds true that he is to bring back Snow White's heart, he is send after her because she has fled. Further he is sought out because Snow White is said to have fled into the Dark Forest, and the Huntsman supposedly is one that came out of that forest alive. The Huntsman then finds her but not only does he not kill her but the two them strike a deal and after a time even come to love each other. Thus from a pursuer he turns into a love interest, and therefore additionally takes on the role of the prince in fairy tales.

He is a drunkard but that is not portrayed in a bad light – it is explained away by his missing his wife and having no prospects without her in his life. His drinking is depicted in a glorified light which makes drinking accepted in men as common male behaviour (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012) and also enhances his manliness. This becomes plainer in one dialogue between Snow White and the Huntsman:

S: "Do you drink to drown your sorrows? Or your conscience?"

H: "What concern is it of yours, why I drink?"

S: "I suppose a man's sorrows are his own."

H: "What does a young girl like you know about sorrow?" (44:13-44:27)

Even though it hints at a vulnerability what is foregrounded is his inability to deal with his feelings (sadness about losing his wife, being a vagabond without goals, lost in life etc.) which is popularly accepted and is seen as a masculine trait. Drowning his grief in drink makes him quite useless; this is noticeable in the scene in which he is picked up by the Queen's men, though he is presented as quite strong otherwise. This strengthens the

acceptability of men dealing with loss and showing emotion through drink. Despite his overtly shown need for love and his not having a purpose in life until he finds love, he always acts and is still seen as “manly”. Other than giving the drinking a masculine explanation it also puts Snow White in a more innocent light and he patronises her for being a “young girl” which is endorsed by her because she concedes that “a man’s sorrow” is something that can go unquestioned.

5.3.5 The Queen

The Queen in “Snow White” is also known as the Evil or Wicked Queen or Stepmother. She is beautiful but vain and conceited. It was brought out by Rowe (1979), Bottigheimer and Tatar (cf. Jarvis 2000) amongst others that powerful women in fairy tales are punished, and by e.g. Yvonne Tasker (1995) for films in general. In the “Snow White” films in question the Queen who is portrayed as a powerful, strong, and wilful woman who knows what she wants is equally punished, in all the three films alike – with death.

Although the Queen has many more facets to her character than Snow White in *Snow White and the Huntsman* her figure remains the villain of the story, only with a reason to her evilness that is revealed in a background story. Her power which is embedded either in magic or her beauty or both but is put into perspective in being dependent on men still. The magic and beauty are only needed and used to fool or overcome men. Ravenna’s beauty is used as a ruse to overcome the King, and later usurp the kingdom. There the interrelationship between power and beauty emerges which is always related to men.

In *Mirror Mirror* she has more personality than Snow White; and in both films they are the driving force of the story. Here instead of “beauty” a love potion is used to hoodwink the King and get married to him or later the Prince and enjoy the benefits of the relationship (lifestyle, money, being Queen etc). Without the Queen, in all the films there would be no jealousy, no threat to the kingdom, the people or Snow White, and there would be nothing to fight against or for. Snow White is not against the Queen as such but it is the Queen’s “hate” and obsession that sets everyone against her in the first place. Snow White’s actions are consequences of what the Queen has done to her. One could argue that Snow White’s hands are tied and she cannot really decide for herself but that she has to do the things, i.e. fight back and stand up to the Queen, in order to survive, heal the land, and protect the people.

Disney's Evil Queen decides that Snow White must die, gives the order (to a man) to kill her, is jealous, goes after her, and dies (as a punishment for being evil – or for being a powerful woman who does not know her place or conveniently both).

In *Mirror Mirror* the Queen is portrayed as a woman who is humorously deluded, and obsessed with age/skin/wrinkles/(clothes) size like women are portrayed to be in contemporary media and popular culture (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012, Ross 2013). She knows herself and what she wants well, is rather impatient and wilful but in the end is punished for that and also for being wicked. In the film the punishment for her is, however, explained by “magic has its price”. Further, she demonstrates a “weakness” for men's naked (and trained) bodies – which is usually a “weakness” reserved for men and naturalised (as in “boys will be boys”) as they are said to be inherently unable to restrain themselves when faced with the body of a “beautiful” woman (cf. Towbin et al. 2003).

