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**THE EVOLUTION OF SNOW WHITE: A CLOSE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF
THREE VERSIONS OF THE SNOW WHITE FAIRY TALE**

A Dissertation in
Speech Communication

by

John Hanson Saunders

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The dissertation of John Hanson Saunders was reviewed and approved* by the following:

Stephen H. Browne
Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences
Dissertation Advisor
Chair of Committee

Thomas W. Benson
Edwin Earle Sparks Professor of Rhetoric

Tony M. Lentz
Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences

Steven L. Herb
Education Librarian

James P. Dillard
Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences
Head of the Department of Communication Arts and Sciences

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School

ABSTRACT

The fairy tale “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” has endured hundreds of revisions and retellings throughout the last several centuries. Each version of this story carries with it traces of the author or authors and of the culture that produced that particular version. The meta-narrative must remain somewhat intact for any version to be recognizable as a variation of the Snow White tale. However, the elements that are added or subtracted by each author or authors make each version unique.

This work presents a close textual analysis of three popular versions of the Snow White fairy tale. The focus of this work is not to just highlight how versions are different, but rather to isolate the unique variants of each version. Once separated from the meta-narrative, these elements can be examined for the rhetorical choices made by each author or authors. I make the claim that by looking at what changed over time within versions of this one specific tale; one can read aspects of the individual cultures that produced each version.

I examine the first published version by the Brothers Grimm, the Walt Disney film, and the Michael Cohn film. These three versions are separated by one hundred and eighty-seven years and were produced in three very different cultures. I briefly present aspects of the three distinct cultures, changes made within the three narratives with analysis of those changes, and character studies for how each character was adapted for a new version. This evolution of the story and characters over time displays unique cultural traces present in each version that can allow rhetorical scholars to examine and understand possible cultural influences as they are manifest in one meta-narrative over time. This study explains how cultural traces can be seen in the variations between versions.

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Chapter 1

Fairy Tales as Unique Rhetorical Texts

“...of the entire “children’s literature” – with rare exceptions- nothing can be as enriching and satisfying to a child as the folk fairy tale.”

Bruno Bettelheim¹

The sheer quantity of narratives available to humans today is staggering and almost unfathomable. Categorizing these stories into genres that define both the stories and their target audiences would be a massive undertaking. Most books published today cater to specific genres, instead of having mass appeal. Every genre of literature now has sub-genres to better define the books themselves and their intended audiences. Rarely do narratives emerge that have mass appeal, accessibility, and adaptability to large audiences that span demographics.² Few stories in the history of narratives have been able to blur the lines between audiences and genres. However, many of the stories that have such wide appeal and recognition are fairy tales.³

Fairy tales have existed and undergone thousands of changes over time. Barzilai states that these tales are “continually recreated.”⁴ Few texts evolve with their audiences the way fairy tales do. Fairy tales are unique rhetorical texts; many texts that rhetorical scholars critique have not changed a single word since they were initially presented to the public.⁵ The Gettysburg

¹ Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), 5.

² The Harry Potter series is one of the rare narratives that has garnered recent mass appeal and accolade across ages, nationalities, races, genders, and other demographics.

³ This is not to say that all fairy tales have such mass appeal, accessibility, and adaptability to audiences. This also does not constitute a claim that most well known stories are fairy tales.

⁴ Shuli Barzilai, “Reading Snow White: The Mother’s Story,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 15, no. 3 (1990): 515.

⁵ Rhetorical scholars do not only examine static texts. However, most close textual analysis focuses primarily on specific texts or specific versions of a text, not a singular text that continually morphs to each new audience.

Address, for example, has remained unaltered since Abraham Lincoln spoke those famous words in 1863. In contrast, Jones notes that over four hundred versions of the Snow White fairy tale have been collected in the last five hundred years.⁶ That is almost one version published per year since the earliest known publications of this story in the early sixteenth century.⁷ Similar numbers of versions can be found in other fairy tales.⁸ Such changes over time do not make the meta-narrative for these fairy tales flawed, or in need of work, but attests to their adaptability and longevity. Most iconic texts that rhetorical scholars examine do not need such continual revisions and may be seen as static in comparison. Fairy tales continually change and adapt, which is the primary factor that makes them unique rhetorical texts.

Single fairy tales have changed characters, plot points, languages, and mediums from telling to telling. Versions of the Snow White fairy tale have been set in Germany, Ethiopia, Brazil, Japan, Russia, New York City, and many other locations. Some versions are very short and concise whereas other versions take hours to tell. These special types of narratives change with individual storytellers and individual audiences. They evolve and adapt. No other genre of narratives collectively moves with its audiences the way fairy tales do. Such texts provide rhetorical scholars with an interesting task because these texts are anything but static.

One reason these texts have such mobility and adaptability is because they are rooted in the oral tradition. Jones states, “Since the tales circulated orally at the start, there are no exact or established versions, no identifiable versions, and no fixed titles. In oral tradition, fairy tales circulated over hundreds and, in some cases, thousands of years in multiple versions, adapted by different narrators in a style or manner specific to each narrator, often in different historical

⁶ Steven Swann Jones, *The Fairy Tale: The Magic Mirror of Imagination* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995), 4.

⁷ Giovanni Batiste Basile’s *Il Pentamorone* is considered one of the first well known versions in 1637, but other versions were recorded sparsely before then.

⁸ The numbers of versions may not be as large as those for the Snow White tale, but select tales do have hundreds of versions.

circumstances.”⁹ Although individual storytellers can claim their versions of these stories, no one can claim authorship for most of these tales.¹⁰ Even with the few tales that have known authors, Jones continues to say the fairy tale “does not possess one single correct version; rather, there are a large number of renditions or inflections of the basic story, all of which are equally valid.”¹¹ Even though some versions of fairy tales, such as those by the Brothers Grimm or Walt Disney, are better known, they are not authoritative versions.

The genre of fairy tales contains hundreds of narratives and hundreds of versions of those narratives and the wide reach of this genre has spawned several misconceptions. Sheldon Cashdan discusses the three biggest misconceptions.¹² The first misconception is that fairy tales are children’s stories. Fairy tales were not told in the oral tradition or put into books for children until fairly recently. Terri Windling argues, “It is only within the last century that such tales were deemed fit only for small children, stripped of much of their original complexity, sensuality, and power to frighten and delight.”¹³ One can see some of this by reading a few of the Brothers Grimm tales that have not been widely published or presented in books for children.¹⁴

Problems can arise for the critic as a result of viewing of fairy tales as children’s stories. Some view fairy tales purely as children’s literature and, therefore, view them as less important than adult literature. Karlheinz Stierle presents a hierarchy of reading competencies that places adult literature at the top and children’s literature at the bottom.¹⁵ Such an order devalues

⁹ Jones, *The Fairy Tale*, 3.

¹⁰ Some notable exceptions to this are Charles Perrault and Hans Christian Andersen who each wrote many fairy tales.

¹¹ Steven Swann Jones, *The New Comparative Method: Structural and Symbolic Analysis of the Allomotifs of “Snow White”* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1990), 37.

¹² Sheldon Cashdan, *The Witch Must Die: The Hidden Meaning of Fairy Tales* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 2-10.

¹³ Terri Windling, introduction to Tanith Lee, *White as Snow* (New York: TOR Books, 2000), 13.

¹⁴ *Donkeyskin* would be one such example that involves excrement made of gold, incest, murder, and magic.

¹⁵ Karlheinz Stierle, “The Reading of Fictional Texts,” trans. Inge Crosman and Thekla Zacharu, *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation*. Eds. Susan R. Suleman and Inge Crosman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 83-105.

children's literature. Tim Morris continues this argument by stating, "For Stierle, and for many literary theorists, children's concerns are never as weighty as those of adults. High literature is at one pole of a continuum and the other pole is not occupied by *bad* literature as by *children's* literature."¹⁶ Many academic theorists, unfortunately, make such assertions. The study of children's literature, or texts that are considered part of that genre, is denigrated because they do not study texts worthy of criticism. Fairy tales written for children and adults are rich for criticism despite those who deem children's literature unworthy of such attention.

The second myth Cashdan dispels regards the Brothers Grimm. The Brothers Grimm did not write any fairy tales; they only compiled them in an effort to preserve the German oral tradition.¹⁷ But they were not merely transcribers. The Brothers gathered the tales and then artfully pieced them together, which gives them a certain level of authorship. Hurlimann states, "Even for the first edition they did a lot of revising, comparing with other sources, and trying to find a simple language which was at the same time full of character."¹⁸ Editing like this is especially apparent in later editions, where the tales were changed strategically for younger audiences.¹⁹

The final myth Cashdan debunks is that fairy tales teach moral lessons -- fables teach moral lessons, fairy tales do not. The purpose of fairy tales is to present human characteristics that are commonly seen and struggled with in the human condition.²⁰ Emotions like fear or anger, or having to face a difficult decision, are part of the human experience and, therefore, are integral parts of fairy tales. Audiences who hear these narratives can possibly see relevance in their

¹⁶ Tim Morris, *You're Only Young Twice* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 5-6.

¹⁷ Cashdan, 4-6.

¹⁸ Bettina Hurlimann, "Fortunate Moments in Children's Books," *The Arbuthnot Lectures, 1970-1979*, compiled by Zena Sutherland (Chicago: American Library Association, 1980), 61-80.

¹⁹ This would include removing elements of incest, toning down violence, removing the evil parent from many tales and replacing them with a stepparent, and removing some bodily functions.

²⁰ Cashdan, 7-8.

lives,²¹ but they do not necessarily take away specific lessons that fables teach.²² Some audiences may learn great lessons from these tales, however, the primary focus of this genre is to mirror the human condition, not instruct. These myths damage or devalue such scholarship on fairy tales, which is why they must be addressed.

Fairy tales have a deep seated place within culture. Bettelheim describes fairy tales, “not only as a form of literature, but as works of art...”²³ Art has its own meaning for each individual, but it also has larger resonance when accepted by a culture. Fairy tales, whether created by a particular culture or borrowed from another culture, have played an integral part in shaping and preserving cultural values and ideals. Some fairy tales, called monogenesis stories, are products of specific cultures and hold a unique resonance with natives of that culture. Hans Christian Andersen’s *The Little Mermaid* is one such example. We know the author and the originating culture. Polygenesis stories, on the other hand, possess more generalizable patterns that can be seen in a variety of stories originating from different countries.²⁴ Snow White is considered a polygenesis story. Maynard, McKnight, and Keady note that the basic patterns of the story can be seen in versions from Germany, Italy, Russia, Egypt, and many other countries from around the world.²⁵ The generalizable constants of the story appear in various forms of the tale from widely separated countries establishing Snow White as a universal story type where the elements that are present in most versions are core to the story.

²¹ Children learn about the struggle of good versus evil, the rewards that come with good deeds, and the punishment that come with evil deeds.

²² Fables teach specific lessons like the early bird gets the worm, do not talk to strangers, smart can beat strong, and other lessons like these.

²³ Bettelheim, 12.

²⁴ The use of both monogenesis and polygenesis as categories can be seen in the works of Stith Thompson, *Motif-index of Folk Literature: A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Mediaeval Romances, Exemple, Fabliaux, Jest-Books, and Local Legends* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955), and Kathleen Glenister Roberts, “Texturing the Narrative Paradigm: Folklore and Communication,” *Communication Quarterly* 52, no. 2 (2004): 129-142.

²⁵ Sally Maynard, Cliff McKnight, and Melanie Keady, “Children’s Classics in the Electronic Medium,” *The Lion and the Unicorn* 23.2 (1999): 186.

The status of the public that produces a version of a fairy tale can be imprinted onto the text. The problems of a society and how these problems are solved have influence on these narratives. Jack Zipes, a well-known authority on fairy tales, states, “The forms, shapes, and messages of folk and fairy tales are determined by the conflicts in cultural fields of production in the public sphere.”²⁶ Ronald Arnett and Pat Arneson further this argument: “When a story has enough coherence that it can be agreed upon by a group of people, it becomes public and is therefore a narrative.”²⁷ Any public must show some level of acceptance of a narrative, whether negative or positive, for the narrative to become part of the public dialogue. Such acceptance is consistent with Walter Fisher’s idea of “narrative fidelity,” which provides elements within stories that individuals can identify with.²⁸

Versions of Snow White began as personal stories because they originated in oral cultures. After telling and retelling, these stories soon became public domain. The individual authors slipped into the past, but the stories remained because they were valuable to the continuing public. These stories provided a legacy to be passed down to entertain and preserve stories that had cultural significance. Passing these stories down was not just an attempt by one storyteller to preserve these tales while still in the oral tradition, like the Brothers Grimm in print. Rather, a story that was accessible and acceptable to a public would be retained. Thus, the story persisted from generation to generation. Halden is quoted saying, “For centuries storytellers have retold tales in their own ways, embellishing the storyline with details peculiarly representative of both the individual teller and his time.”²⁹ Each storyteller presents the tale with his or her own spin to make the tale appeal to the immediate audience. Halden seems to echo Plato’s claim that

²⁶ Jack Zipes, *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1979), ix.

²⁷ Ronald C. Arnett & Pat Arneson, *Dialogic Civility in a Cynical Age* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999).

²⁸ Walter R. Fisher, “Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument,” *Communication Monographs*, 51 (1984), 10.

²⁹ Judith Halden, “Barthelme’s *Snow White*: The Making of a Modern Fairy Tale,” *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 45 (1981), 145.

orators must know the souls of the audience.³⁰ Audiences exist in a particular historical and social context, so tales adapted specifically for them are easily woven into the cultural fabric. As a result, each telling leaves an imprint on the culture for which it was adapted.

Although fairy tales belong to both individuals and cultures, they can not be owned by either. These meta-narratives contain universal traits, personalities, and scenarios. Because fairy tales are so malleable, they are rich texts for rhetorical critics to examine because these narratives are, as Zipes notes, “rarely retold in the same way, always adapting to the environment and circumstances in which they were generated.”³¹ Each version presents a consistent rhetoric from the meta-narrative as well as a variable rhetoric from the individual storyteller, the audience, and the context. These characteristics present a unique opportunity for rhetorical critics.

The Choice of Snow White for Examination

There are hundreds of fairy tales with hundreds of versions, but only a few dozen are widely known across many cultures. I have chosen to focus on the Snow White fairy tale for this study, and the reason is quite simple: Walt Disney.³² *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was Disney’s first major motion picture. It was also the first major film that was completely animated and it represents a major landmark in film making. Although Disney went on to make many more animated films from fairy tales, this film will always stand out because it set the standard for the others that followed. Many in the United States today are most familiar with the Disney versions of fairy tales. Disney films have dominated the market on representations of fairy tales.³³ To

³⁰ Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. Christopher Rowe (New York: Penguin Classics, 2005), 271d.

³¹ Jack Zipes, *Why Fairy Tales Stick: The Evolution and Relevance of a Genre* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 130.

³² For the rest of this study, the term “Disney” will be used to incorporate the man Walt Disney, the company and its employees that worked on the film.

³³ Disney has done this through films, books, games, and a wide variety of other merchandising and mediums.

properly analyze popular versions of any fairy tale today, a Disney version must be considered due to the overwhelming success and popularity of these versions. Maria Tatar states, “Walt Disney’s *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* has so eclipsed other versions of the story that it is easy to forget that hundreds of variants have been collected over the past century in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas.”³⁴ Yet, as Cashdan notes about the Brothers Grimm, Disney was not a creator of fairy tales, but an adaptor of them.³⁵

The Snow White fairy tale has endured for centuries as both an adult and child’s fairy tale, making this, as Maynard, McKnight, and Keady would say, a “classic work.”³⁶ Authors have made both subtle and grand changes to the aesthetics of the story. Despite the many changes made to suit different audiences, the story of Snow White remains popular. Such popularity may seem logical to those who only know the Disney version, but for those who know only the early Grimm version, this popularity may seem peculiar. Windling states, “Yet the Snow White theme is one of the darkest and strangest to be found in the fairy tale canon—a chilling tale of murderous rivalry, adolescent sexual ripening, poisoned gifts, blood on snow, witchcraft, and ritual cannibalism, in short, not a tale originally intended for children’s tender ears.”³⁷ The discrepancy between current understanding of this narrative and what was commonly thought of the same narrative before the Disney version is striking. These discrepancies provide another reason for choosing this tale.

³⁴ Maria Tatar, *The Classic Fairy Tales*, A Norton Critical Edition (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1999), 74.

³⁵ Cashdan, 10.

³⁶ Maynard, McKnight and Keady define a “classic work” with several conditions. The primary condition is enduring time and is contingent upon having meaning for more than one generation. See Sally Maynard, Cliff McKnight, and Melanie Keady, 186.

³⁷ Terri Windling, “Snow, Glass, Apples: The Story of Snow White,” <http://www.endicott-studio.com/rdrm/forsga.html> (accessed 11/26/2006), 1.

The wide variety of different versions of the narrative by many different authors also makes the Snow White narrative an inviting text for analysis.³⁸ Jones notes that, “the history of Snow White scholarship may be viewed as a model of folktale research in general, as it moves from a concern with origins and influences, to a survey of collected versions and typology, and then to sociological and psychological analysis of the tale.”³⁹ The present study draws on the considerable scholarship surrounding the Snow White narrative from other academic fields, including folklore studies, literature studies, history, and sociology. My work offers a rhetorical perspective concerning how different versions communicate specialized versions of this one meta-narrative⁴⁰, an approach which has not been discussed in existing literature.

The Snow White fairy tale has achieved a wide range of diffusion among many different cultures. The resonance of the Snow White narrative seems to transcend national identity, language, and culture and allows the critic to examine Snow White not just as a narrative, but as an archetype. As such, it lends itself to a comparative approach, which this work will undertake. Although there are hundreds of versions of Snow White to choose from to analyze, this particular study will examine three very different versions of the Snow White fairy tale over one hundred and eighty six years.⁴¹ Such an approach follows Jones’ work on Snow White: “In the case of ‘Snow White,’ there are over four hundred collected versions. Any interpretation of this folktale,

³⁸ The term “authors” will be used for the rest of this study to describe the Brothers Grimm, Disney, and Michael Cohn. None of these people actually authored this tale, but they all produced very different adaptations of it. Since they did change the aesthetics of the story to fit a certain audience, I will call them authors.

³⁹ Steven Swann Jones, “The Pitfalls of Snow White Scholarship,” *The Journal of American Folklore*, 92, no. 363 (Jan.-Mar., 1979), 70.

⁴⁰ The meta-narrative is the consistent aspects of the Snow White fairy tale that are present and essential to the tale across tellings.

⁴¹ Using only three versions of the Snow White tale is a limitation of this study. However, the three versions that were chosen do represent three very distinct historical cultures and incorporate two versions that are the most well known.

therefore, should logically be based on a cross-section of versions in order to verify the broad applicability of the findings.”⁴²

I will examine three versions of the Snow White narrative. The first version is the 1811 Brothers Grimm version entitled “Schneewittchen,”⁴³ published in *Kinder-und Hausmärchen*. “Schneewittchen” is the first publication of this tale by the Brothers Grimm and it has many striking elements that were edited out for subsequent publications; many of the later publications were targeted toward children. Most scholarship concerning Snow White begins with this version because it was one of the first versions to exist in print and be widely accepted and popular. The initial Grimm version has also been the basis for many subsequent versions, including the other two versions in this study.

The second version is the 1937 Disney film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. As previously mentioned, this is one of the best known versions of the tale. Such enduring popularity is partially because it was Disney’s first major film and partially because it has been shown, sold, and merchandised many times during the last seventy years. Disney’s film challenged an emerging medium. Short cartoons had been made before, but never one this long or intricate. Special effects were limited in the 1930s and animation would allow for so many things to occur that live actions films could not produce at the time. In addition, this story was presented to an audience that desperately needed a distraction. Nugent, a newspaper film critic, said, “Wars are being fought as the picture unreels; crimes are being committed; hatreds are being whetted; riots are being brewed. But the world fades away when Mr. Disney begins weaving his spell and

⁴² Jones, *The New Comparative Method*, 37.

⁴³ This is the original title for the Brothers Grimms versions in the German language. It will be referred to in English for the rest of this text.

enchantment takes hold.”⁴⁴ Because of its far reaching impact, any contemporary study of this fairy tale should include the Disney version.

The final version to be analyzed is the 1997 Michael Cohn film version, *Snow White: A Tale of Terror*. Cohn’s film was not critically acclaimed and was not even released in theaters. One reviewer of the film stated that the film was dumped from the movie studio because, “they could not conceive any interest in a film that told a children’s story in dark adult terms.”⁴⁵ The film was chosen because it is not a children’s film; rather it attempts to re-capture the darkness of the original Brothers Grimm version while making it presentable to a 1990s audience. Just as many of the early versions of Snow White were targeted towards adults, this film was also targeted to adults. Cohn’s film is entirely live action, relying heavily on special effects and make-up.

These three versions represent a wide variety of media, characters, and plot points. Each version also has many traces of the culture and time that produced it. These traces, or what McGee calls “fragments,” will be examined for their worth to the particular version.⁴⁶ The Brothers Grimm version is dark, but it presents the tale before the Grimms made it more child-friendly in subsequent editions. However, this version is true to an early nineteenth-century Germany that was trying to establish its own nationality. The Disney film is completely child-friendly and omits many aspects of the Grimm version. Disney’s version gave Depression-era America a dose of light humor and song that Americans celebrated.⁴⁷ The Michael Cohn version tries to reclaim the darkness of the original Grimms narrative, creating a shocking film that tries

⁴⁴ Frank S. Nugent, “One Touch of Disney: And New York Surrenders to the Genial Warmth of His ‘Snow White’ Fantasy,” *The New York Times*, 23 January 1938, ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2004), 157.

⁴⁵ Richard Scheib, review of “Snow White: A Tale of Terror,” <http://www.moria.co.nz/fantasy/snowwhite97.htm> (accessed 9/19/2007), 2.

⁴⁶ Michael Calvin McGee, “Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture,” *Western Journal of Speech Communication*, 54 (54 (1990): 280.

⁴⁷ This is not to say the rest of the world that viewed this film in the late 1930’s did not appreciate the film. See O. A. Lejeune, “Dopey is Adopted by John Bull,” *The New York Times*, 18 September 1938, ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2004), 159.

to capture the desensitized 1990s American audience. These three versions provide a cross-section of different variations of the Snow White fairy tale because, as Dundes notes, “It is always risky to base an analysis upon a single version of an item of folklore.”⁴⁸

Methodology

One can conduct a close textual analysis of any version of the Snow White fairy tale. Each analysis could prove to be interesting and informative. However, comparing versions highlights what is essential to the core narrative and separates aesthetic changes made by a particular author. According to Barzilai, “An analysis of numerous versions will yield interesting and valuable information about a variety of individual, national, and cultural characteristics.”⁴⁹ These cultural characteristics are primary in pinpointing what makes one version specific to a particular historical context. Roberts continues this thought by stating, “Narratives must be examined, for optimum understanding, in terms of culture.”⁵⁰ Hence the cultures that produced these tales are almost as important as the tales themselves. Eugen Weber argues that fairy tales are repositories of peasants’ social and political living conditions.⁵¹ These fairy tales preserve aspects of history as it actually was. Peter Taylor and Hermann Rebel further this, arguing that, “a more fruitful approach to fairy tales is to see them in connection with actual social life and social institutions, as a popular (and not elite) ideological product focused on the inherently imperfect and conflicting workings of a given social order.”⁵²

⁴⁸ Alan Dundes, *The Study of Folklore* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 110.

⁴⁹ Barzilai, 516.

⁵⁰ Roberts, 136.

⁵¹ Eugen Weber, “Fairies and Hard Facts: The Reality of Folktales,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 42 (1981), 93-113.

⁵² Peter Taylor and Hermann Rebel, “Hessian Peasant Women, Their Families, and the Draft: A Social Historical Interpretation of Four Tales From the Grimm Collection,” *Journal of Family History*, 6 (winter 1981), 352.

Scholars tend to agree that fairy tale revisions or adaptations are shaped by the audiences to which they are presented. Adaptation is a commonly understood axiom of writing or adapting any narrative: write for your audience. However, no methodology has been presented that examines the rhetorical changes made by authors from version to version to fully display how specific versions are marked with cultural stamps from the society that produced these versions. Finding a specific methodology for examining evolving rhetorical texts is not the primary focus of this study. However, such analysis may provide a possible framework for analyzing variations of a single text over time and variations.

The focus of this work is primarily a close textual analysis. Edwin Black makes the distinction between “etic” and “emic” approaches as a theory-based approach and a text-based approach.⁵³ My work will employ the emic approach to let the text guide which theories will be utilized. Michael Leff endorses such a focus on the text as being crucial to progress the field of rhetorical criticism.⁵⁴ Many theories will be utilized, but none will be forced onto the text.

Many scholars have conducted close textual analysis on individual fairy tales to examine the unique facets of that particular version. McGlathery states, “Each version, that is to say, has its own meaning within a given cultural context.” He continues to argue the circumstances, such as the individuality of the storyteller or the conventions of the narrative genre, which come into play when scholars try to interpret certain fairy tales.⁵⁵ McGlathery’s main argument is that societal pressures have an impact on each version. His claim seems reasonable, but this study differs from McGlathery’s approach by discovering the specific traces of culture that are imprinted onto and into each version of a text instead of focusing on how culture impacted the writing of the text. Luthi warns, “The comparison of the different variants shows us that we must

⁵³ Edwin Black, “A Note on Theory and Practice in Rhetorical Criticism,” *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 44 (1980): 331-336.

⁵⁴ Michael Leff, “Interpretation and the Art of the Rhetorical Critic,” *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 44 (1980):337.

⁵⁵ James M. McGlathery ed. *The Brothers Grimm and Folktale* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), X.

be cautious about our interpretation of details.”⁵⁶ Luthi’s comment is precisely why different versions must be examined together to help highlight the differences that are products of culture.

The primary aim of my study is to examine the text, texture, and context of each of these three tales to explain what changed between the versions, when it changed, and why it changed.⁵⁷ The secondary purpose of this study is to establish a rough methodology for examining evolving texts. Such analysis will contribute to rhetorical scholarship by providing a framework to examine several versions of one meta-narrative over time. Many established rhetorical theories help scholars examine the specific rhetorical functions of texts; however, there is no theory specific to evolving, or fluid, texts that fully addresses this project.⁵⁸ While current rhetorical theory does address the specific elements within the text, no substantial theory exists to address internal evolution of the language of a text that is changing textually to match evolving external factors.

In their preface to the second volume of the first edition of *Kinder-und Hausmärchen* (1812), the Brothers Grimm discuss variants of their published tales, noting that “these variants seem more remarkable to the editors than those who see in them merely changes or distortions of an original which once really existed.”⁵⁹ At the time, this may have been true, but from historical,

⁵⁶ Max Luthi, *Once Upon a Time: On the Nature of Fairy Tales* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), 33.

⁵⁷ Alex Dundes, “Text, Texture, and Context,” *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, 28 (1964), 251-265.

⁵⁸ One can look at Benson’s look at how rhetorical texts ask the audience to be or become (Thomas W. Benson, “Rhetoric as a Way of Being” in Thomas W. Benson, ed. *American Rhetoric: Context and Criticism*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989. 293-322.), Bitzer’s Rhetorical Situation (Lloyd F. Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1:1 (1968): 1-14) for elements of rhetorical discourse, Fisher’s narrative paradigm which establishes all communication as forms of narratives, Campbell and Jamison’s work on genre (Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, “Form and Genre in Rhetorical Criticism: An Introduction,” from Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson eds. *Form and Genre: Shaping Rhetorical Action* (Falls Church, VA: The Speech Communication Association, 1978), 9-32.), or Leff and Sachs’ work on iconicity within texts (Michael Leff and Andrew Sachs, “Words the Most Like Things: Iconicity and the Rhetorical Text,” *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 54 (Summer 1990): 252-273.). All of these supply rhetorical critics with theory to examine texts. However, none address the use of a narrative and it continually changes over time.

⁵⁹ Quoted by T. F. Crane, “The External History of the *Kinder-und Hausmärchen* of the Brothers Grimm,” *Modern Philosophy*, 19 (1917), 608.

cultural, and rhetorical standpoints, these changes that were made between versions are of considerable interest to scholars from many fields.

All authors have a specific audience in mind when they produce a text, even if the audience is idealized. Herbert Gans writes, “Every creator is engaged to some extent in a process of communication between himself and his audience, that is, he is creating something for somebody. This somebody may be the creator himself, other people, or even a non-existent stereotype, but it becomes an image of an audience which the creator develops as part of the creative process.”⁶⁰ Gans’ statements are in accordance with Black’s “Second Persona” in that it presents the speaker as having an idea of what he or she would want his auditor to become.⁶¹ To fully understand the specifics of any version, one must recognize the culture that produced that version. For example, in his analysis of the Declaration of Independence, Stephen Lucas illustrates the importance of understanding text within its historical context by demonstrating the terms and phrases that have become of prime importance to twentieth-century audiences were little more than established figures to eighteenth century readers.⁶² The historical context of each version must be examined in order to differentiate between traces of one version’s culture that are present in a specific version, traces of the individual storyteller, and core components of the narrative. Maria Von Franz articulates and endorses this rationale for examining the historical context:

When you see how they [fairy tales] originate and understand the way they are handed on, you realize that anything *personal* – which might come from the complexes of the person who had the vision or invented the tale from an active imagination, and

⁶⁰ Herbert J. Gans, “The Creator-Audience Relationship in Mass Media: An Analysis of Movie Making,” in Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White (eds.) *Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1957), 315.

⁶¹ Edwin Black, “Second Persona,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56(1970): 109-119.

⁶² Stephen E. Lucas, “Justifying America: The Declaration of Independence as a Rhetorical Document.” In Thomas W. Benson (ed.) *American Rhetoric: Context and Criticism* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989).

which would make the story deviate from the archetypal pattern – these things would be discarded or corrected by retelling, because what does not fit the psyche of the collective doesn't stick.⁶³

Von Franz's statement directly addresses the rhetoric of these specific texts; the archetypal patterns of the story are the aspects that endure.⁶⁴ If these variations are added into a certain version of the text and discarded by later retelling of the story, the details unique to one version will likely display certain societal reflections produced by the particular version of the text that adhere to what the present audience desired.

The present study will examine a wide variety of versions in terms of each tale's historical and sociological significance and influence. As Bacchilega states, "What interests me, then, is how the narrative construction and manipulation of the tale of magic contribute to making different ideological effects possible within specific historical and social contexts."⁶⁵ How versions of this tale reflect history and values to the audiences that are living that history and employing those values is important.

The use of cultural contexts is applicable not just to some of the original written versions of the texts, but also will be used for versions of the text that are based upon previous versions of the tale. Bacchilega writes, "The fairy tale is shaped by literary traditions with different social uses and users."⁶⁶ By looking at the literary devices used in versions of Snow White, certain assumptions, like how these traces of values are made manifest, can be made and substantiated by examining the texts with their corresponding contexts. The context surrounding any given reproduction of this tale can be seen as influencing certain details that make the story unique and shape the literate structure of the tale. All of these components make research such as this

⁶³ Maria Von Franz, *Archetypal Patterns in Fairy Tales* (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1997), 15.

⁶⁴ Von Franz discusses some of these archetypal patterns at length in her lectures on Jung that are presented in her book.

⁶⁵ Christina Bacchilega, *Postmodern Fairy Tales: Gender and Narrative Strategies* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 13.

⁶⁶ Bacchilega, *Postmodern Fairy Tales*, 8.

necessary to understand why and how changes were made to the make-up and rhetoric of each version.

To analyze the Snow White fairy tale, a variety of theoretical approaches will be utilized to examine both the texts and contexts surrounding the variations. An open method for analysis will be informed by John Campbell's "Between the Fragment and the Icon: Prospect for a Rhetorical House of the Middle Way." His approach between etic and emic criticism is useful to let the text guide the analysis, but to also employ theory when applicable onto the text. Such a fluid method allows the critics to adjust his or her criticism depending on how the text proceeds. I will examine the various versions of the tale in terms of critical responses as well and the contexts that produced them.⁶⁷ Such methodology allows latitude to discuss both theory and texts together. In addition, it allows for different levels of concentration. A possible theory for examining evolving texts may arise; however, the texts will stay central to this study over the theory.⁶⁸ An analysis of three popular versions is not meant to be an exhaustive genealogy of the Snow White fairy tale, but can provide a tool for such a work in the future.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter two will be a close contextual analysis of the three cultures that produced each version. Such an approach may seem more historical in nature, but as Barry Brummett states, "An important part of being rhetorical is existing in relation to some problem or situation."⁶⁹ Every aspect of those specific cultures will be not presented as that would be impossible and impractical. Those aspects that can be seen as influential within the texts will be presented and

⁶⁷ John Angus Campbell, "Between the Fragment and the Icon: Prospect for a Rhetorical House of the Middle Way," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 54 (Summer 1990): 346-376.

⁶⁸ My explanation of method is similar to the method described by Annalee R. Ward in her book *Mouse Morality: The Rhetoric of Disney Animated Film* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2002), 8-9.

⁶⁹ Barry Brummett, *Rhetoric in Popular Culture* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2006), 110.

examined to establish them as societal and cultural influences. The second chapter will examine German culture from the early 1800s. Then American culture from the late 1930s and late 1990s American culture will be analyzed. Finally, the mediums used for these three versions will be discussed.

Chapter three will be a close textual analysis of the narrative structure for each of the three versions. The meta-narrative is examined for the consistent aspects of each version. Differences are noted and explained in terms of cultural traces. Archetypal metaphors will be highlighted to separate consistent parts of every version and details unique to a particular version.⁷⁰ The narrative elements that remain constant are meta-narrative elements. All other aspects of each version will be isolated to examine their use within the narrative and whether these changes carry cultural markers.

Chapter four will be a character study. An examination of the individual characters within the Snow White fairy tale to see how the characters changed over time and showed traces of the culture with their personalities and actions will be presented. Every character or role that is consistently within all three versions will be examined.

My study concludes with a presentation of a possible framework for examining a fluid text and showing how the culture that produces a particular version of a fairy tale can be seen through examining what is unique to that specific version.

Such a study contributes to current scholarship in rhetorical, folklore, English historical and sociological studies. Much of the research used within this study comes from outside the communication discipline. My analysis will not only establish such studies from the

⁷⁰ With this use of archetypal metaphors, the work of Jung, as well as Maria Von Franz' work on Jung and the works of other theorists such as Michael Osborn (Michael Osborn, "Archetypal Metaphor in Rhetoric: The Light-Dark Family," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 53 (1967), 115-126.)

communication perspective, but will also add to the methods used in other disciplines for examining fairy tales as well as any other fluid text that adapts with different audiences.

Chapter 2

The Need for Close Contextual Analysis

“Follow a story through its variants and you are following the trade routes, the slave routes, the route of a conquering army, or that of a restless people on the move.”

Jane Yolen⁷¹

Narratives are inseparable from influence, whether it is personal pressures on the author or from the audience, pressures from the time or place, or internal pressures from the story itself. Narratives can never be devoid of context. These pressures and influences make narratives what they are. Yolen describes these pressures stating that, “The oldest stories were transmitted and transmuted, the kaleidoscope patterns of motif changed by time and by the times, by the tellers and by the listeners, by the country in which they arose and the countries to which they were carried. The old oral tales were changed the way culture itself changes, the way traditions change, by an erosion/eruption as powerful in its way as any geological force.”⁷² Such alterations to the text of any fairy tale were organic and arose naturally.

Culture promotes and manufactures cultural products. Narratives are cultural products that bear the stamp of a particular culture. Cashdan furthers this stating, “Fairy tales are historical documents of a sort and provide a rough picture of what life was like during periods of history when every day was a struggle for life.”⁷³ Cashdan’s comment is notable because these cultural stamps are not relegated to just the upper class or dominant aspects of culture. With most fairy tales originating in the oral tradition with the peasantry and then adapted to the upper class, these narratives have traces of diverse elements of political and social culture.