Concerning the stereotypical traits of a villain and of a woman (the “bad” kind), the Queens in the films have them all. The Queen character knows exactly what she wants and pursues it, and decides things for herself – insofar she has reclaimed her autonomy and sexuality although it still is all occurring in a patriarchal frame (cf. Williams 2010a). All of them are the most powerful women in the film and all of them pay for that (and admittedly also for being villains) with death in the end (cf. Tasker 1995).

6 Conclusion

Fairy tale films contemplated as a part of fairy tales and of films or as a distinct matter are subject to constant transformation. The hybridity of their genre and the shifts and changes within that range bear testimony to that. Every adaptation of the “Snow White” story can be viewed as an individual work and is a genuine version in itself as opposed to a copy of a copy because there are no “originals” to fairy tales (cf. Greenhill and Matrix 2010, Zipes 1999, Zipes 2010). As illustrated with the “Snow White” films in this study, they all are clearly discernible as a fairy tale, and they are recognisable as the story of “Snow White” despite the changes and stretches in the story from the Grimms’ version. *Snow White and the Huntsman*’s look and feel is a rather dark and a serious one especially when compared to *Mirror Mirror* which pokes fun at stereotypes regarding fairy tale as well as gender roles and views towards those conceptions, although it is also not free of stereotypical representations. However, *Mirror Mirror* is discussing fairy tale matters and gender matters on a meta-level and therefore challenging genre and gender boundaries.

Gender Representation

The set of values concerning gender in contemporary Hollywood cinema is represented as a binary; this binary is represented as the norm (cf. Connell 2009, and Milestone and Meyer 2012). Alternatively it could be said that the only options are to be “male” or “female”, and thus one must behave within the scale of “femininity” or “masculinity”. Moreover, gendered narrative patterns are entrenched within the genre of fairy tale (cf. Willams 2010b). All love interests fit the heteronormative frame, as is discussed by Milestone and Meyer (2012), and McRobbie (2000); the couplings are between men and women which leads to a heteronormative gender image. With regard to the facets of gender images, *Mirror Mirror* is more conducive to being self-reflecting, and on the whole more thought-provoking than *Snow White and the Huntsman*, at the very least it addresses some issues regarding the concepts of fairy tale and touches on the subject of being a woman or a man within the story.

“Beauty” in the films is only connected to women; while men’s appearance is of much less importance, the princesses are described as beautiful. However, only the Queens are overtly obsessed with appearance in general, and most of all with their own looks. They are the only ones who try to maintain their immaculate complexion. Nonetheless, the Queens conform to the limited idea of “beauty” in contemporary media which is tantamount to being

thin, and “conventionally pretty” (Milestone and Meyer 2012:93), and also to be or look young and have perfect skin (cf. Tiggemann and Lewis 2004). Beauty (work) when portrayed as a woman’s domain and something which men are unfamiliar with isolates the beauty realm for women, and confirms the “naturalness” of the division. To acknowledge women’s understanding and expertise in “beauty” simultaneously exclude men from this field. Further, adjudging “beauty” to be a woman’s domain and speciality, in the same way that women are associated with housework and childcare, means to *let* them be experts in a field that supposedly neither is nor should be interesting for men. This makes the “beauty domain” seem not as much as granting women a field of profession but assign them to a sphere that is not taken seriously by men. Here, too, there is a different possibility to read the text, namely that because it is seen as inappropriate for boys and men to care about their looks too much or even to show interest in their own looks, this makes it difficult for men to show interest in beautification or their own looks. Of course it can be argued that not being able to show interest in one’s own looks is better than being reduced to what one has on the outside only. I argue, however, that both add to the imbalance of the gender relationship and therefore is harmful for both ends of the spectrum. Hence, “beauty” as well as the domesticity are still connected to “femininity” and consequently further away from “masculinity”. Composing women to be obsessed with “beauty” makes it easier to reduce them to their appearance which in turn defines them by it, and makes it easier to perpetuate the “femaleness of beauty”. Thus, due to the connection between “beauty” and “youth”, it is not difficult to understand why with age men become “wise” while women become “ugly”. Consequently, the “gaze” is still placed on females; women remain the ones to be looked at, still in accordance with Laura Mulvey’s article from 1975. However, the characters in *Mirror Mirror* display a reversed role at some points, mostly prominent in scenes with the Queen and Prince Alcott.