⁷¹ Jane Yolen, *Touch Magic* (New York: Philomel Books, 1981), 23.

⁷² Yolen, 23.

⁷³ Cashdan, 42.

Fairy tales exhibit cultural stamps just like other texts. However, the variations of these narratives over time highlight these traces of culture in a way that singular versions of a text do not. The longevity and adaptability of these stories over time contribute to their unique representations of the cultures that produced these variations. Zipes notes that “these tales became canonized because they were adapted from the oral tradition of folklore from aristocratic and middle-class audiences as print culture developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and basically reshaped and retold during this time to reinforce the dominant patriarchal ideology throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.”⁷⁴ He continues to say, “With each retelling the tale touches on basic instincts and moral codes and also adapts itself to the environment in which it is proposed.”⁷⁵ However, once a particular tale collects cultural stamps unique to one retelling, this does not mean that those stamps remain with the story like scars. They are often sloughed off and stripped down to the meta-narrative and then rebuilt with cultural stamps appropriate for the next audience. Some versions do retain some traces of a previous telling, but this can vary in degree from version to version.

Culture is difficult to define because it encompasses so many areas of concentration or influence. What follows in this chapter is a brief overview of three specific cultures. It is beyond the scope of this work to define every nuance of a country’s culture within a particular time frame; rather this chapter explores aspects of three cultures that directly pertain to the Snow White adaptations that these cultures produced. The chapter begins with an examination of early 1800s German culture, then moves on to discuss the late 1930s American culture, and finally, late 1990s American culture.

Establishing the historical context is necessary to appropriately place each of these versions in a specific moment and place in history. Belsey notes, “History is always in practice a

⁷⁴ Zipes, *Why Fairy Tales Stick*, 1.

⁷⁵ Zipes, *Why Fairy Tales Stick*, 131.

reading of the past. We make a narrative out of the available ‘documents,’ the written texts (and maps and buildings and suits of armor) we interpret in order to produce knowledge of a world which is no longer present.”⁷⁶ The second chapter will attempt such a reading and approach these “fragments” as rhetorical artifacts.⁷⁷ Political to social aspects, from the national scale to the familial, and the artistic to the economic will be examined. Each culture will dictate what aspects will be presented, as there is no standard way to examine culture.⁷⁸

Such a contextual analysis is informed by scholars in communication, history, sociology, English, and other fields in an attempt to gain a broad insight into each of these distinct cultures. Jenkins notes,

The past appropriated by historians, is never the past itself, but a past evidenced by its remaining and accessible traces and transformed into historiography through a series of theoretically and methodologically disparate procedures (ideological positioning, tropes, emplotments, argumentative modes)...(This is understood) as a rhetorical, metaphorical, textual practice governed by distinctive but never homogeneous procedures⁷⁹

Jenkins comment is important because no one alive right now can accurately describe and define all three cultures. Being removed historically from two of the three contexts does hinder an overall understanding of each culture. However, ample artifacts from each historical context make an analysis possible. Many traces from a variety of fields will be examined to inform the representation of each culture as it pertains to the three Snow White versions.

⁷⁶ Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy* (New York: Routledge, 1985), 27.

⁷⁷ McGee.

⁷⁸ This is not to say that culture has never been adequately defined or examined. For an example within the communication field, see Brummet’s *Rhetoric in Popular Culture*. For examples from cultural studies, see any of the works by Henry Giroux such as Peter McLaren and Henry A. Giroux, *Cultural Studies* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2007) and Henry Giroux, *The Giroux Reader (Cultural Politics and the Promise of Democracy)*, Christopher G. Robbins ed. (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2006).

⁷⁹ Keith Jenkins, “On What is History?” *From Carr and Elton to Rorty and White* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 178.

With each new audience in time, alterations must be made to the previous version of a fairy tale to update and contour the text to better suit the new audience. Stone comments, “While it may seem obvious that contextual change results in content modification, both the Grimms and the Disneys have been castigated for altering this tale in order to meet their needs of new expressive forms intended for new audiences.”⁸⁰ Disney especially has been vilified over the last fifty years for exploiting the classic fairy tales in order to make a profit. However, what both the Grimms and Disney did to the fairy tales was nothing new. Stone furthers this argument by stating, “When texts become attached to specific creators, the notion of originality in the dual senses of primacy and uniqueness come into play.”⁸¹ She continues, “As a story was increasingly edited by a single writer, it became more his story and less the people’s story.”⁸² All three of the authors of the specific versions presented here worked hard to make the individual versions their own. In so doing, they impressed more of their culture onto their versions than can be found in other retellings that did not add much to the meta-narrative.

Germany in the Early 1800s

In the early 1800s, Germany was going through a transitional phase. The country had been separated and ravaged by wars. With each army that marched through, certain traces of other cultures, besides German, became evident. In the late eighteenth century, the German states started to make bold steps to solidify itself as a nation, not just a collection of principalities. German people were trying to create a unified country and wanted to preserve the genuine aspects of the German culture. Pinson notes, “Germany is hard to define historically because its

⁸⁰ Kay Stone, “Three Transformations of Snow White,” in McGlathery ed. *The Brothers Grimm and Folktale*, 52.

⁸¹ Stone, 57.

⁸² Stone, 58.

boundaries have always been fluid.”⁸³ Until this point, Germany had few distinctly defined borders; the country was continually in a state of flux. Zipes states, “When the Brothers Grimm began their folklore research as young men in their twenties, Germany, as we know it, did not exist.”⁸⁴ Germany being in a state of flux made it difficult to define what was specifically German before the year 1800. Starting in the early nineteenth-hundreds, Germany began to solidify unique German cultural traits emerged and be recognized.

To attempt to describe German culture from this time period as it pertains to the Grimm version of Snow White, several aspects of culture will be examined. The nature of the family structure in Germany, as well as in Europe generally will be examined: the emergence of education and religious pressures; the political structure of Germany; the transition from the oral tradition into more of a print medium; and the Brothers Grimm and their unique place in Germany culture.

Family

Two major factors influenced the nature of family in Germany during this time. First, children were expected to grow up much quicker than in today’s society. Tatar states, “In earlier centuries, especially before the onset of public education, childhood was of a much shorter duration, with the child integrated into the adult world of work even before puberty.”⁸⁵ Children were expected to work for the family as soon as they were able. Because of this early onset of adult chores, many children were treated as adults early.

Since there were very few means of entertainment for the majority of the lower class, storytellers were very popular. Because children were forced to grow up quickly, they were

⁸³ Koppel S. Pinson, *Modern Germany* (New York: McMillian Company, 1996), 2.

⁸⁴ Jack Zipes, “The Grimms and the German Obsession with Fairy Tales,” In Ruth Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales and Society* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 273-274.

⁸⁵ Maria Tatar, *The Annotated Brothers Grimm* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2004), 244.

allowed to listen to the stories that entertained the adults. Most stories in this oral tradition were not created for children, but were told to them. Storytellers aided in this process of growing up by presenting the adult narratives to children.⁸⁶ Children were expected to work like adults, and were told narratives that exposed them to many of the darker aspects of humanity.

The second major familial factor was the high mortality rate. Generally, people did not live nearly as long as people do today. Medicine was still a growing science and even with advances in medicine, most people did not have access to medications or doctors. Opie and Opie describe one consequence noting, “The prevalence of step mothers is accounted for by the shortness of life in past times, by the consequent shortness of marriages, and by the practice of the surviving partner marrying again with unnecessary delay.”⁸⁷ Cashdan clarifies by stating:

One explanation for the mother’s absence in fairy tales is rooted in historical reality. Before the nineteenth century, childbirth was one of the major causes of death, and repeated pregnancies constantly placed a woman’s life in jeopardy. Common infections and diseases also took their toll. It thus was not unusual for children to find themselves motherless before they were able to fend for themselves. The replacement of the birthmother by a stepmother, a common occurrence in fairy tales, also has a basis in historical fact. The demands of agricultural life forced men to replace their deceased wives quickly who could care for the children and tend to the hearth. Love and extended romantic involvements lost out to practical considerations.⁸⁸

In fact, the term “Step” was added to common vocabulary during this time because of the predominance of men who remarried just to have someone to take care of children and the home. “Indeed, the word *step* in *stepmother* derives from the Middle English *steif*, which means

⁸⁶ Donna E. Norton, *Through the Eyes of a Child: An Introduction to Children’s Literature*, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall, 1999), 62-64.

⁸⁷ Iona and Peter Opie, *The Classic Fairy Tales* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 16.

⁸⁸ Cashdan, 42.

'bereaved,' a term used to describe an orphan child. Rather than being cruel, stepmothers historically were mother surrogates who provided comfort for orphaned children."⁸⁹

With the role of a stepmother becoming more prevalent,⁹⁰ it is natural that this element made its way into many of the common fairy tales. The Freudian term "splitting" was derived from these situations. When a child lost a mother and was then introduced to a stepmother, the child would associate the good qualities of both mothers with the birth mother and all of the bad or negative qualities with the stepmother.⁹¹ Splitting sets up the idea of the "wicked stepmother" that has come to be a staple in many fairy tales.

Education and Religion

As many aspects of German life were evolving, public education and the German ideas of religion evolved as well. Flenley notes, "Germany in the middle and more especially the latter part of the eighteenth century experienced a remarkable revival of literature and thought. It was a movement comparable in importance to the Reformation, and like that was one of the great movements in German History."⁹² The majority of the lower class citizens were not well educated because the need for children to work and add to the maintenance and support of the household was more important than children's education. However, as Holborn notes, "German intellectual and literary life gathered strength in the second half of the eighteenth century even though it had little support and little recognition from Germany's political rulers."⁹³ The idea of

⁸⁹ Cashdan, 18.

⁹⁰ It should be noted that while most remarriages included the birth father of the children and the stepmother, occasionally a father died and the mother remarried to produce a stepfather. This, however, was rare during this time period.

⁹¹ Cashdan, 26-27.

⁹² Ralph Flenley, *Modern German History* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company INC>, 1959), 77.

⁹³ Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), 305.

becoming educated and learning to read were becoming more popular amongst the lower classes. Burgeoning formal education was not set up by the state, but rather a grassroots movement.

Families were becoming eager to have their children educated. Therefore children began to go to school instead of working at an early age. The change in importance of education also aided women's roles outside of the home as they filled the increased need for schools and teachers of young children.⁹⁴ Although the lower class was beginning to become better educated, this did not close the chasm between the peasant class and the ruling class, but it did give the lower classes more options. Flenley states, "For whilst the movement was at first and in its own day almost purely literary and philosophical, and markedly remote from politics, in the long run it was to exert profound effects on the whole history of the German people, including that of the state."⁹⁵ Such an explosion of education and the ability to read different forms of literature set up the lower classes for future endeavors into politics, but during the early 1800s, most read to expand their mind, rather than to acquire political abilities. Holborn notes a general shift from the classicism of Gothe and Schiller to romanticism. "To them life was emanation of the absolute spirit in the world."⁹⁶ Germans were becoming more interested in humanity and the search for truth, rather than just accepting a life of work and place.

Revivals of interest in the human spirit also lead the German people toward spirituality and a strong sense of religion.⁹⁷ Holborn states, "The romantic imagination succeeded in discovering a spiritual content in all reality and, in addition, found new worlds beyond the real one in myth, fairy tale, and dream. It was not only a magic spell which was spun over all appearances but also a new warming glow brightening human life."⁹⁸ Romanticism became a

⁹⁴ Holborn, 309.

⁹⁵ Flenley, 77.

⁹⁶ Holborn, 346.

⁹⁷ This is not to say that the German people were not religious, but rather to say that religion began to play a larger part in the lives of most Germans around this time.

⁹⁸ Holborn, 347.

cyclical pattern where literature influenced the masses' search for spirituality, and the spirituality of those that were writing in Germany influenced their literature.

Germany's new found search for spirituality was widespread, but was not uniform in any sense. Pinson highlights such diversity, "In the realm of religion there were cleavages which affected profoundly the entire course of German history. The opposition between Christianity and paganism runs a steady course throughout all German history. It has been said, and rightly so, that Germany was never completely and thoroughly Christianized."⁹⁹ Windling notes that the Brothers Grimm continued to edit their own works, over the many publications, to emphasize their "good Protestant values."¹⁰⁰

Education helped create a new lower class. Lower classes had gained some mobility within their social class, access to some basic forms of literature, a larger philosophical outlook on life, and a renewed religious vigor. Each of these aspects began to inform each other in ways that the lower class in Germany had not experienced before. Traces of these aspects are displayed in much of the literature from Germany during this time. Ellis states, "In general, the Grimms continued to make the tales more and more acceptable from a moral standpoint."¹⁰¹ The Brothers Grimm were scholars of the time and their appreciation of how spirituality and education influenced each other becomes noticeable through their work.

Politics

In the early 1800s, Germany was a loose federation of thirty-five monarchical states and four city republics; there would be no real unification until the Vienna Treaty of 1815.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Pinson, 4.

¹⁰⁰ Windling, 1.

¹⁰¹ John M. Ellis, *One Fairy Story Too Many: The Brothers Grimm and Their Tales* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), 77.

¹⁰² Holborn, 386-422, 445.

Fragmentation prevented the formation of a distinct German culture. Elements of German culture were present, but were not commonplace outside of the individual principalities. Pinson explains that, “in understanding the evolution of Modern Germany one must never forget the enormous effect of the retarding of national unity in Germany. Only Italy and Germany had to wait until the middle of the nineteenth century (for national unity as a country).”¹⁰³ Germany was one of the last European countries to fully develop itself as an identifiable country.

The organization within the fragmented Germany was largely based on the medieval feudal system. The thirty-five monarchal states had the ruling class and the peasant class with little in between. Bacchilega notes in her analysis of Snow White that, “because it is grounded in the nineteenth-century European dominant discourse about women and the bourgeois cult of domesticity, the ideological effects are still with us”¹⁰⁴ She makes several claims about the Snow White fairy tale that all rely on the separation of the two distinct classes, which can be seen in history as well as within these fairy tales. She also states that gender roles that are present in updated versions of fairy tales still present women in gendered positions that are no longer commonplace in most of the world.

Once Napoleon retreated out of modern day Germany, the individual city states slowly began to recognize their weaknesses and realized their potential strength as a unified country.¹⁰⁵ Growing solidarity added to the increase in education and literature, and the unification of several fragmented cultural aspects. Zipes notes, “The rise of the fairy tale in the Western world as the mass-mediated cultural form of the folktale coincided with the decline of feudalism and the formation of the bourgeois public sphere.”¹⁰⁶ In 1812, when the Brothers Grimm first published

¹⁰³ Pinson, 10.

¹⁰⁴ Christina Bacchilega, “Cracking the Mirror: Three Re-Visions of “Snow White”,” *Boundary 2*, 15 no. 3 (Spring – Autumn, 1988), 3.

¹⁰⁵ For an interesting view of this history from the point of view of the Brothers Grimm, see Joseph Campbell, “Folkloristic Commentary,” in The Brothers Grimm, *The Complete Grimms Fairy Tales* (New York: Pantheon Fairy Tale & Folklore Library, 1944).

¹⁰⁶ Zipes, *Breaking the Magic Spell*, 12.

their collection of fairy tales, Germany was on the brink of defining itself as a country with a specific cultural identity.

The Brothers Grimm were at the right place at the right time to capture this shift into an unified country. Golden and Canen note, “The Grimms collecting and editing activity coincided with the socio-cultural shifts accompanying Germany’s movement from a small, agrarian society to an industrialized power. Their tales played an integral part in the Prussian Empire and Nazi Germany to foster nationalistic spirit.”¹⁰⁷ The rise of several aspects of German culture, such as a growing nationalism and a desire for a collective Germany, added to the political unification that would lead Germany well into the next century.

The Transition from the Oral Tradition to Print

Fairy tales had largely carried from generation to generation through the oral tradition to this point. Perrault’s fairy tales had been transcribed and various other versions had been written, but the majority still lived in the oral tradition. Lower class storytellers did not have literacy to capture the oral tales.

Goody presents the difference between artist-performer and artist-creator as part of the basic difference between an illiterate and a literate.¹⁰⁸ The dichotomy has to do with the use of knowledge and memory in both types of cultures.¹⁰⁹ Those who perform primarily utilize skills from the oral tradition regardless of level of literacy. Those who create need some of the skills from the literate culture not to identify or regurgitate information, but to use abstract thought to produce something not accessible to them before.

¹⁰⁷ Joanne M. Golden and Donna Canen, “Mirror, Mirror on the Wall”: Readers’ Reflections on Literature Through Literary Theories,” in *English Journal (High School Edition)*, 93, no. 5 (Urbana: May 2004), 44.

¹⁰⁸ Jack Goody, *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 158.

¹⁰⁹ Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (New York: Routledge, 1982), 1-3.

The oral tradition is an integral part of communication in any form. However, the limitations of the oral culture prohibit it from being reliable for any future examination. Hoffmeyer states, “Oral forms are believed to be vulnerable, tenuous and on the verge of extinction.”¹¹⁰ Hoffmeyer has a commonsensical view of orality. Ong states that while oral people do have levels of masterful use of language, they have no text or referent as in orality; words fly away too fast to be remembered or analyzed.¹¹¹ Oral cultures simply have no substitute for actual, real-world experience.¹¹² The abstract remains perpetually out of reach, even though it can be loosely recognized. Oral people do not “study,” they learn through experience.¹¹³ Orality is continually situated in the moment and limits their activities. Such limitations can create a desire for advanced ways of thinking and accessing information. Lentz further supports this need of oral people for immediate and concrete experience.¹¹⁴ Oral people live with language in immediate terms and only have specific connections with their own specific experiences. They rely on repetition to retain or memorize information.¹¹⁵ “The pre-literate, or non-literate, remains deeply situated, and confronts experience,” Sanders notes, “by walking right up to it and grabbing hold of it.”¹¹⁶ The oral experience is a valuable one and does provide a rich method for communicating. However, the limitations lock individuals in how they can experience and think.

As writing became accessible to the lower classes through the 1700’s and 1800’s, the way the lower classes accessed these fairy tales changed. The storyteller would rely on oral skills

¹¹⁰ Isabel Hoffmeyer, “Jonah and the Swallowing Monster: Orality and Literacy on a Berlin Mission Station in the Transvaal.” *Journal of South African Studies* 17, issue 4 (Dec., 1991), 663.

¹¹¹ Ong, 30, 33-34.

¹¹² Barry Sanders, *A is For Ox: The Collapse of Literacy and the Rise of Violence in an Electronic Age* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 29.

¹¹³ Ong, 9.

¹¹⁴ Tony M. Lentz, *Orality and Literacy in Hellenic Greece* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), 3.

¹¹⁵ Ong, 24.

¹¹⁶ Sanders, 32.

to a large extent; however, there is a change from an oral mind to an “alphabetic” mind.¹¹⁷ “Writing,” Schmandt-Bessert asserts, “is regarded as the threshold of history, because it ended the reliance on the oral tradition, with all the inaccuracies this entailed.”¹¹⁸ Writing allowed versions of these tales to become more concrete and consistent. Burgeoning forms of literacy show the ability to link memories together to produce a text.¹¹⁹ For the storyteller, Havelock states, “language ceases to be just echo and becomes artifact.”¹²⁰ Storytellers do not just engage in translation of a code, but are affected by the act of translating.¹²¹ Literacy changed how storytellers accessed and represented these tales. Such movement toward literacy led to the Brothers Grimms desire to take oral tales from the lower classes and write them to be presentable to those who were already literate, largely the upper class.

As populations grew, the oral tradition could not realistically meet the growing needs of formal education and literate audiences. Zipes supports this by saying, “With the rise of literacy and the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century, the oral tradition of storytelling underwent an immense revolution. The oral tales were taken over by a different social class, and the form, themes, production, and reception of the tales were transformed.”¹²² The availability of books had slowly increased until the year 1700. Until this time, few people could read and the narratives in print furthered notions of elitism and separation between social classes.¹²³ However, the production of books in accessible languages for the common public was starting to grow. “Reading was spreading from the learned circles.” Holborn comments, “In the second half of the

¹¹⁷ John Halverson, “Havelock on Greek Orality and Literacy,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 53, issue 1 (Jan. – Mar., 1992), 152.

¹¹⁸ Denise Schmandt-Bessert, *How Writing Came About* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), 1.

¹¹⁹ Eric A. Havelock, *The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 14.

¹²⁰ Havelock, 66.

¹²¹ Sven Birkerts, *The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1994), 96.

¹²² Jack Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell,” in Elizabeth Bell, Lynda Haas, and Laure Sells Eds. *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 22.

¹²³ Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell,” 24.

seventeenth century, about half of all books in Germany were still in Latin.” Only one-twentieth of the books available in Germany by 1799 were in Latin.¹²⁴ Literature was thus becoming more accessible and wide spread by the early eighteen-hundreds.

The availability of printed literature coincided with the rise in education within Germany. Storytellers were still present and told their tales orally, much like they had done for centuries before.¹²⁵ However, a shift was occurring away from having access to certain narratives through storytellers to having ready access to the same narratives through books. Röhrich notes, “A fundamental distinction is that both in print and film a story is fixed, and in that sense authoritative, while in oral tradition tales may be narrated many ways without ceasing therefore to be thought of as genuinely and authentically the same story.”¹²⁶ Although narratives were becoming more accessible, they were also becoming static. Goody points out that “with oral versions recited at different times and places, you cannot easily make a comparison, not the way you can when you lay the written versions . . . side by side and actually examine particular passages”¹²⁷ The individual flavor of the storyteller and the sense of timeliness, or *kairos*, were being threatened by books.¹²⁸

The way individuals experienced stories was evolving to allow both group and individual encounters in the oral and literate realms respectively. Zipes states, “Unlike the oral tradition, the literary tale was written down to be read in private, although, in some cases, the fairy tales were read aloud in parlors. However, the book form enabled the reader to withdraw from his or her

¹²⁴ Holborn, 309.

¹²⁵ For more on the long tradition of oral storytellers, see Lentz’s *Orality and Literacy in Hellenic Greece*, and Albert Bates Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960).

¹²⁶ Lutz Röhrich, “The Quest For Meaning in Folk Narrative Research: What Does Meaning Mean and What is the Meaning of Mean?” in McGlathery ed. *The Brothers Grimm and Folktale*, XI.

¹²⁷ Jack Goody, *The Power of the Written Tradition* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), 38.

¹²⁸ This is not to say that *kairos* is not present when reading a book. This means that there is a certain interaction between a live storyteller and a live audience that is not present when an individual reads a narrative.

society and to be alone with the tale.”¹²⁹ Having books available allowed individuals to “study” a text, not just experience the telling of it and then have the tale escape into the ether.¹³⁰ The general shift in mediums of narratives available encouraged the burgeoning interest in education, philosophy, and religion.

Literacy was reducing the personal connection between the storyteller and the audience. Zipes notes, “We have already seen that one of the results stemming from the shift from the oral to the literary in the institutionalization of the fairy tale was a loss of live contact with the story teller and a sense of community or commonality.”¹³¹ Zipes’ statement appears to contradict what Germany was doing as a whole. Germany was trying to unify itself as a country, but the rise of literacy seemed to take away the storyteller that brought a sense of community. Actually, both were happening. The individual states were becoming less reliant upon themselves as independent entities and started to experience things outside their small tight-knit communities. The internal sense of community within these states was lessening as the connections with external communities were strengthening.

Fairy tales illustrated the transition from orality to literacy as they were being adapted to the emerging medium. “They (fairy tales) appeared in print just when folktales were moving out of barns and spinning rooms and into the nursery.” Zipes states, “The process by which adult entertainment was translated into children’s literature was a slow one with a long transitional period when the line between the two was by no means clear.”¹³² Education and literature were becoming more commonplace. Because of this, young children needed a literature of their own to begin their education. Many of the adult tales were already being told to children, many of the first written tales for children were not sanitized for children. The tales were recorded just as they

¹²⁹ Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell,” 24.

¹³⁰ Ong, 9.

¹³¹ Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell,” 29.

¹³² Maria Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimms Fairy Tales* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 21.

were told. It was not until well into the nineteenth century that editions were specifically adapted for children and sanitized versions began to appear.

With the explosion of literature being both produced and consumed at the beginning of the nineteenth century, many distinct genres of literature began to emerge in Germany as well. Romanticism was blooming, and the poetry of the Romantic period led directly to the scholarly work of Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm.¹³³

The Brothers Grimm

The Brothers Grimm have long been considered heroes within German culture and history, but this is not to say that they have an untarnished reputation. Many scholars in the last century have called into question their methods, sources, and intentions.¹³⁴ These criticisms, however, have done very little to alter the place of the Brothers Grimm. Their collection of fairy tales is considered by most to be very thorough and complete and is one of the most examined collections.

Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm openly admitted to the fact that they were not creating any new fairy tales. McGlathery comments they “functioned as transmitters, retellers, or adaptors of existing narrative material, and indeed saw this as their role.”¹³⁵ The Brothers Grimm were not transcribers. They did not just collect the fairy tales and reprint them exactly as they heard them. The narratives were collected, compiled, and fashioned into complete versions using simple language.¹³⁶

¹³³ Holborn, 349.

¹³⁴ See Valerie Paradiz, *Cleaver Maids: The Secret History of the Grimm Fairy Tales* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), and McGlathery, *The Brothers Grimm and Folktale*, for examples of scholarly criticism of the Grimm brother’s work.

¹³⁵ McGlathery, IX.

¹³⁶ Norton, 62-64.

A vernacular clash occurred. The language of the oral tradition did not always fit well onto the page or in a manner consistent with the potential readers of the time. Stone notes, “The Grimms, for example, reworked traditional stories for an urbane audience of readers unfamiliar with oral material. Scholars have criticized their modifications as inappropriate and also as dishonest, since they claimed to be offering genuine traditional tales ‘straight from the lips of peasants.’”¹³⁷ The Romantic Movement had some influence here. The brothers altered the tales that they collected and cleaned up the language to make the tales seem more poetic and prolific. There is partial truth in the Brothers Grimms assertion; they did collect the tales directly from the lower class, but then reshaped them before presenting them in print to both social classes.

The Brothers Grimms interest was primarily academic. Cook furthers this argument, “They wrote as scholars, not as storytellers, and were obviously more concerned to preserve evidence for future anthropologists than to put their stories into words that would hold the attention of children.”¹³⁸ While their interests were primarily academic, the brothers were also very aware of the prose of the stories. Tatar supports this noting that, “the Grimms enterprise, we must recall, began as a scholarly venture and a patriotic project. As early as 1811, the brothers proclaimed that their efforts as collectors were guided by scholarly principles, and they therefore implied that they were writing largely for academic colleagues.”¹³⁹ The reason for collecting these tales was scholarly in nature, but did serve the purpose of telling stories effectively. The tales were constructed in a way that tried to preserve specific versions of them without using just the common vernacular that the tales were presented in originally, or the higher, more intellectual vernacular of the scholars.

The Grimms were trying to preserve the German oral tradition by collecting these tales. These tales were not purely unique to Germany. Traces of several of the fairy tales in the Grimm

¹³⁷ Stone, 52.

¹³⁸ Elizabeth Cook, *The Ordinary and the Fabulous* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 41.

¹³⁹ Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimm Fairy Tales*, 11.

collection have been found elsewhere in the world. Within just the European community, many similarities between countries can be seen when comparing versions. Some of this can be attributed to the literary movement that was taking place in Germany, but not confined to Germany. However, the tales they collected were all in the German language and were collected from German people. Zipes states, “Thus, their desire to publish a work which expressed a German cultural spirit was part of an effort to contribute to a united German front against the French.”¹⁴⁰ His statement may seem overly aggressive, but since Napoleon had just recently retreated from Germany and France shared the biggest border with Germany, part of Germany’s attempt to create a national identity was because of the French. Zipes continues to say, “The Grimms were indeed nationalistic, but not in the negative sense in which we tend to use the term today. Their ‘country,’ essentially Hesse and the Rhineland, was invaded by the French, and they were disturbed by French colonialist aspirations.”¹⁴¹

Germany had been dominated for centuries by other warring countries. With unification beginning, nationalism was present in many aspects of German life. “The Grimms appealed strongly to German nationalism because their own motives were nationalistic;” Ellis notes, “and so this factor is dominant both in the brothers’ fabrications and deceit, and in the strong reluctance of later scholars to acknowledge what they had done when the evidence emerged.”¹⁴² In some scholars’ minds, the purpose of what the brothers did had a stronger historical significance when looking at the larger context of the time period. Whether the Brothers Grimm deliberately changed stories to fit their own poetic needs or fashioned the tales to combine versions of a single tale is a matter of scholarly debate. Some of the methods the brothers chose

¹⁴⁰ Zipes, “The Grimms and the German Obsession with Fairy Tales,” 274.

¹⁴¹ Jack Zipes, *The Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forests to the Modern World* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), 111.

¹⁴² Ellis, 100.

may have been suspect, but the benefit of the final product to a country and culture seems to justify these means in many scholars' opinions.

The brothers thought the old German oral tales that they were collecting as some of the most natural and pure forms of culture.¹⁴³ With so many of these tales purely in the oral tradition at this time, they had not become static or preserved in one form or another. These narratives still lived within the minds of the storytellers and audiences within close-knit communities. In the words of Zipes, "The Grimms saw old German literature as the repository of valid truths concerning German culture. In particular, they believed that a philological understanding of Old German literature would enable Germans to grasp connections between the customs, laws, and beliefs of the German people and their origins."¹⁴⁴ By writing down and fashioning all of these tales, the brothers were made them static and preserved what they thought was the best of the German oral tradition.

The Collective Germany

Each of these components, family, education, religion, politics, and the oral tradition, influenced the Brothers Grimm and, in turn, left traces on their work. These aspects did not work independently of each other, but rather all placed certain stressors on each other that helped Germany identify itself and define the culture that made this country unique. Although this analysis does not constitute every nuance of German culture from the early nineteen-hundreds, it illustrates many of the major aspects that will be highlighted in later chapters with the text and characters of this one narrative.

¹⁴³ Zipes, *The Brothers Grimm*, 10.

¹⁴⁴ Zipes, *The Brothers Grimm*, 12.

The United States in the Late 1930s

Many aspects of the Disney film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* are occupied by the meta-narrative or are aspects carried over from the Grimm version. However, many cultural components unique to 1930s America left traces within the Disney film. Time Magazine reported, “The old movies almost always portrayed U. S. dreams – and thus, indirectly, realities. Just as the peasant tales retold by the Grimm brothers spoke of common maidens who could spin gold from straw, Hollywood created its own folk stories from the yearnings of 1930s audiences.”¹⁴⁵ A commonality exists in that the lower social classes en masse had a tremendous influence on the narratives that the culture produced.

Because of the many circumstances affecting Americans during this time, family became more important. People were forced, due to a lack of other options, to spend more time with their families. Susman described this phenomenon, “By the 1930s the average American and even the average American family had become central to what culture might be.”¹⁴⁶ More narratives emerged that focused on the individual who was down on his luck, rather than the sensational stories of the affluent.

One must examine several components to describe American culture in the late 1930s: the political scenario of the United States, especially within the larger world circumstances;¹⁴⁷ the socio-economic status of America and the depression: the need and use of entertainment for the masses will be presented: the emerging medium of film with color and sound: advertizing and merchandizing as it was becoming intrinsically linked with film: and the role of Walt Disney himself as he brought *Snow White* to the big screen.

¹⁴⁵ Time magazine, “The Late Show as History,” *Time*, 28 June 1968, 32.

¹⁴⁶ Warren Susman, *Culture and Commitment 1929-1945* (New York: George Braziller Inc., 1973), 187-188.

¹⁴⁷ This section will not discuss many of the individual aspects that created the political scenario America was in during the 1930’s. This section is presented primarily to establish a few of the major world-wide pressures of the time.

The Political Culture of 1930s America

The late 1930s was a confusing time for Americans. Images of World War I were beginning to fade, but a resurgence of unrest was gaining strength in Europe. The Great Depression was still strong and FDR was in the White House attempting to rectify the situation. Prohibition was repealed in 1933, so Americans could drink again, but they had very little else to distract them from the poverty at home and the new war abroad. After World War I, Cripps notes, “For good or evil, movies played to and helped define an American collectivity by means of an aesthetic that moviegoers *liked*.”¹⁴⁸ Movies were a means of escape for many Americans.

Movies, filmed shorts, and cartoons all helped divert attention away from the dominant oppressive world view. Zipes described this situation, “Though the intention was not malevolent, the Disney films were meant to distract viewers from grasping the evil they confronted in their daily lives, and pointed to illusory possibilities for happiness and salvation.”¹⁴⁹ The pressure was slowly building for America to enter the war in Europe, and with so many financial problems at home, Americans needed these distraction for their own sanity.

Bosley Crowther attempts to describe the situation during the late 1930s by stating in an article printed in 1944,

Six years ago! At that period we were living in what we called peace. Munich had not yet happened; there was no oppressive prospect of war. As a matter of fact, most of us vaguely cherished the hope that the ominous disturbances in Europe would eventually work themselves out. And Japan, at the end of a wide ocean, was just a country that sold us little things. We felt good and sublimely complacent when the dwarfs sang us “Whistle While You Work.” Who’d have thought that this jovial little ditty was destined

¹⁴⁸ Thomas Cripps, *Hollywood’s High Noon: Moviemaking and Society Before Television* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 140.

¹⁴⁹ Zipes, *The Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forests to the Modern World*, 61.

to become a war-plant song? What kill-joy dreamed that American draftees would soon be marching to “Hi-Ho, Hi-Ho”?¹⁵⁰

Whether Americans knew it or not, or more importantly whether they were willing to admit to knowing it or not, America was in a dark period that was soon to become much darker.

The Great Depression

Beginning with the stock market crash in 1929, America had plunged into unprecedented financial depression.¹⁵¹ Jobs and money were scarce, money was tight, and many Americans were forced to live well below their preferred lifestyle. Baxter describes the situation as, “In the decade between the Great Depression and the second World War,¹⁵² American society suffered its most sweeping changes since the Civil War, changes which were mirrored and distorted by the popular arts, and especially by the cinema.”¹⁵³ Because of the many pressures beyond the control of most Americans, America and American culture was changing. The narratives that emerged from this period, especially on film, were changing. Much like the nationalistic stories that emerged in Germany during the early nineteenth century, many of the films, such as *Way Out West*, *Mr. Deeds Goes To Town*, *My Man Godfrey*, and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, that Hollywood produced during this time were aimed to promote the American spirit, bolster a sense of nationality, and distract Americans from the current economic crisis.

Scholars debate how much of reality actually comes through in the movies. Knight states, “The depression had produced a new world, a new morality – and the studios, in giving the public

¹⁵⁰ Bosley Crowther, “Disney’s ‘Snow White,’ Reissued, Proves Itself Forever New-Other Films,” *The New York Times*, 9 April 1944, ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2004), X3.

¹⁵¹ This section will not discuss any of the causes of the depression or how the United States recovered from it. The primary focus here is on the direct effects upon the American public in terms of how they thought of and approached movies.

¹⁵² There was not actually a full decade in between these two events because the effects of the Great Depression were felt into the early 1940’s.

¹⁵³ John Baxter, *Hollywood in the Thirties* (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1968), 8.

what it wanted, reflected the seamiest side of the picture with unprecedented accuracy.”¹⁵⁴ Rhode seems to argue this point by noting that in 1933 with the depression on, “Hollywood became utopian – more interested in how things should be than in how they are.”¹⁵⁵ There was also a sense of reality that was beginning to develop within films that had not, up to this point, ever been seen. Americans were struggling and the movies began to show this. However, American film was not quite ready to display reality in full. A sense of reality was displayed, but this reality was still removed from what the average Americans would find in their own homes and communities.

Even with money becoming tight, Cripps notes, “During the Great Depression, some Americans admitted to being willing to give up any other amenity in their lives, rather than allow poverty to take away their weekly movie, as much a nourishment as bread.”¹⁵⁶ Movies were almost becoming a necessity as a means of distraction. When watching a movie, audiences were allowed to forget the reality of their world and were transported into another world.