Furthermore, the domestic sphere is also linked more to women and femininity; household tasks and childcare are connected with mothers and women in general (cf. Connell 2003, and Milestone and Meyer 2012), while men are defined through their professional jobs (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012). In the films too, the cooking is done by Snow White in *Mirror Mirror*, and the King sought out a new wife when he felt that his little girl would surpass his abilities. *Snow White and the Huntsman* lacks the subject of house work as a whole and instead exhibits men to be courageous, performing many outside activities, being proficient in what they do, and posits them in the sphere of work. By contrast, child-raising is

illustrated as a woman's task which can be seen in the scene with the Scarred Women. This plainly confirms the connection between the domestic role and women, and links men to work outside.

Emotions, romantic relationships, and marriage in media tend to be linked together, displayed as central in a woman's life, and are therefore viewed as something that women depend on. Men on the other hand, are supposedly incapable of expressing emotions or not willing to commit (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012). The notion of love is loosely absorbed in *Snow White and the Huntsman*; the Huntsman seems to be the only one who cries over it and feels the need for love to be a "better man". This might suggest that a man needs love more than the women. However, upon further reflection, the film also puts emphasis on how women are adept with feelings and love; with women's supposed expertise in the "emotions division", they have a different understanding of "love" and can even get a "lost soul" out of his misery, as was the case between the Huntsman and his wife. Further, Ravenna talks about "love" dismissively and sees it as a weakness of women who by loving lose to men. This connects "femininity" to the emotion of love, which is displayed as a weakness. As for *Mirror Mirror*, love is not central in anyone's life, but significant for the kissing scene (for the Prince can only be freed by "true love's kiss"), and is also taken up at the end of the film which resolves in marriage where Snow White sings that she "believes in love". The Queen does not take much interest in "love", instead focusing on herself, her beauty, and her lifestyle, and using men to enhance herself. The same as with the "gaze", this is a reversed role; a role that used to be set aside for men. But in this case it is undercut by the Queen being excited to get married nonetheless (despite her lack of interest in love as such) which suggests that a resolution in marriage results in a happy ending for women. Thus, a shift in the aspect of love can be noted but "femininity" is still defined by "love" or "marriage".

Reversed Role

Not only the discussed themes of "love" and "beauty" influence the presentation of gender in the films. The reversed gender roles or attributes that are assigned to female or male figures respectively also stand out. Women in popular culture have a tendency to be portrayed as domesticated and dependant on men (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012:85ff). Particularly in fairy tales women have been confined to more restrictive roles (cf. Rowe 1979), and described as rather passive (cf. Baker-Sperry and Grauerholz 2003, and Zipes 1999). By contrast most male heroes are said to be courageous and adventurous (cf. Zipes 1999). In

examined films, however, the princesses are less passive, take on the role of rescuing instead of waiting to be rescued, and go on adventures. They are depicted as more independent, stronger, and more self-reliant. The Scarred Women in *Snow White and the Huntsman* are depicted as peaceful but powerful and self-sufficient fighters in their territory. When the Huntsman and Snow White come to where they live, the impression is given that they are always ready for an attack. This is contradictory to how they are later presented, namely as being left at home to raise the children while the fathers/men are at war. The image of being autonomous and in control is further revoked when the Queen's party attack. They then are exposed as just a group of helpless women with children. Snow White herself is said to have a defiant spirit and becomes more confident throughout the story, peaking when she leads a group of warriors to fight Ravenna. Ravenna is powerful, and spawns fear; she has more "traditionally masculine traits" (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012:114ff, and England, Descartes, and Collier-Meek 2011) than feminine ones, except for her beauty. But all of her "masculine" attributes are initiated in a patriarchal frame and are attributed to men having made her that way.