With this growing reliance upon movies for an entertaining distraction, the movie industry had to adapt to this growing need. Hollis and Sibley describe the adaptation, “As the depression tightened its grip on America, movie theaters were increasingly obliged to give patrons more entertainment for their money.”¹⁵⁷ Very little money combined with a high desire to watch movies led Americans to seek theaters that would provide the best value for their money. Thomas explains, “The Depression had forced theaters to offer more and more entertainment to lure customers, and exhibitors had adopted the double feature – two feature length films on one bill. That meant there was little left in each theater’s budget or running time for short subjects.”¹⁵⁸ The depression had a huge impact on the movie industry from writing, to production, to

¹⁵⁴ Arthur Knight, “The Movies,” in Don Congdon ed., *The Thirties: A Time to Remember* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962), 381.

¹⁵⁵ Eric Rhode, *A History of the Cinema: From its Origins to 1970* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976), 335.

¹⁵⁶ Cripps, 1.

¹⁵⁷ Richard Hollis and Brian Sibley, *Walt Disney’s Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs and the Making of a Classic* (New York: The Walt Disney Company, 1987), 5.

¹⁵⁸ Bob Thomas, *Walt Disney: An American Original* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976), 129.

distribution, to showing. William H. Hays, then president of the Motion Pictures Producers and Distributors of America, was quoted as saying, “[The current demand upon the industry was for pictures] that present the strongest measure of hope in their portrayal of stories of success attained through initiative, through perseverance and sacrifice, and through the triumph of man’s spirit over material obstacles.”¹⁵⁹

The General Need for Entertainment

Even during the depression, Americans were still spending money at the box office. Some Americans spent more than one percent of their annual income just on movie tickets.¹⁶⁰ Although this may seem excessive from today’s standards, television was not available to the general public, and for many this was one of the only forms of recreation.

The entertainment industry provided much for the consumer’s money. Trent notes, “For from 10 to 50 cents you could see a double feature, plus a cartoon, plus a newsreel, plus (at the top price) an hour long stage show headed by top talent – up to five or more hours in which to forget the endless waiting in long lines for jobs that didn’t exist, the ominous letters from the electric company, the gas company, the phone company, the landlord, all saying the same thing: pay up ... or else.”¹⁶¹ The popularity of this medium during this time period clearly points to the need for most Americans to have this distraction. Most Americans could not afford to go to the movies, but they went anyway and went in droves. In the second half of the 1930s, movie

¹⁵⁹ New York Times, “Americanism Theme Now Popular With Movie Public, Hays Finds: He Notes Shift From Boy-Meets-Girl Topics to More Serious Current Problems – Also finds a Trend to ‘Snow White’ Thread,” *New York Times*, 28 March 1939, ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2004), 25.

¹⁶⁰ Cripps, 2.

¹⁶¹ Paul Trent, *Those Fabulous Movie Years: The 30’s* (Barre, MA: Barre Publishing, 1975), 5.

attendance per week in America was between eighty and ninety million.¹⁶² With around one hundred and twenty-three million people in America during the 1930s,¹⁶³ this means that over two-thirds of America was watching at least one movie in the theaters a week.

Because of the pressure on major studios to produce movies that would bring in much of the money being spent by the American public, film makers had to continually work to make better and more innovative movies. Animators from Disney would watch several current films per week to look for new ideas, innovations, or trends.¹⁶⁴ When new ideas, or even old narratives presented in a fresh way, were presented to the American people, the audience would let the movie makers know if they did a good job or not through the weekly attendance. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was the first film, as the New York Times reported, “to run more than three weeks at Radio City Music Hall. It was estimated by the theater management that more than 800,000 persons will have seen the picture there by the end of its four-week run.”¹⁶⁵ It was also not uncommon for movies to be pulled from theaters and then re-released around major holidays just to give Americans additional chances to see popular films.¹⁶⁶

The 1930s saw a huge upswing in movie attendance and production, despite the many troubles both home and abroad. Such phenomenon was not limited to the United States, but was also, to a lesser extent, noticed in other countries. By the late 1930s Mickey Mouse was being recognized in Africa, China, Japan, and other parts of the world. However, Germany had

¹⁶² Terry A. Cooney, *Balancing Acts: American Thought and Culture in the 1930's* (New York: Twayne Publishing, 1995) 74. This number documents how many tickets were sold in an average week and does not consider how many people saw more than one show per week.

¹⁶³ United States Census Bureau, *1930 Census* (Washington D. C.: Federal Archives, 1930, accessed 24 February 2008); available from <http://www.census.gov/pubinfo/www/1930facts.html>; Internet.

¹⁶⁴ Hollis and Shibley, 17.

¹⁶⁵ New York Times, “News of the Screen: ‘Snow White,’ First to Remain for Fourth Week at the Music Hall, Expected to Draw 800,000,” 31 January 1938, ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2004), 15.

¹⁶⁶ New York Times, “Screen News Here and in Hollywood: Marlene Dietrich Signs to Do ‘The Image’ Next Autumn for French Company, Paris Seeks Other Stars, ‘Snow White’ to Be Withdrawn From Canadian and United States Theatres in April,” 6 February 1939, ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2004), 13.

denounced him as a dirty rodent.¹⁶⁷ The films that the United States produced were spreading all over the world and those in America who needed these distractions found them readily available.

The Medium of Film

When an author changes the medium of a narrative, the message will change.¹⁶⁸ For a director to bring a fairy tale to the big screen, the tale must be adapted to the medium of film, which has rules that differ from print. Also, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was animated, which had different rules than live action films. In the 1930s, the major studios competed fiercely for the movie-goer's patronage. Each studio worked to create new ideas and to perfect technology before the other studios.¹⁶⁹

Disney produced the majority of the animated shorts at this time, so Disney had more facilities and animators employed than most other studios. However, many audiences did not give them much credit as the available animated shorts were just attachments to larger live action films. Disney wanted to produce a full length animated film partially to legitimate his work. Clark notes of the nature of film at the time,

If film is the distinctive art medium of the twentieth century, then animated film, which seems most fully to exploit the medium's potential, could be seen not just as "the perfection of the movie" but as the acme of twentieth century art. In the 1930s and 1940s, photography was still considered sort of dubious – many art critics and historians were reluctant to call it art. Hence moving photography, motion pictures, had only a precarious claim to artistry. Cartoons, however – animated drawings and paintings – seemed to

¹⁶⁷ Rhode, 343.

¹⁶⁸ See Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage* (New York, Bantam Books, 1967).

¹⁶⁹ Baxter, 10.

make a stronger claim: their ancestry could be traced to traditions of the fine arts in a way that the genealogy of live-action films could not.¹⁷⁰

Even with Clark's present claims and Disney's burgeoning world-wide recognition from the many Disney shorts, animation still did not have as great a place as feature length films in the 1930s.

There were many problems with the medium of animated films. Rhode notes, "The importance of colour remained unappreciated, and many of its difficulties left unresolved, until Walt Disney began to apply it systematically to his cartoons in the late 1930s."¹⁷¹ Disney was one of the first to try to apply certain technical skills of animation to his shorts. These attempts produced many innovations within animation over the decade. Part of the push for such innovation was Disney's desire to make *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

One problem animators struggled with when beginning on *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was to try to depict real people and real places in a cartoon. Before this, reality had little place in animated films. Live action films showed real people and places, but animated films focused primarily on the unrealistic, or that which could not be filmed.¹⁷² Walt Disney is quoted as saying, "The first duty of a cartoon is not to picture or duplicate real action or things as they actually happen – but to give a caricature of life and action – to picture on screen things that have run through the imagination of the audience – to bring to life dream-fantasies and imaginative fantasies that we all have thought of during our lives or have had pictured to us in various forms during our lives. Also to caricature things of life as it is today – or make fantasies of things we think of today"¹⁷³ Disney had to figure out a way to use animation in a realistic way without

¹⁷⁰ Beverly Lyon Clark, *Kiddie Lit: The Cultural Construction of Children's Literature in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 171.

¹⁷¹ Rhode, 260.

¹⁷² This mainly included animals talking and acting like people.

¹⁷³ Thomas, 125.

becoming too much like the live action films. Nugent states, “In ‘Snow White,’ Mr. Disney and his merry crew have attempted to blend the realistic and the fantastic.”¹⁷⁴

Many reviewers of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* had conflicting, but mostly positive, reviews. From reading most of them, it appears that many were not that familiar with the original Grimm version because they considered the two different versions similar. The *Times* reviewed the film and stated, “The life-blood of a cartoon is the drawing, and it says much for the script, the music, and the production that it emerged from this ordeal as a triumphant success. The miracle was that little adaptation was necessary.” The article continued to say, “The mad race at the end could only be suggested, but Snow White’s flight through the forest in the darkness was brilliantly recast for the new medium, reproducing exactly the macabre and fearful feeling of the original.”¹⁷⁵ Many critics reviewed the film favorably because Disney was providing something they had not seen before.

The *Times* preceded the previous comments months before by stating, “It is difficult to think of this production as a series of animated cartoons, so skillfully is the spirit of the tale captures and so faithfully is it recorded. The Grimm tradition has been followed faithfully, with no concessions to modernity – except that a little bird in a fit of exuberance whistles four bars of “Tiger Rag,” and the dwarfs impart a somewhat modern *tempo* to a German folksong.”¹⁷⁶ These comments seem to suggest no recognition of any change of the narrative at all between the mediums. Granted, the full length animated feature was a new concept at the time, but for the media not to recognize differences is highly questionable.

Some reviews of the new medium for this tale were negative, but were focused more on the technical aspects on the narrative. Hirschfeld reviewed the film and noted, “But the characters

¹⁷⁴ Nugent, 157.

¹⁷⁵ The Times, “Disney’s “Snow White” A Broadcast Version, *The Times*, 17 March 1938, 12.

¹⁷⁶ The Times, “Fairy Tale as Film Mr. Walt Disney’s “Snow White,” Grimm Modernized,” *The Times*, 14 January 1938, 14.

Snow White, Prince Charming, and the Queen are badly drawn attempts at realism: they imitate pantographically the actions their counterparts in factual photography.”¹⁷⁷ Such reviews were correct concerning the technical limitations of Disney’s innovations. Nugent furthered this by noting, “Hence it might be adduced that Mr. Disney and his staff have no trouble in making birds and beasts act like humans, but are hampered artistically when they strive to create humans who act as humans.”¹⁷⁸ Much of the criticism was about the technology that Disney was innovating at the time, rather than any changes to the narrative. Having a full length animated film was such a dramatic change with the medium that the medium was the aspect that got much of the press, especially in terms of criticism.

As Disney was quoted earlier, the goal was not to create animated humans that exactly replicated humans, but to create a caricature.¹⁷⁹ Churchill notes, “Disney and his staff learned that the public could not be critical of the actions of animals, because no one was sure just what a rabbit looked like when he smiled. But, being reasonably familiar with the human race, it was feared that the customers might be captious in viewing Snow White and the Prince.”¹⁸⁰ Much of the medium change here was recognized by the critics and the public, but was largely accepted as a new and enjoyable, if not quite perfect, version of this fairy tale. Disney’s new version became so popular that it was being translated and overdubbed into other languages for distribution to countries worldwide.¹⁸¹ The Times reported, “Even so, it is an adventure, and the more valuable when it is understood to be pioneer work in its own kind.”¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷ Al Hirschfeld, “An Artist Contests Mr. Disney,” *The New York Times*, 30 January 1938, ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2004), 154.

¹⁷⁸ Nugent, 157.

¹⁷⁹ Thomas, 125.

¹⁸⁰ Douglas W. Churchill, “Walt Disney Sighs for More Whirls,” *The New York Times*, 9 January 1938, ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2004), X5.

¹⁸¹ Thomas M. Pryor, “‘Snow White’ Sidelights Censors Toppled and Business Boomed as the Dwarfs Went Round the World.” *The New York Times*, 5 February 1939, ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851-2004), X4.

¹⁸² The Times, “Disney’s Film ‘Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs,’” *The Times*, 22 February 1938, 12.

Advertising and Merchandising

Along with the new use of the medium, Disney explored new ways of making money through advertising and merchandising. Disney had come to know the potential audiences that shorts and early features attracted.¹⁸³ Because of this familiarity, Disney began thinking about how to specifically target that audience. With feature animated films now possible, advertising and merchandise targeted toward children now seemed possible and necessary to Disney.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs was heavily promoted all over the country, and elsewhere in the world. Cooney notes, “Cultural advice of a different sort flowed unbidden to most Americans in the form of advertising.”¹⁸⁴ Disney began to sell more than just tickets to his films. Having products related to a film was not a new idea. However, Disney took this to a level that had not been witnessed before.

Disney recognized the marketing potential of products associated with his film. Cooney describes this, “New merchandise was created to tie in with the sales potential inherent in radio and movies: in the midst of the recession of 1937-8, a factory working overtime after the release of Disney’s *Snow White* would still fail to keep up with the market for rubber dwarfs.”¹⁸⁵ Disney created such media frenzy with this film that he could not keep up with the demand. Pryor notes,

Particularly significant, however, is the effect which the picture had on the nation’s economic life. Records attest that 147 concerns and/or individuals were licensed to manufacture 2,183 different novelty products, ranging from dolls to undergarments for children, based on the “Snow White” characters. “Snow White” drinking glasses have sold to the figure of 16,500,000 and there have been more than 2,000,000 purchases of

¹⁸³ Stone, “Three Transformations of Snow White,” 60.

¹⁸⁴ Cooney, 66.

¹⁸⁵ Cooney, 69.

dolls fashioned after the various little people. Too, book versions of the film story, scaled from 10 cents to \$2.50 per copy, reached a total of 20,000,000 sales up to last week.¹⁸⁶

These numbers are staggering even by twenty first century standards. But these numbers do display the extent that Disney went to advertise and merchandise this film.

Walt Disney

Walt Disney is no stranger to anyone familiar with American popular culture. His name is synonymous with bringing fairy tales to the big screen and into the homes and hearts of people for over seventy years. Many today will be more familiar with his versions of these fairy tales than any other version. He first gained success and major recognition with his animated shorts in 1933 with “Three Little Pigs.”¹⁸⁷ Some of his other shorts had become famous, like “Steamboat Willie” in 1928, but “Three Little Pigs” is what catapulted Disney to the forefront.

Disney was advancing the use of technology. Rhode states, “Disney was shrewd in recognizing the value of sound and, later, of the three colour process Technicolor.”¹⁸⁸ As stated previously, part of what made *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* work so well was Disney’s innovation with the medium. “*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, produced in 1936¹⁸⁹ as Walt Disney’s first feature-length animated feature, is most important because it became the prototype not only for all of Disney’s other fairy tales but for most feature film adaptations of folk and fairy

¹⁸⁶ Pryor, X4.

¹⁸⁷ Rudy Behlmer, *Behind the Scenes: The making of...The Matlese Falcon, Singin' in the Rain, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Stagecoach, A Streetcar Named Desire, The Adventures of Robin Hood, The African Queen, All About Eve, Casablanca, Frankenstein, The Grapes of Wrath, Gunga Din, High Noon, Laura, and Lost Horizon* (New York: Samuel French, 1982) 41.

¹⁸⁸ Rhode, 272.

¹⁸⁹ The film was not released until 1937.

tales by other producers.”¹⁹⁰ Thus, Disney was not only an innovator for his own animated films to come later, but also shaped a new genre of fairy tales adapted for film.

Disney wanted this film to be his version of the story, no one else’s. Stone states, “The Disney brothers also intended to reach a new audience with the now-familiar Grimm material by reinterpreting the story from print to film. While they made no false claims as to their source, the final film carries Walt Disney’s name in place of Grimms.”¹⁹¹ Disney made no claims that he or his company created the tales, or the meta-narratives. However, Disney did claim that these were his versions and that he completely owned his versions.

Disney was aware of the current situation in America and knew what his shorts were doing for the average American. Zipes echoes this, “Disney’s ‘popular’ culture reflects the socio-economic conditions of his times, and he was able to capsule the needs of both the culture industry and the American people in his art work to conceive a synthetic image of what America came to mean for him.”¹⁹² Disney was trying to bring the old world into the new world, in a new way.¹⁹³ His dreams were big and his ambition was bigger. He had found a new way to tell fairy tales.

The Collective 1930s United States

Each of these cultural aspects, politics, the Great Depression, the need for entertainment, the medium of film, and advertising and merchandising, influenced Disney and can be seen in his work. Disney came along at just the right time with the right ideas to make himself very

¹⁹⁰ Zipes, *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales*, 113.

¹⁹¹ Stone, “Three Transformations of Snow White,” 52. It should also be noted that the opening credits for the Disney film present this as Walt Disney’s *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, but they also state that this is adapted from the Brothers Grimm.

¹⁹² Zipes, *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales*, 115.

¹⁹³ Robin Allan, *Walt Disney and Europe: European Influences on the Animated Feature Films of Walt Disney* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 152.

successful. The historical conditions of the Great Depression needed products like his. Disney collected the right people to work on his products and pushed them for creativity that helped develop a new way of using a fairly young medium. Many of his innovations are accepted as common place now, but were revolutionary when first unveiled. All of these criteria left their marks on Disney's first major motion picture.

The United States in the Late 1990s

The analysis of the United States in the 1990s will be most brief mainly because much of Michael Cohn's film *Snow White: A Tale of Terror* is reliant upon the Grimm version of the tale and its historical context. Cohn's film is interesting historically because it tries to recapture the darkness of the original Grimm version and is targeted toward adults, much like the version of *Snow White* was in the oral tradition. However, there are some cultural stamps within *Snow White: A Tale of Terror* that do clearly display America in the 1990s: the importance of the father in 1980s and 1990s movies and the revision of the genre of children's films. These two aspects were the most influential in placing traces of 1990s American culture within the film.

The rising number of horror films in the previous two decades also had an impact on what audiences would expect to see from a thriller film. Dick provides an interesting timeline of horror films that gained popularity in the late 1970s and early 1980s, such as the *Halloween* series, the *Friday the 13th* series, the *Nightmare on Elm Street* series, and many of the Steven King films such as *The Shining*, *Carrie*, and *Cujo*.¹⁹⁴ Other films such as *Silence of the Lambs* and the *Scream* series allowed directors to show a little more gore than previous films had, but also combined shock with suspense to add more versatility to the genre that Alfred Hitchcock perfected decades before. These films prepared audiences for the darkness of Cohn's film.