Mirror Mirror has subverted gender roles in the character of Snow White who is the one breaking the spells, the one who rescues the Prince in the beginning (at their first encounter even), kisses him to free him from his "infatuation by potion" by the Queen, and locks him up towards the end to fight the Queen's Beast alone, and en passant rescues the kingdom from the Queen's unruly leadership as well as her father from the Queen's spell. The Queen's leer at Prince Alcott is also a shift from the "male gaze" towards a female one, and stands in contrast to Snow White's humble looking down. But a modification in gender role can also be seen in the characterisation of Prince Alcott in as far as that he acts in an unprofessional (therefore "unmasculine") way; he seeks an adventure and is being overcome by dwarfs, he is brave and gallant but loses all his fights, and every now and again he has to be rescued by Snow White. The Prince's clumsiness and Snow White's rescuing performances can be viewed as a reversal of the roles. But this can also be read differently, namely, that men will be loved by women, regardless of their behaviour; whether "he" is a macho-"old man", "new man", or "new lad", as is discussed by Milestone and Meyer (2012), as long as he is "good" and a male, he will be liked and loved by a woman because women need men to reach their life goals. Without men there could not be a relationship which connotes no marriage, no family, and no meaning in life. And after all, who to be beautiful for?

Furthermore, the mere “reversal of the passive-heroine trope [...] actually naturalizes gender expectations and the idea that demonstrations of female strength are akin to gender equality” (Williams 2010a:114). Thus, making Snow White a confident, strong, and more assertive woman as opposed to the naïve, waiting damsel in distress is not enough to step out of the patriarchal frame (cf. Greenhill and Matrix 2010, and Williams 2010a). This is perceivable in the relationship between Prince Alcott and Snow White where he goes through a transformation of “being a cute jerk” to someone who realises the errors of his ways and then apologises for the mistakes he made such as making fun of and being rude to the dwarfs, and deriding Snow White for being a “girl” and therefore not taking her seriously). By admitting to his mistakes and faults, and later acknowledging that Snow White [read women in general] can take care of herself and does not [necessarily] need male help, he makes a step towards more equality because he accepts and that women can do without men. But on the other hand, this would firstly, only equate gender equality with women being able to do what men do and do it as good, which is a very shallow understanding of equal rights. As when the equality of women is diminished to the empty idea of “girl power” which then consists of nothing more than just doing what one wants, from drinking excessively, over having casual sex with whomever, to wearing what one wants which of course contain a trifle of empowerment but also stops there without any progress or sustaining changes (cf. Milestone and Meyer 2012:130f). And secondly, women and their actions would still be in need of being approved by men. This is a crucial point for every aspect that is addressed here; because either the inequality is broached as a subject and displayed, and therefore made an issue, or not mentioned at all. And if it is indeed brought up, there is the question of how to present the relationship between female and male figures. One could either present them as equals (which would be farfetched and does not leave room for critique or improvement but on the other hand is ideal and projects a value), or present them like in the film where the male protagonist admits to his wrong doings and hazard the possibilities that as long as the patriarchal frame exists, everything men do will seem right. And apologising is, of course, better than not apologising, and admitting to women’s capabilities will mean validation. Regardless of the apology, misogynic and derisive behaviour as adopted by the Prince should never be passable. Thus, female power in *Mirror Mirror* is undermined. It might have sent/been a better message if they had helped each other out, instead of Snow White continuously rescuing him but being derided along the way, which could be understood as passable as long as the princess wins in the end. Patronising someone should never be presented as acceptable, not even when the patronising has less validity because Snow White