¹⁹⁴ Bernard F. Dick, *Anatomy of Film* (New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2005), 175-180.

The New Role of the Father in Film

Many films previous to the 1980's displayed fathers that were disciplinarians and often distant from their family. Or fathers were shown in a sanitized, but aloof, role. Wood states that the "Restoration of the Father" became the dominant project of the 1980s.¹⁹⁵ Many films of the 1980s tried to present fathers in a much more positive role than they had been seen before. Fathers were more present in films and seemed to express more interest and care towards their children. Into the 1990s, Hollywood produced an enormous number of father-centered films.¹⁹⁶

From the beginning of the 1980s to the end of the 1990s, Hollywood showed tremendous growth and development of fathers within movies. Bruzzi notes, "The 1980s was a time of crisis for masculinity and fatherhood, but it also proved to be a time of male resurgence as one of the notable features of the decade's films is that fatherhood, having been defined in the 1960s and 1970s through feminism and women's issues, came once again to be defined, as it had been in the 1950s, by and for men."¹⁹⁷ The role of the father was being confronted in movies and was being recreated through them.¹⁹⁸

The father figure was becoming more important in American films. Bruzzi supports this by stating, "An important facet of the 1990s masculinity studies was the pervasive attempt to carve out a niche for fathers, but the persistent identification of this paternal identity with sensitivity and nurturing led to an adverse reaction in some quarters to the over-determined requirements of feminism."¹⁹⁹ In some respects, the role of the father seemed to move from the polar opposite of the mother role in the 1960s and 1970s to almost being too similar to the mother by the end of the 1990s. Some of this may have been caused by films in the 1980s and 1990s with

¹⁹⁵ Robin Wood, *Hollywood From Vietnam to Reagan*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 172.

¹⁹⁶ Stella Bruzzi, *Bringing Up Daddy: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Postwar Hollywood* (London: British Film Institute, 2005), 153.

¹⁹⁷ Bruzzi, 115.

¹⁹⁸ This is not to say that Americans accepted this new portrayal of the father as the way all fathers should behave. This merely points toward the way fathers were being portrayed within films during this time.

¹⁹⁹ Bruzzi, 155.

strong female leads which had never been witnessed on this scale before. Sigourney Weaver's role in the *Alien* movies displayed this strong female persona well. It proves interesting that she was picked to play the Queen in the new version of *Snow White* because she was known in the 1980's for playing such dominant female characters that were very masculine in their actions.

The Changes in the Children's Film Genre

Hollywood has never turned its back on children's films, especially in light of their popularity from the 1930s to present day. However, the genre has changed dramatically. Instead of having a few well done children's films emerging over a year, the market is now flooded with new releases for children constantly. Part of this can be explained with the availability of and accessibility to films right now. Also, the ability to produce many films and edit them with new technologies adds to this. With the market for children's products becoming bigger and bigger each year, this growth in children's films comes as no surprise.

Even with the ability to make films becoming more convenient for both producers and consumers, most children's films today have glaring problems. Most low-budget films for children, and even some major releases from Disney, have become too reliant on dated popular culture. Putting these popular culture traces in films, like adding the Macarena, a dance craze of the late 1990s, to Disney's *Mulan*, date the film and make it only relevant to a small pocket of people for a short period of time. Fewer films that are being produced in the early twenty first century focus on having a timeless quality about them. Dated material makes most films, as Lyman describes, "almost without exception, utterly forgettable" that "are clichéd and predictable and offer only momentary diversions for the children who see them."²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ David Lyman, "Where Have All the Monsters Gone? Once Upon a Time, Movies for Kids Were Sad and Scary. Then Hollywood, at the Urging of Parents, Made Some Changes. The Result? Everyone Lived Blandly Ever After." *Detroit Free Press*, 9 November 1997, 1H.

The 1980s and 1990s presented several remakes of fairy tales for children and adults. Most of these films, like *The Company of Wolves*, *Ever After*, *Jin-Roh: The Wolf Brigade*, and *Freeway*, seemed to take old tales and update them somehow to the 1990s.²⁰¹ Some of these films were made for just adults and therein lies the problem. Fairy tales have been associated with Disney for so long now that they are now considered to be children's stories. The Disney films were targeted toward children, but the long histories of many of these fairy tales shows that they have only been adapted for children for a relatively short period of time. Even with a film title like *Snow White: A Tale of Terror*, many thought that this was just an adult adaptation of a children's fairy tale, rather than a current retelling of an old adult story.

The Collective 1990s United States

These two criteria, the increasing roles of the father and the changes in the children's film genre were the most striking in terms of 1990s cultural impact upon this version of Snow White. Most of the film tried to recreate sixteenth century Bavaria, which was much closer to what the Grimms would have experienced and placed their version contextually. The changing role of the father is important for the way the father is portrayed in this film. The decline of the children's genre is noteworthy because of the reception of the film.

Conclusion

I have presented a contextual analysis of three very distinct time periods in the countries of origin for each version of the Snow White fairy tale examined in this work. Germany in the early eighteen-hundreds was emerging from reliance on the oral tradition and a fragmented

²⁰¹ Scheib.

society that sought a cultural identity. The increased desire for education and cultural and political unification provides the Brothers Grimm with a fertile context for the transcribing of the German oral narratives. The United States in the 1930s was hit with a depression in between World War I and World War II. Americans were seeking diversion and hope. New forms of media allowed Disney with the means to emblazon the American spirit onto the silver screen to both profit from and add to the American need for entertainment. The United States in the 1990s was fragmented and overloaded with versions of children's films and portrayals of overly sensitive father figures. The evolution of the horror film and the mixture of an old tale for an audience desensitized to basic elements of shock provided Cohn with a ripe context to produce his dark version of Snow White.

Each of these contexts presents distinct cultural markers that can be seen when the text of each version and the characters are highlighted and compared. The contexts establish specific rhetorical pressures that become evident in the way the individual authors shaped and presented their version of the narrative.

Chapter 3

Close Textual Analysis of the Story

“In the life-course of any given version of a tale, a number of typical accidents may occur. A foreign trait may become naturalized, an obsolete modernized. A general term (animal) may become specialized (mouse), or, vice versa, a special generalized. The order of events may be rearranged. The personages may become confused, or three acts confused, or in some other way the traits of the story may cross-influence each other. Persons and things become multiplied (particularly by the numbers 3, 4, and 7). Many animals may replace one (polyzoism). Animals may assume human shape (anthropomorphism), or vice versa. Animals may become demons, or vice versa. The narrator can appear as hero (egomorphism). Further: the story may be amplified with new materials. Such materials are generally derived from other folk tales. The expansion may take place at any point, but the beginning and end are the most likely to be amplified. Several tales can be joined into one. Finally: the inventiveness of an individual narrator may lead to intentional variations – for better or worse.

Joseph Campbell²⁰²

The narrative structure of any given fairy tale will change over time. Change is inevitable. Bettelheim notes, “Each narrator, as he told the story, dropped and added elements to make it more meaningful to himself and the listeners, whom he knew well.”²⁰³ Each storyteller adjusts the story to fit the current situation and audience. For the story to remain an adaptation

²⁰² Joseph Campbell, 7.

²⁰³ Bettelheim, 150.

and not become a new story, the meta-narrative, or the core of the story, must remain intact for this version to be recognizable as an adaptation of an earlier version. The ability of an individual to recognize the difference between an original and an adaptation becomes very important.²⁰⁴ No one alive knows the original version of the Snow White fairy tale since it was purely in the oral tradition.²⁰⁵ With no original available and with so many versions available in various mediums today, it becomes important to recognize what is the same among versions and what is different.

Despite the hundreds of versions of the Snow White fairy tale, most are easily recognizable as a variation of this story. Tatar states, “Snow White may vary tremendously from culture to culture in its details, but it has an easily identifiable core in the conflict between mother and daughter.”²⁰⁶ Core components are the one constant within all of the versions of Snow White. If one primary element was removed, the story would no longer be recognizable as Snow White. Major alterations would change the meta-narrative and would, therefore, no longer be an adaptation, but a loosely based original story.

The Grimm version has long been considered the authoritative version of Snow White. However, within current popular culture, the Disney film is best known and is the version that would be most readily recognizable. The Cohn film would be the least known as it only appeared on cable and was never promoted or was near as popular as the other two. Part of this can be explained by looking at film criticism. Dick states that adaptations draw the greatest criticism because the original becomes the standard.²⁰⁷ The Grimm version was the standard version that most people were aware of for over one hundred and twenty-five years. The Disney version was automatically compared to the Grimm version when it was released because the Grimms text was the most popular version in print. Once the Disney version became popular, it became the new

²⁰⁴ Maynard, McKnight, and Keady, 195.

²⁰⁵ This is true for most fairy tales, except those originally written by Charles Perault and Hans Christen Andersen.

²⁰⁶ Tatar, *The Annotated Brothers Grimm*, 242.

²⁰⁷ Dick, 261.

standard and was established as a children's story. When Cohn's film was released, it was instantly compared to the Disney version. Other film versions had been released between the two films, but the Disney version is still the standard for the film medium and for the twentieth century.

Each version has its own critics. Each critic has his or her own opinion and interpretation of that version. Jones notes, "Some students of folk narrative wonder aloud and in print whether these psychological interpretations are actually manifested in the texts themselves or whether they are simply the idle speculations of overly inventive, academic minds."²⁰⁸ Part of what determines the critics' view is their own methodology. When looking at the narrative structure of the tale, there are different forms of structural analysis to choose from. Jones describes this as, "The generic structure of 'Snow White' is a pattern of action underlying that narrative that reveals the essential connection between 'Snow White' and other related folk tales of persecuted heroines as well as the fundamental relationship between the tales and the society from which they grew."²⁰⁹ A recognizable pattern must emerge to identify tales that are adaptations and tales that are just similar.

There is a distinct structure to the Snow White episodes; however, not every version has the exact sequence of events. Jones explains, "Accordingly, these common events found in versions of a particular narrative are called *episodes*, and their identification is proposed as the basis for defining the tale type of 'Snow White' and differentiating it from other tales."²¹⁰ Each version has some similar episodes, but some episodes are left out and new ones can be added in, depending on the author of that specific version. Because of this, there is no one perfect way to analyze the narrative structure that will apply to all three versions. Propp's methodology is useful

²⁰⁸ Steven Swann Jones, "Joking Transformations of Popular Fairy Tales: A Comparative Analysis of Five Jokes and Their Fairy Tale Sources," *Western Folklore*, 44, no. 2 (April 1985), 98.

²⁰⁹ Steven Swann Jones, "The Structure of 'Snow White'," *Fabula*, 24 (1983), 63.

²¹⁰ Jones, *The New Comparative Method*, 21.

when examining some fairy tales, but becomes too structural for this type of analysis and is too specific, in many cases, to be fully applicable.²¹¹ Zipes also raises concerns about Propp's thirty-one basic functions because they are based on the Russian wonder-tale and are too structuralist.²¹² Jones supports this with his work on the Snow White fairy tale by noting that Propp is too formal.²¹³

Another major structural analysis method is the folktale formula that Glazer and Williams describe. They set up five major episodes. First, the story starts without any lengthy prologue or set up. Secondly, there is an introduction of uncomplicated characters, which can be good or bad. Thirdly, a variety of fools is introduced. Fourthly, the pace of the plot quickens. Finally, the audience sees the inevitable fate of the villains.²¹⁴ The structural form seems too vague to be of any real utility, but does provide basic parameters of fairy tales as narratives. There are other forms of structural analysis, but for fairy tales such as Snow White, these are the primary ones.²¹⁵

For the analysis of the narrative structure of the three versions, this chapter will largely use Jones' specific episodes from his work on the Snow White fairy tale, as they were created specifically for versions of this narrative. Jones states,

The structural methodology of identifying allomotifs (that is, related motifs that fulfill the same dramatic purpose in the same point in a narrative in different versions of that narrative) is used here to identify the significant actions of the story of "Snow White." For example, in "Snow White" the heroine may be killed in different versions by

²¹¹ Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, trans. Laurence Scott (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968).

²¹² Zipes, *Why Fairy Tales Stick*, 49.

²¹³ Jones, *The New Comparative Method*, 21.

²¹⁴ Joan I. Glazer and Gurney Williams III, *Introduction to Children's Literature* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1979), 202-206.

²¹⁵ There are other valid structural analyses of the Snow White fairy tale that presume certain ideologies that guide such analyses. For an excellent example, see Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), for a feminist analysis.

poisoned staylace, needle, raisin, or apple, but in all cases, *she is killed*, which is the significant action of that episode.²¹⁶

The details of each episode, or the allomotifs, set up a distinct structure that Jones described as fitting over one hundred different versions of the Snow White fairy tale.²¹⁷

This chapter presents a close textual analysis of the narrative structures for each of the three versions. The text will be “slowed down” to examine the inner workings of the narrative.²¹⁸ First, the Grimm version will be examined. Secondly, the Disney version will be analyzed. Finally, this chapter will analyze the Cohn version. Each of these versions will be presented in order of the nine episode sequence that Jones describes. The nine episodes are:²¹⁹

1. Origin: The beginning of the story
2. Jealousy: The Queen becomes jealous of Snow White’s beauty
3. Expulsion: Snow White is driven from the home
4. Adoption: The Dwarfs accept Snow White into their home
5. Renewed Jealousy: The Queen realizes that Snow White is not dead
6. Death: The Queen plots and kills Snow White
7. Exhibition: Snow White’s dead body is displayed
8. Resuscitation: Snow White is brought back to life
9. Resolution: The end of the story

Such structure provides a specific sequence to make the three versions easier to navigate. Each version will be examined through these nine episodes to show the consistency of the episode sequence and to highlight the different cultural traces imprinted in each version’s narrative structure. Not every episode for every version needs to be discussed. Each episode for

²¹⁶ Jones, *The New Comparative Method*, 21.

²¹⁷ Jones, *The New Comparative Method*, 22-24.

²¹⁸ Steven E. Lucas, “The Renaissance of American Public Address: Text and Context in Rhetorical Criticism,” *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 74 (1988), 241-260.

²¹⁹ Jones, *The New Comparative Method*, 36-76.

each version that displays a cultural stamp will be examined, as the meta-narrative that is present in every version untouched is not the focus of examination here. Also, each of these versions was given little or no context at the beginning of the narrative, so the time or locale will not have to be explained to introduce each version.²²⁰

The Brothers Grimm Edition

The Brothers Grimm published seven editions of their *Children's and Household Tales* during their lifetimes. The first edition was published in 1812 and the last in 1857. There have been numerous reprints since then. The first edition will be examined here. The version of the Snow White tale in the first edition contains a few striking differences that later editions do not possess.

The language used is easily understandable, but with a poetic sense of prose. Susan Issacs described their language by stating, "Grimms own words are comparatively bare and conventional, leaving the child free to fill them with his own images, according to his own psychological bent."²²¹ Issacs essentially describes how readers engage a printed text, but additionally makes the point of the accessibility of the Brothers Grimms prose. Zipes states, "The Brothers Grimm Germanized their material to stay in touch with the concerns and sensibility of the German people."²²² They intentionally fashioned their tales with the language of the common people, meaning the lower classes.

Children were quickly becoming the primary audience for the Grimm versions. Zipes notes, "The Grimms were totally conscious and open about their endeavors to make their material

²²⁰ This is one of the main contributing factors to the timelessness of this tale.

²²¹ Susan Issacs, "On "Snow White," To the Editor of the Times," *The Times*, 12 March 1938, 13. Ms. Issacs worked for the Department of Child Development in London during the 1930's. It is unclear whether she read the tale in the original German and was commenting on that language, or if she had read an English translation and was commenting on it.

²²² Zipes, *The Grimms and the German Obsession with Fairy Tales*, 275.

more suitable for children.”²²³ From the first edition, they had children in mind for these stories. The focus on children is why the first edition stands out so much. The tale was not altered by the brothers’ as much as later editions. Zipes continues, “The form and structure of the fairy tale for children were carefully regulated in the nineteenth century so that improper thoughts and ideas would not be stimulated in the minds of the young.”²²⁴

The Brothers Grimm produced several editions of their fairy tales and made strategic changes to every subsequent edition. Ellis describes this process, “The fate of *Sneewittchen* (Snow-White) as it progressed through the seven editions provides an especially striking example of how the Grimms practically destroyed the whole point of the story in their zeal to render it less offensive to sensibilities which expected the *KHM* (*Kinder-und Hausmärchen*) to be above all charming and never threatening.”²²⁵ In some respects, the Brothers Grimm were trying to preserve the tale as it was told to them in the oral tradition. However, as they continued to reconstruct the tale for children, it became less of the people’s tale and more of their own.

Each of the following sections presents an episode, or episodes, from the Grimm version to display the core elements and highlights aspects that are unique cultural traces. With the context established in the previous chapter, the connection to these details as cultural markers should become clear. All major cultural traces will be presented and situated within their historical context.

²²³ Zipes, *The Grimms and the German Obsession with Fairy Tales*, 274.

²²⁴ Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tale as Myth, Myth as Fairy Tale* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994), 14.

²²⁵ Ellis, 74.

Origin

Many fairy tales begin with the death of a father or mother, which creates many agonizing problems, just as in real life.²²⁶ However, in 1811, the first edition of the Grimm version does not have the mother, or Queen, die. Scenes 1 and 2 tell of the Queen's wish for a child and the birth of Snow White.²²⁷ Scene 3 begins with the Queen, Snow White's birth mother, asking her mirror who is the fairest in the land. There is no referent to the Queen dying and the King remarrying. The absence of a death is significant because in the early 1800's, stepmothers were becoming more common due to the shortness of marriages because of high mortality rates. However, it would not have been predominant enough to have pervaded the oral tradition that the Brothers Grimm used to fashion their first version.