always has the upper hand and triumphs over the Prince. It remains unclear whether the winning and the triumph in the end is worth more or less in the face of patronisation. And the lingering question is whether her independence gains value or whether it is diminished because even though she beats him, she has been patronised before and his later acknowledgment of her independence might suggest that Snow White as well as her independence need male validation. His wrongdoing, acknowledgment of it, and apology can be viewed as a slight improvement, and in the most naïve way, the validation can be read as recognition.

Prospect

An assessment of the gender regarding equality has only been possible to make between heterosexual “men” and “women” because there is not much room for people (identifying) outside of that scope. Gender is in all films presented as a binary with females and males at opposite poles. But between these two there has been a shift although it still has to be read in the frame of patriarchy. I argue that even the positive changes are on the whole merely superficial and a reversal of gender roles, or stronger characteristics of women are validated by men which makes women dependent on male opinion and approval.

The image of gender as long as it exists in this dual understanding is a rigid one. The studies of characteristics of “femininity” and “masculinity” are helpful in order to explore the shifts in representation. But considering how people are represented and of how the notion of being feminine or masculine is used, there will not be a need to develop new concepts. It is like sticking a label on someone, which presupposes a certain continuity of an attribute or of being “masculine” or “feminine”. The concept in its duality does not permit much room for change, complexity or variety. One cannot be weak today and strong tomorrow, active today and passive the next. Categories are exclusive; being one automatically rules out being the other. If one is good, one cannot be bad; to be both is not possible. There is no grey in categories, they are either black or white which only makes possible a shift from one thing to the other, and an in-between-ness seems hard to grasp. One can be shy at first, become more assertive later, and stay that way but can never be both. The complexity of beings is thus simplified. The base trait is something stuck with a person. In Snow White’s case it is noticeable that she is bolder towards the end, yet she always stays pure, innocent, humble, and caring. In other word, she stays “good”. Breaking free of the binary understanding of gender does not seem possible because the shift in “feminine” or “masculine” behaviour is

exactly that: a shift. One is more “feminine” one day and more “masculine” the next. But in the frame of patriarchy and this understanding of gender it will not be possible to emancipate or transcend these concepts. In this way, the gender roles did not so much go through a transformation than merely shift from one end towards the other or vice versa.

Even though fairy tales as such are usually compact and associated with two-dimensional character types (cf. Carney 2012), one might expect more from a film that reprocesses this kind of material. Especially in view of the changes that were made to the story in both films, the stretches it went through suggests that quite enough space is given to new possibilities of new gender images and gender notions beyond the binary as well. There are gender addressed novelizations of fairy tales which are not restricted to the binary notion. It seems sad that fairy tale films are still confined to a pattern when they work with a material that is so adaptable and where there is the possibility of changing everything. And Williams (2010b:270) states that

Just because a narrative pattern is pervasive does not mean it is essential to the genre of fairy tales. Patterns can be broken, and the plot can continue. Writers can rewrite the popular fairy tale and still write fairytales, and their heroines need not walk the same paths as their foremothers in order to reach the story’s happy ending.

Thus it seems wondrous why gender patterns are not disrupted a little more in films, let alone broken if they could be.

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URL4 – <https://www.teepublic.com/t-shirt/257831-velocisnow-white> (last accessed 24.09.2015)

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URL6 - <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/volksmarchen-der-deutschen-4374/7> (last accessed 30.10.2015)

URL7 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wB6aI8OW8mU> (last accessed 20.11.2015)

URL 8 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vm5N6d-O0kk> (last accessed 20.11.2015)

7.4 Audio References

Cahn, Sammy (lyricist) and Jimmy Van Heusen (composer)

1955 *Love and Marriage*, Recorded by Frank Sinatra for Capital Records [MP3]

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A

a. List of Screenshots (in chronological order of occurrence)

Figure 1 – “Good vs. Evil”, screenshot of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*

Figure 2 – “Snow White instructs animal on cleaning (left), insisting on dwarfs to go wash before dinner (right)”, screenshots of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*

Figure 3 – “Snow White kisses Prince Alcott against his will to break the spell”, screenshot of *Mirror Mirror*

Figure 4 – “The Huntsman spills his heart to Snow White before he kisses her”, screenshot of *Snow White and the Huntsman*

Figure 5 – “Snow White is crowned Queen”, screenshot of *Snow White and the Huntsman*

Figure 6 – “Snow White and Prince Alcott get married”, screenshot of *Mirror Mirror*

Figure 7 – “Snow White’s bond and spiritual affinity to animals”, screenshots of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*

Figure 8 – “The first encounter between Snow White and the Prince”, screenshot of *Mirror Mirror*

b. List of “Snow White” screen adaptations

Chart 1 List of films watched sorted by year (*films chosen for analysis)

Year	Film	Direction	Country
1916	<i>Snow White</i>	J. Searle Dawley	USA
1933	<i>Snow-White</i>	Dave Fleischer	USA
1937	<i>*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i>	David Hand	USA
1943	<i>Coal Black and de Sebben Dwarfs</i>	Robert Clampett	USA
1955	<i>Schneewittchen</i>	Erich Kobler	West Germany
1961	<i>Schneewittchen</i>	Gottfried Kolditz	GDR
1987	<i>Snow White</i>	Michael Berz	USA
1990	<i>Happily Ever After</i>	John Howley	USA
1992	<i>Schneewittchen und das Geheimnis der Zwerge</i>	Ludvík Ráža	Czechoslovakia
1997	<i>Snow White: A Tale of Terror</i>	Michael Cohn	USA
2001	<i>Snow White: The Fairest of Them All</i>	Caroline Thompson	USA
2004	<i>7 Zwerge: Männer allein im Wald</i>	Sven Unterwaldt	Germany
2005	<i>Snow White</i>	Samir	Switzerland/Austria
2006	<i>7 Zwerge: Der Wald ist nicht genug</i>	Sven Unterwaldt	Germany
2007	<i>Sydney White</i>	Joe Nussbaum	USA
2009	<i>Schneewittchen</i>	Thomas Freundner	Germany
2010	<i>The Snow White</i>	Sarawut Intaraprom	Thailand
2012	<i>Blancanieves</i>	Pablo Berger	Spain/Belgium/France
2012	<i>Grimm's Snow White</i>	Rachel Lee Goldenberg	USA
2012	<i>Miroir mon Amour</i>	Siegrid Alnoy	France
2012	<i>*Mirror Mirror</i>	Tarsem Singh Dhandwar	USA
2012	<i>Snow White: A Deadly Summer</i>	David DeCoteau	USA
2012	<i>*Snow White and the Huntsman</i>	Rupert Sanders	USA

c. Example for “Change and Reframing” subchapter as explained in Chapter 4

Lyrics of *SNOW WHITE vs ELSA: Princess Rap Battle (Whitney Avalon ft. Katja Glieson)*
explicit as can be found at URL3.

ANNOUNCER:

Snow White versus Elsa! Let the rap battle begin!

SNOW WHITE:

It's not lame that my aim here's to tell you the truth
I'll hit it out of the park like my name is Babe Ruth
Got a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame
The fact that you can't claim the same is really a shame
I'm the original princess, you're a copy of a copy
I am porcelain and perfect and your floppy hair is sloppy
I'm fragile but agile, rarely cross
I am sweet, you can tweet, I'm a treat, like a boss

ELSA:

Who the hell are you to step to me?
An aimless airhead with a vitamin D deficiency
You got no skills 'cuz you're focused on your looks
And let's get to what was up with you and those seven shnooks (Hi, ho!)
I've heard you sing – it's a high-pitched chirp
You're dopey. SNOW: You're grumpy. ELSA: You're a bashful twerp.
That squeaky, meek demeanor is an awful choice
I can drown you out right now with my powerful voice