Audiences over time will associate narrative elements or details with certain current historical situations. Opie and Opie note, "Indeed some details that appear to us romantic today may merely reflect social conditions when the tales were first formulated."²²⁸ The element of having the birth mother as the antagonist dramatically changes the rhetoric of the story. Keeping the birth mother alive positions the Queen as a much more evil person than a stepmother could be, even with the same murderous rage. Ellis supports this by stating, "(Having the birth mother) concentrates the action into Snow White's immediate family circle, and provides an added dimension to the rivalry between the mother and the daughter."²²⁹

The Brothers Grimm would change the mother to a stepmother by their second edition in 1819 because, as Windling states, "For them, the bad mother had to disappear in order for the ideal to survive and allow Mother to flourish as symbol of the eternal feminine, the motherland,

²²⁶ Bettelheim, 8.

²²⁷ All scenes discussed in this section can be found in Appendix A.

²²⁸ Opie and Opie, 16.

²²⁹ Ellis, 76.

and the family itself as the highest social desideratum.”²³⁰ Such change represented the responsibility the brothers felt toward children as their new target audience, toward the growing religious society, and toward Germany. The first version with the birthmother shows some of the last traces of the story from the oral tradition that was only for adult listeners. Changing the birth mother to a stepmother was a strategic move in later versions so the children would not become afraid of their natural parents.

Jealousy

The jealousy episode begins with the Queen asking her magic mirror who is the fairest in the land. Each response is the same that the Queen is the fairest. The Queen’s jealousy begins when the mirror answers, “You, my Queen, are fair: it is true. But Little Snow White is still a thousand times fairer than you.”²³¹ At this time, the text states that Snow White was seven years old. Her age is significant as later versions show Snow White as much older than seven.

Part of the rationale for presenting Snow White as a seven year old can be seen from the early maturity of children during this historical time. Children became adults much younger and were expected to act as such much earlier than children today. Snow White’s age also shows historical significance in that it was not uncommon for women to be presented as brides, especially within royal families, at an early age. Since Snow White was a princess, even if she is never called that in the text, it would not seem uncommon during this historical period for her to enter adulthood around this time because of the need for children to act as adults at a younger age.

²³⁰ Windling, 4.

²³¹ Scene 4.

Snow White's choices in the story are not that difficult and are primarily guided by her innocence. Should she run away or not? Should she trust others, or not? Those are the only real decisions she must make and her naivety leads her to answers. However, her character does become more complex when looking at both how Snow White is represented in the story and how she is shown to relate to other characters. She is not forced into a new role that is unknown to her, but rather is continually placed in a familiar role dictated by her age and gender. With children becoming more inclusive as an audience, the engendered role that Snow White is placed into positions the audience to see Snow White as having no options beyond this role.²³²

Expulsion

A cultural trace can be seen when the Queen orders the Huntsman to take Snow White into the woods, kill her, and bring back her lungs and liver for the Queen to salt and eat.²³³ Once the Queen has what she thinks is Snow White's lungs and liver, she cooks them and eats them promptly.²³⁴ Bettelheim explains the Queen's actions by stating, "In primitive thought and custom, one acquires the powers of characteristics of what one eats. The Queen, jealous of Snow White's beauty, wanted to incorporate Snow White's attractiveness, as symbolized by her internal organs."²³⁵ Once again, the primitive customs of cultures rooted in the oral tradition have their stamp on this first version.

²³² See Thomas W. Benson's "The Rhetorical Structure of Frederick Wiseman's High School." *Communication Monographs* 47, no. 4 (1980): 233-61, where he states the role of the critic is to inquire into the states that would be invited by a rhetorical discourse.

²³³ Scene 5.

²³⁴ Scene 8.

²³⁵ Bettelheim, 207.

Adoption

When Snow White first finds the Dwarfs' house, everything is neat, clean, and organized. She enters the house and then realizes she is hungry and thirsty. She eats some vegetables and bread. Then she drinks a drop of wine from each of the Dwarfs' glasses.²³⁶ A seven year old girl drinking wine would be outrageous today, but in Europe during this time, letting a child try some wine was not a major affair. Current societal norms dictate why she drinks a drop from each glass, and not full sips or gulps.

After her meal, Snow White falls asleep in one of the beds. When the dwarfs come home, they begin to question who has disturbed their home. They find Snow White, but do not disturb her. Rather, one dwarf shares a bed with another dwarf, changing each hour until morning. Upon the Dwarfs and Snow White waking in the morning, the Dwarfs ask her how she came to be in their house. She explains her situation to them. The Dwarfs pity her and offer conditions for her to stay with them. She must cook, sew, make beds, clean, and so on.²³⁷

The Dwarfs' offer is interesting because even though Snow White is a princess, the Dwarfs, being males, still control this situation. Snow White is not in the castle and, therefore, cannot make any demands. The Dwarfs, by virtue of being male, make the conditions, as would have been common during this time period. Women had very little control during this time period. Even being a princess, at seven years old, Snow White could not command anything outside of her home.

²³⁶ Scenes 9-11.

²³⁷ Scene 14.

Death²³⁸

Upon realizing that Snow White is still alive, the Queen begins to plot Snow White's death. The Queen realizes the Huntsman lied to her and is further infuriated. The Queen knows that only the Seven Dwarfs live in the seven mountains and so they must have rescued Snow White.²³⁹ The Queen disguises herself as an old peddler woman for the first attempt to kill Snow White.

It is important that the Queen makes three attempts to kill Snow White.²⁴⁰ In the oral tradition, many fairy tales somehow included the number three. The Queen makes three attempts to kill Snow White. Within different versions, the devices used to kill Snow White vary, but having three attempts is standard.

The Queen makes her first attempt to kill Snow White by giving Snow White bodice laces and then tying them on her so tight that she can not breathe. The Dwarfs arrive, loosen the laces, and revive her. Then the Queen changes disguises, makes a poisoned comb, and gives it to Snow White. Once it is in Snow White's hair, she falls over dead. Once again the Dwarfs return, they remove the comb, and Snow White comes back to life. The first two attempts are unique from the third in that the Queen tries to kill Snow White with bodice laces and a comb. Both of these items are used to make women more attractive. Additionally, the idea of binding the female figure in some form was common in some cultures during this time. Essentially Snow White is guilty of the same narcissism that drove the Queen to want to kill her.

In the final attempt, the Queen poisons half of an apple. The Queen knows that the Dwarfs have warned Snow White against accepting anything from a stranger. Therefore the Queen must be cunning. She presents the apple to Snow White. When Snow White refuses it, the

²³⁸ The Renewed Jealousy episode is combined with the Death episode here because the Renewed Jealousy episode did not contain any distinct cultural traces.

²³⁹ Scene 15.

²⁴⁰ Scenes 16-25.

Queen, in her different disguise, takes a bite from the un-poisoned half and then offers the rest to Snow White. Showing the apple halves plays on the idea of duality within this archetypal metaphor. One half of the apple provides sustenance for life, and the other half provides death.²⁴¹ The two halves also bear a cultural trace of the times in that food could not be wasted, especially by the peasant class. Fruit was not commonly available to the lower class and, therefore, would make an apple seem irresistible to Snow White, since she was eating only what the Dwarfs had for her.

Exhibition

The Dwarfs cry for three days after they find Snow White dead. They build a glass coffin to place her in because she has not decayed.²⁴² During this time period, methods of preserving a body were not known in Europe and dead bodies would either be burned or buried quickly. The Dwarfs waited three days for the body to show signs of decay, but since it did not; they built a special coffin for her to continually observe her beauty.

It is important to recognize the characters here. Snow White is the Princess. Her father is the King. The Prince is her brother. Snow White's relationship to the Prince is implied, rather than clearly stated. However, royal families in Europe were known for marrying their own relatives. Incest, for lack of a better word, was an attempt to keep the royal blood line pure. Because this was well known to happen in royal families, there was no need for any explanation or referent to the Prince being from another kingdom.

The Prince accidentally finds the Dwarfs cottage while searching for shelter in the woods.²⁴³ Once he sees Snow White, he falls in love with her and tries to buy her from the

²⁴¹ See Osborn, 115-126.

²⁴² Scenes 27-28.

²⁴³ Scene 29.

Dwarfs. The Dwarfs refuse to sell her, but do give her to the Prince once they see how strongly he loves her. Because of his strong love, the Prince begins to take Snow White's body with him everywhere he goes. The Prince's actions are unusual, but during this time it was not too uncommon for a person to carry around a remembrance of a lost loved one, even if it bordered the grotesque.

The exhibition episode is not exclusive to the Snow White fairy tale. Bottingheimer comments, "Both 'Little Briar Rose' and 'Snow White' conclude with a prince coming upon a sleeping young woman, a subject that has been a magnet for discussion of gender roles in passivity and sexuality."²⁴⁴ Reliance on male heroes has been debated by many current feminist scholars. However, during the time, the role of women was largely a passive one, unless they were in positions of power.²⁴⁵

Resuscitation

In an earlier unpublished version by the Brothers Grimm, Snow White was awakened by her father who finds the coffin and then orders his royal physicians to revive her by tying her body to ropes connected to the four corners of a room.²⁴⁶ The Brothers Grimm changed this to the Prince finding Snow White. In both versions, Snow White is powerless and held in eternal death waiting for someone, a man, to bring her back to life.

In the first edition of the Brothers Grimm, a servant, who has to carry Snow White's body in the glass coffin around everywhere the Prince goes, gets sick of doing this. He opens the coffin

²⁴⁴ Ruth B. Bottigheimer, *Grimms Bad Girls and Bold Boys* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 164.

²⁴⁵ See Gilbert and Gubar for a more thorough examination.

²⁴⁶ For complete English texts of both the 1810 and 1812 unpublished variants, see Alfred David and Mary Elizabeth David, *The Frog King and Other Tales of the Brothers Grimm* (New York: Signet Classics, New American Library of World Literature, 1964).

and slaps Snow White in the face.²⁴⁷ Once he slaps her, the apple piece falls out, and Snow White comes back to life. It is easy to see why this detail is removed by the next edition published by the Brothers Grimm. This scene further situates the dominance of males over females during this period. The male servant feels justified by slapping the Princess because she is a woman and is dead.

Resolution

The Grimms' version concludes with Snow White and the Prince planning a wedding for the day after Snow White comes back to life.²⁴⁸ Such a short engagement would seem incredibly quick by today's standards, but since the mortality rate was much higher in those days, lengthy engagements were rare. Snow White's mother is invited to the wedding. Because of her evil deeds, the Queen is forced to wear iron shoes that have been in the fire and dance in them until she falls over dead.²⁴⁹ The wedding party, with the King, Prince, and Princess in attendance, watches as the Queen, their mother and wife, dances in glowing iron shoes until she is dead. The method of the Queen's death is rather barbaric, but is not unrealistic for methods of torture that were devised during the Middle Ages. The fact that the Queen is put to death at the wedding and the method of her death both act as cultural traces.

Most of the editions published by the Brothers Grimm ended this way. However, in the second edition, the mother was changed to a stepmother who made this final barbaric act not seem as drastic. With the replacement of Snow White's mother with a step mother, a reader can feel justified by the wedding party's cruel punishment for the Queen's evil deeds. The Queen's torture and death gives closure to the reader and the death seems more fitting. The story

²⁴⁷ Scene 31. This event was changed in the 1819 version to a stumble instead of the servant deliberately striking Snow White.

²⁴⁸ Scenes 32-33.

²⁴⁹ Scene 35.

collectively creates a character for the reader to hate and then removes the hate at the end with the Queen's death. Her death can provide justice and allows the audience to see good triumph over evil.

The Disney Edition

When Disney's film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was released in 1938, it received critical acclaim. "The first and outstanding virtue of this film is that it plays no tricks with the story. It is an entertainment for men and children which is without equal, as entertainment, in the history of films."²⁵⁰ Adults and children alike waited eagerly for the next showing of this masterpiece of cinema. In 1938, many thought this was a faithful revision of the original Brothers Grimm version, which had been widely spread for over one hundred years. Such an assertion is incorrect. Disney made vast changes to the aesthetics and storyline of Snow White. In doing so, he also changed the rhetoric of his filmed version.

Every author has reasons for adapting an existing narrative. Windling supports Disney's motives by stating, "Walt Disney was fond of fairy tales, but he was not shy of reshaping them to suit his needs, turning them into simple, comedic tales he believed that his audiences wanted [a generation marked by economic depression and two world wars]."²⁵¹ Disney knew his target audience well. He knew how to fashion a tale so that the parents would approve and the children would be enthralled by such a vivid story. As he did with many other fairy tales, Disney sanitized *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* by removing the more gruesome details and adult themes that he deemed inappropriate for children.²⁵²

²⁵⁰ The Times, "Films in the Suburbs and Provinces: "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," *The Times*, 19 September 1938, 10.

²⁵¹ Windling, 7.

²⁵² Rip Rense, "Scary Ever After, Are the Original Macabre Fairy Tales Suitable for Children?" *The Los Angeles Times*, 17 June 1992, 1 (Home Edition).

Disney also wanted to present this story in a way that no one had seen or heard before. One review noted, “In contrast, the dramatic and realistic resources of Disney’s technique are so magnificent and so compelling that the child who has only recently learnt to distinguish between what is real and what is imagined may well be shaken to his depths.”²⁵³ With film’s relative youth, many of the new techniques that Disney used astonished audiences with a closer sense of reality that cartoons had never displayed before.

Disney was willing to make any changes necessary to his film to make it work.²⁵⁴ Guroian states, “As in so many cases, Disney has turned this popular fairy tale into a story about romantic love.”²⁵⁵ Disney was making the medium as important as the narrative. He changed many aspects of the story to fit the medium and vice versa.

Disney’s film represented many of the values of America in the 1930’s. Wilkie-Stibbs supports this, “Disney adaptations of fairy tales are particularly interesting to an intertextuality of children’s literature because, as touchstones of popular culture, they reflect the way in which each generation’s retellings have assumed and foregrounded the dominant socio-linguistic and cultural codes and values at a particular moment in history: for example, Disney’s foregrounding of Snow White’s good looks alongside qualities of moral rectitude and goodness claimed for her by earlier written stories.”²⁵⁶ Wilkie-Stibbs implies that because Disney was so consumed with altering the story and medium to fit each other, he produced a version of the tale that is deeply marked by its cultural context. This section of the chapter will highlight these specific cultural markers.

Disney wanted to make a version of this story that would captivate audiences, but he also wanted it to be perfectly clear that this was *his* version. Zipes states of Disney’s control,

²⁵³ Issacs, 13.

²⁵⁴ Katherine and Richard Greene, *Inside the Dream: The Personal Story of Walt Disney* (New York: Roundtable Press Books, 2001), 51.

²⁵⁵ Vigen Guroian, *Tending the Heart of Virtue: How Classic Stories Awaken a Child’s Moral Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 181.

²⁵⁶ Christine Wilkie-Stibbs, “Intertextuality and the Child,” in Peter Hunt ed. *Understanding Children’s Literature* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 174.

What did Disney actually do to have his name flash on top of the title as “Walt Disney’s *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*” in big letters and later credit his co-workers in small letters? As we know, Disney never liked to give credit to the animators who worked with him, and they had to fight for acknowledgement. Disney always made it clear that he was the boss and owned total rights to his products. He had struggled for his independence against his greedy and unjust father and against fierce and ruthless competitors in the film industry.²⁵⁷

Thomas supports this authoritative control of Disney’s by noting, “Story men and animators made contributions at the conferences, but it was always Walt’s voice that dominated, suggesting camera angles, indicating moods, and, most valuable of all, acting out his concept of the dialogue and action.”²⁵⁸ Disney felt he had to be in complete control as he wanted his vision of what Snow White should be to be the version on the silver screen.

Disney made a more pragmatic than sentimental choice of Snow White for his first feature length film. Thomas comments, “He recognized it as a splendid tale for animation, containing all the necessary ingredients: an appealing heroine and hero; a villainess of classic proportions; the Dwarfs for sympathy and comic relief; a folklore plot that touched the hearts of human beings everywhere.”²⁵⁹ Disney also added elements to the story to make it a well rounded film. He created songs that were integral to the plot, not just filler. Behlmer supports this, “It was Disney’s objective that the songs would either offer exposition, develop characters and situations, or advance the plot, rather than be mere musical interludes inserted here or there. He wanted a fusion of story, character, and music.”²⁶⁰ Crafting the songs strategically made *Snow White and*

²⁵⁷ Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell,” 38.

²⁵⁸ Thomas, 136.

²⁵⁹ Thomas, 130.

²⁶⁰ Behlmer, 55.

the Seven Dwarfs the first musical film where the music was integral to the plot, as opposed to *Oklahoma!*, which was produced in 1943 and is most often cited as the first musical film.²⁶¹

Disney's film, with all of its accolades, is not without its criticisms. Tatar states, "The Disney version of 'Snow White' relentlessly polarizes the notion of the feminine to produce a murderously jealous and forbiddingly cold woman on the one hand and an innocently sweet girl accomplished in the art of good housekeeping on the other."²⁶² Zipes seem to partially refute, but also support this by noting, "Of course, the house for the Grimms and Disney was the place where good girls remained, and one shared aspect of the fairy tale and the film is about the domestication of women."²⁶³ The role of women in fairy tales is very much situated in the past. The naïve virginal princess is positioned against the old, vain evil Queen. Part of this critique is unjustified historically, but can be used to make more contemporary acceptance or interpretation of the tale.

Since the 1938 release of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, Disney heroines have slowly evolved to become stronger and more independent as women and individuals. However, remnants of the stereotypical placement of women in relation to men are still noticeable in modern Disney films.²⁶⁴ Such positioning of the heroine gives *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* special historical significance because it seems to capture women's roles from an older period, but also begins the evolution of the modern day heroine that recent Disney films present.²⁶⁵

The 1930's provided Disney with a rich historical culture to sample within his film. The following episodes examine what Disney changed from the Grimm version to his film adaptation

²⁶¹ Hollis and Sibley, 26.

²⁶² Tatar, *The Classic Fairy Tales*, 78.

²⁶³ Zipes, "Breaking the Disney Spell," 37.