SNOW WHITE:

Um, you should know, that's not singing, you're just yelling
At least now I can't heard the mean lies you're telling
You could've grieved with your sister from the start
But no, you're the one who's really got a frozen heart
You were selfish and deluded when it comes down to it
Had the chance to do better, but like a porn star, you blew it
As for your powers, they're hardly legit
You built a whole castle with nowhere to sit
Does it really count as magic if when you let it go
The only thing that moves is ice and snow?
I talk to animals and it always impresses
You're just a blonde snow-blower in sparkly dresses

ELSA:

That's right, manipulating snow, I'm the best at that game
Which means you're under my control 'cuz that's your stupid name
And who eats an apple a stranger gives ya? (Duh)
And who needs a man to save and kiss ya?
I'm savvy, strong, single, and so independent
You're the weakest role model while I am transcendent
You're a forgotten bygone, yes, time is the cruelest
I'm the newest, the boldest, and literally the coolest
So step aside and hide, go find a cottage to clean
You're one ditzy princess, I'm a motherf'ing queen

8.2 Appendix B

a. Abstract

Fairy tales, in the form of books, films, or oral telling, are subject to constant change and reframing, and contain a set of values that changes with them. Three screen adaptations of “Snow White”, Disney’s *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012), and *Mirror Mirror* (2012) are analysed in this study. The more recent films display a conspicuous transformation of the female protagonist; from damsel in distress to warrior princess. Therefore, this study raises the question of gender representation and the associated set of values. The analysis thereof is conducted by means of different themes that influence the gender image, such as “love”, “beauty”, and “home and work”. This anthropological study with an interdisciplinary approach exhibits intersections of film, gender, popular culture, myth, and fairy tale, displays a combined approach of content and textual analysis with emphasis on feminist critique and semiotics. Its aim is to provide a possible reading of the films concerning gender images in order to discern whether or not (re)presentations of men and women has changed and whether an emancipation process actually does occur.

b. Abstract in German

Märchen, in Buchform, als Film, oder auch als mündliche Überlieferung, befinden sich in stetigem Wandel und *Reframing*, und beinhalten Wertvorstellungen, die sich mit ihnen ändern. In dieser Arbeit werden drei Verfilmungen von „Schneewittchen“ analysiert: Disneys *Schneewittchen und die sieben Zwerge* (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*) aus dem Jahre 1937, *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012), und *Spieglein Spieglein* (*Mirror Mirror*) von 2012. Die zwei rezentere Filme weisen eine auffällige Veränderung der weiblichen Hauptfigur auf, nämlich von der „Jungfrau in Nöten“ zu einer Kriegerprinzessin.

Im Mittelpunkt der Arbeit stehen daher die Thematisierung und Darstellung von Gender im Märchenfilm, und die damit einhergehenden Normen und Wertvorstellungen. Die Analyse davon wird anhand herausgearbeiteter Themenbereiche, die die Gendervorstellung beeinflussen, durchgeführt; dazu gehören beispielsweise „Liebe“, „Schönheit“, oder „Familienleben und Arbeit“. Der herangezogene Themenkomplex überschneidet sich in vielen Bereichen, wie Film, Gender, Populärkultur, Mythen, und Märchen. In Anbetracht dessen weist diese anthropologische Arbeit, sowohl methodisch als auch theoretisch, einen interdisziplinären Charakter auf; sie bedient sich der Inhalts- sowie Textanalyse mit Fokus auf feministischer Kritik und Semiotik. Das Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es eine mögliche Interpretation der Filme in Bezug auf Gendervorstellungen herauszuarbeiten, um aufzuzeigen, wie sich die Repräsentation von Frauen und Männern verändert hat, und ob tatsächlich ein Emanzipationsprozess darin stattgefunden hat.