²⁶⁴ Many examples of this can be seen in *Sleeping Beauty's* need for a prince to wake her, *Cinderella's* reduction to household chores, *Wendy's* acting as a mother to *Peter Pan*, *Ariel's* trading of her voice in hopes of wooing a man, and *Belle's* devotion to taking care of her father at the cost of her own freedom. These are but a few examples.

²⁶⁵ *Belle* in *Beauty and the Beast* and *Mulan* in *Mulan* are two such heroines that have stronger, more proactive and independent characteristics.

and attempts to explain these alterations in conjunction with the historical context. I will highlight many specific scenes from the film to display aesthetic changes as well as narrative changes.

Origin and Jealousy²⁶⁶

The opening credits of the Disney film note that this version is adapted from the Grimms Fairy Tales.²⁶⁷ Such a statement makes clear to the audience that this film is an adaptation of a well known fairy tale and it gives credit to the version that is the most well known at the time, the Brothers Grimm version. However, viewers see “Walt Disney’s *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*” as the title first. Disney recognizes the other well known version, but clearly establishes this version as his own.

After the credits, a book opens. The pages open to present the current relationship between Snow White and her stepmother by stating that the Queen is evil and forces Snow White to dress in rags and work as a scullery maid. There is no mention of the birth mother or father at all. Snow White is presented as an orphan.²⁶⁸ There is a significant change from the Grimm version before the story has even begun. Snow White’s birth mother is deleted from the story entirely. The absence of Snow White’s birth mother also erased Snow White’s birth, her mother’s death, her father’s remarriage, and her early youth. The choice of erasing the mother all together is a peculiar one.²⁶⁹ By not mentioning the birth mother, there is no context present for the stepmother to enter. The stepmother merely existed in Snow White’s life from the onset. The presence of the Queen from the beginning is also significant because it takes any positive female role model for Snow White out of the story completely. In fact, this removes all other female

²⁶⁶ These two episodes are combined here because the narrative switches back and forth between the two.

²⁶⁷ All scenes for this version can be found in Appendix B.

²⁶⁸ Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell,” 36.

²⁶⁹ Disney did erase the birth mother from the film, but she was referenced and drawn in some of the authorized Disney version books and comic strips. Behlmer, 59.

characters besides Snow White and the Queen. One possible explanation for this coincides with the Freudian term “splitting.”²⁷⁰ However, the audience, which is intended to include children, will be able to attach all negative attributes with the Queen and all positive attributes with Snow White. Presenting the two females as polar opposites simplifies the good versus evil element for the younger audience, but also reinforces a binary of good versus evil. There is no in between.

Snow White, as the prologue states, is forced to work as a scullery maid. Her actions set Snow White up in a subservient role from the very beginning. The audience is told nothing of her past, just that she wears rags and does menial labor. With no other information provided, it becomes implied that Snow White thinks of her dress and work as what should be a normal existence for her. She does not show any traces here of looking or acting like a princess. The text also states that the Queen forces Snow White to wear these rags because the Queen feared that Snow White’s beauty would pass her own. Snow White’s aesthetic quality is another variation from the Grimm version. Disney presents the Queen who fears Snow White’s beauty even while the magic mirror continues to reply that the Queen is the fairest of them all. The Queen displays her narcissism before Snow White’s beauty even blooms.

The prologue ends by telling the audience that each day the Queen checks her mirror to make sure she is still fairer than Snow White. In the first real scene of the movie,²⁷¹ the Queen asks her usual question to the mirror, “Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?” The language here is changed from “us all” in the Grimm version to “them all” in the Disney version. Disney seems to be positioning the Queen separate from all other women, which might explain why she was jealous of Snow White’s beauty even before the mirror acknowledged it. When the mirror replies that Snow White is the fairest in the land, the Queen immediately replies,

²⁷⁰ Bettelheim, 69.

²⁷¹ Scene 3.

“A lash for her.” The Queen’s line positions her in enough authority to have the princess whipped like a common criminal.

The mirror then describes Snow White as having lips red as the rose, hair black as ebony, and skin white as snow. Such description sets up Snow White’s name and the significance of the colors associated with her because these wishes of her mother were taken out of the beginning. Allowing the mirror to explain these characteristic traits lets Disney include this line without having to explain the Mother. There is also a change here. Disney changes “red as blood” to “red as the rose.” Disney changed this to avoid mentioning blood to the younger intended audience. Disney is attempting to remove some of the explicit violent images. Also, by exchanging the blood with a rose, the virginal characteristic of Snow White is more explicit.

Scene four finally shows Snow White to the audience. She is dressed in rags and scrubbing stairs outside of the castle. She does not look seven years old as she is described in the Grimms version. She is drawn by Disney’s animators to look like she is in her mid teens. Her appearance is probably due to the change of the theme of the film to a romantic story. In the 1930’s, seven year old girls did not get married. Disney had to make her look older so that she could fall in love with the prince at the end of the movie and their romantic love would be thought of as sweet, not immoral and illegal.

Snow White is cleaning the stairs and is singing “I’m Wishing,” which is a song about her desire for her love to find her. Her song is the first marker to note the change in atmosphere of this story from a very macabre tale to a lighter romantic one. As she is singing, the Prince approaches and begins to sing with her. Their first meeting in the film plants the seed for Snow White to long for the Prince throughout the film and to be complete at the end when the Prince rescues her. Disney filmed another scene with the Prince to be placed in the middle of the film,

but this was cut and saved for the film *Sleeping Beauty*.²⁷² After the Prince has left, the audience sees the Queen again. The Queen's presence establishes her jealousy for Snow White's beauty and youth as well as her ability to attract a suitor.

Expulsion

Scene eight begins with the Queen instructing the Huntsman to take Snow White into the woods and kill her. The Huntsman argues with the Queen, but the Queen implicitly threatens him if he does not do her bidding. The Queen hands him a box with a heart and a sword through it as the clasp. She tells him to bring Snow White's heart to her once she is dead. Disney changes the Queen's request from the lungs and liver to the heart. Changing which organs are discussed also has connotations to the romantic nature of the Disney version and seems slightly less disgusting for the children viewers.

As Snow White and the Huntsman leave the castle, viewers see Snow White in a very nice dress.²⁷³ Her attire further reveals the controlling nature of the Queen. When Snow White is within the castle walls, she is dressed like a scullery maid. However, once she goes outside of the castle walls, she is dressed like a princess. Once again, there is a duality that is noticeable. Snow White must appear to all those outside her home as well dressed and happy, while inside the home she is stripped of everything. Goffman supports this with his ideas of self presentation in the front stage versus the back stage.²⁷⁴ While Snow White is in public, she is dressed properly, but is in rags when she is out of the public eye. This dichotomy could be seen as representing many people in America during the Great Depression who kept their financial problems in the home, but appeared to be fine to others outside of the home.

²⁷² Behlmer, 44.

²⁷³ Scene 9.

²⁷⁴ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959).

Once the Huntsman realizes he can not make himself kill Snow White, she runs into the forest and he kills a boar to bring the heart to the Queen. The Huntsman is still the male figure and the one with the power in this scenario. He chooses to set her free. In this version, Disney changed what the Queen does with the box of Snow White's organs. The Queen did not eat the heart, but rather kept it in the box so that it was never seen. The act of saving Snow White's organs removed the cannibalistic nature of the Queen and lessened her capacity for evil. The Queen still intended to murder Snow White to satisfy her vanity, but was not as malicious in her attempts as in the Grimms version. Removing these specific elements toned down attitude presents the Queen as being evil, but evil on a level that would not scare children in the audience. Once again, Disney fashions this story around his new audience.

As Snow White runs through the woods to escape the Huntsman,²⁷⁵ the woods come alive. The behavior of inanimate objects is something that Disney could do effectively with film that the Brothers Grimm could not fully capture in the same way. Once again, the light/dark metaphor is utilized.²⁷⁶ When Snow White is picking flowers, the sun is shining and everything is light. A shadow covers Snow White when the Huntsman approaches with his knife. Once she enters the forest, everything around her becomes dark. When Snow White collapses to the forest floor crying, the light around her gets stronger as the woodland creatures come out to comfort her. The nature of the animals presents another element that Disney could add only through film. The animals that comfort Snow White as she sings "With a Smile and a Song," all have human qualities like the intended audience would have. They smile, nod, and eventually lead Snow White to the Dwarfs cabin much as non-talking humans would.

²⁷⁵ Scenes 10-12.

²⁷⁶ Osborn.

Adoption

Snow White is led to the Dwarfs cottage. Upon entering the cottage, Snow White sees that it is filthy.²⁷⁷ Disney presents the opposite of what the Grimm version describes. Everything in the entire cottage is filthy and looks like it has been abandoned, not lived in. Snow White notices that everything is small and wonders if children live here. But where is their mother? Her question positions the Dwarfs as child-like and non-threatening. Her thinking of the Dwarfs in this way also gives Snow White something in common with the Dwarfs; neither have a mother. The establishment of an absent or deceased mother gives Snow White the opportunity to assume the domestic role that the current society expects of her.

Snow White believes that if she cleans the cottage, the Dwarfs will allow her to stay.²⁷⁸ She begins to clean and the animals help her. Snow White sings “Whistle While You Work” and seems very happy to be cleaning the Dwarfs’ cottage. These actions further the notion that women should be happy when fulfilling their “duties.” “The Disney version itself transforms household drudgery into frolicking good fun, less work than play, since it requires no real effort, is carried out with the help of wonderfully dexterous woodland creatures, and achieves such a dazzling result. Disney made a point of placing the housekeeping sequence before the encounter with the dwarfs and of presenting the dwarfs as “naturally messy,” just as Snow White is “by nature” tidy.”²⁷⁹ These stereotypes further the idea of the domesticated woman and that “boys will be boys.” The men are out working all day and do not have time to tend to the house. Therefore, the only way the house will be kept is to have a woman around. In the 1930’s, women were still not a large part of the workforce yet. Disney’s presentation of Snow White being happy

²⁷⁷ Scenes 15-16.

²⁷⁸ Scenes 17-18.

²⁷⁹ Tatar, *The Classic Fairy Tales*, 79.

to stay at home is reflective of those times. The song that Snow White sings also tends to signify that women are, or should be, happiest when they are working in the home.

Scenes 19-26 introduce the dwarfs as miners and show them coming home to their cottage to find Snow White. Snow White is asleep in the Dwarfs' beds and wakes up when they enter the bedroom. The Dwarfs are very quiet and almost scared of Snow White. Snow White introduces herself, even though the Dwarfs recognize who she is, and then she guesses the Dwarfs' names based on their personalities. Disney is making the Dwarfs marketable here. He gives the Dwarfs individual names and distinct personalities. This scene also shows a shift in the balance of power. Zipes describes this as, "For instance, in the Grimms tale, when Snow White arrives at the cabin, she pleads with the dwarfs to allow her to remain and promises that she will wash the dishes, mend the clothes, and clean the house."²⁸⁰ The Grimm version presents the Dwarfs in power and making the conditions for Snow White to stay. The Disney version has Snow White making all of the conditions for her to stay. Her actions do more to diminish the role of the Dwarfs in the Disney version than to strengthen Snow White's character.

The preparing for dinner episode ends with Snow White telling the Dwarfs to wash up for dinner. The Dwarfs act like children here and some act like love-sick schoolboys. Snow White is still in a subservient role by making and serving dinner to the Dwarfs, but her beauty and charm also seem to give her some power over the Dwarfs. She claims power, but also knows her place around men.

²⁸⁰ Zipes, "Breaking the Disney Spell," 37.

Renewed Jealousy and Death²⁸¹

Scene 30 shows the Queen holding the box that she believes holds Snow White's heart. She asks her magic mirror who is the fairest. When the mirror replies that Snow White is still the fairest, the Queen knows that she has been tricked by the Huntsman. The Queen's realization of being tricked further infuriates her and fuels her hatred for Snow White.

Scenes 31-32 present the Queen plotting to kill Snow White through the use of magic. The Queen uses many exotic liquids and elements that make her magic potion. The Grimm version presents the Queen as merely disguising herself, but Disney makes the scene more supernatural and uses many effects with the animation that could not be presented in the Grimm version. Behlmer notes, "But what was originally described in the Grimm text as "Then she (the Queen) dressed herself up as a peasant's wife and traveled over the hills to the dwarfs' cottage" became an embellished, macabre metamorphosis, as described by Disney when he personally told the entire story of *Snow White* at his Hyperion Studio on the evening of December 22, 1936."²⁸²

The Queen transforms into an old woman using magic and then creates a potion called "Sleeping Death" to poison the apple. The Queen looks for any possible antidote for this potion and reads that the only cure for the "Sleeping Death" potion is love's first kiss. The plot to kill Snow White is much more specific and the end resolve is a romantic one as presented. Before leaving the castle, the Queen places the poisoned red apple in a basket of green apples. The red apple gives the audience a simple visual cue of the poisoned apple and makes it aesthetically more attractive for Snow White.

A major change in the narrative by Disney is the reduction of the number of attempts to kill Snow White to one, rather than three. The number three, which is common among fairy tales,

²⁸¹ These two episodes are combined due to the shortness of the "Renewed Jealousy" episode.

²⁸² Behlmer, 48.

is taken out of the narrative.²⁸³ Part of the reason for this change had to do with the medium and the inclusion of new songs as part of the story. Disney had to sacrifice some elements of the story for the medium and for the younger audience.²⁸⁴ Reducing the murder attempts to one also lessens the failed attempts by the Queen. Disney's Queen is shown to be stronger and more methodical than the Grimms Queen.

Snow White is baking and singing "Some Day My Prince Will Come" as the Queen approaches the Dwarfs' cottage.²⁸⁵ Snow White is still very happy while performing menial tasks for the Dwarfs and is once again setting up a romantic ending. As the Queen approaches, the many animals in the forest act humanly again and try to stop the Queen from entering the Dwarfs house with Snow White. However, the Queen fakes a heart problem to trick Snow White into letting her inside. Once the Queen is inside, the animals run through the forest to find the Dwarfs to warn them.

The Queen tempts Snow White with the apple until Snow White takes it.²⁸⁶ Snow White is told that the apple is a "special wishing apple" that can make a wish come true. Since Snow White has been longing for the Prince through the entire narrative, her Prince is what she wishes. Disney puts the camera focus on the Queen as Snow White is dying. The audience never sees Snow White bite the apple or fall over dead due to its poison. The hopeless romantic nature of Snow White is presented as her downfall here, but this scene sets up the ending that Disney wrote. The audience does not see Snow White in her deceased form until the next episode when she is in the glass coffin. Disney's removal of Snow White's death seems a strategic use of the camera to imply the action that he deemed too scary for children to see.

²⁸³ In an early version of Disney's script, the poisoned comb attempts was present, but was later cut out. Behlmer, 48.

²⁸⁴ Disney was a meticulous editor and cut several scenes from the final film that were excellent, but were at points in the story where the narrative needed to keep moving forward. Behlmer, 59.

²⁸⁵ Scenes 44-47.

²⁸⁶ Scenes 48, 50, 52, and 54.

Exhibition, Resuscitation, and Resolution²⁸⁷

While the Queen tempts Snow White with the poisoned apple, the Dwarfs are rushing to her aid. Here the episodes shift. Instead of having the Queen die at the end of the narrative, Disney has her die right after Snow White's death.²⁸⁸ Disney changes the order so that the film ends with the romantic, happy ending, not the Queen's death. Once the Queen knows Snow White is dead, she leaves the Dwarf's cottage. As she is leaving, the Dwarfs arrive and chase her. The light-dark metaphor is used here.²⁸⁹ The background was well lit when Snow White was alive. Now that she is dead, the background becomes much darker and it begins to rain. The Dwarfs chase the Queen, still presented as an ugly old woman, to a cliff. As the Queen tries to crush the Dwarfs with a boulder, the cliff crumbles causing her to fall with the boulder falling behind her. The audience does not see the Queen dead, but only sees her fall. Once the Queen is dead, the rain stops and the background becomes light again. Disney never shows a body dying because of the young audience. Once again, Disney has a realized audience in mind. The Queen's death dramatically alters the "Resolution" episode because the Queen dies at her own hands due to the evil wrong-doings. None of the other characters in the film can be held responsible for the Queen's death. "The film version thus softens the story's psychological impact by transforming the witch's death into an accident."²⁹⁰

With the Queen dead, the next scene²⁹¹ shows Snow White on a bed with the Dwarfs around her crying. Even the animals from the forest gather outside to look through the windows at Snow White. Scenes 58-60 show a tree branch changing through the seasons from fall to spring. Text is superimposed to tell the audience that Snow White is now in a glass coffin that the

²⁸⁷ The last three episodes are combined here because Disney presents them in a different order than the Grimm version did.

²⁸⁸ Scenes 55-56.

²⁸⁹ Osborn.

²⁹⁰ Cashdan, 60.

²⁹¹ Scene 57.

Dwarfs made for her and the Prince is searching for her. Lurie notes that this scene would seem to say that women can fall into a “sleep” or “death-like” state while waiting for the man of their dreams to come and rescue them.²⁹²

Fairy tales are somewhat incestuous in that an occasional narrative device is present in more than one tale. The Prince rescuing the Princess after she falls asleep magically can be seen in a few different fairy tales. Windling highlights this, “Disney adapted an element from *Sleeping Beauty*. In the Grimm *Snow White*, the Prince discovers Snow White, ostensibly dead, in a glass coffin, but when the coffin is lifted to be taken away, the piece of apple falls from Snow White’s lips and she awakens.²⁹³ Disney had the Prince awaken Snow White with a kiss, in the manner of *Sleeping Beauty*, with no evidence of the apple remaining.”²⁹⁴ The Prince arrives singing a song about love.²⁹⁵ The Prince kisses Snow White and wakes her from her death-like state. By changing Snow White’s resurrection from an accident to a romantic event, Disney places her, once again, in a subservient role. She was powerless to awaken herself and needed a man to bring her back to life. As the movie ends, the Prince puts Snow White on his horse and they walk into the sunset with the Dwarfs behind them applauding. The book from the beginning is shown again to state, “And they lived happily ever after.” The book closes and the movie ends with romantic love found and evil completely vanquished.

The Cohn Edition

Since the Disney version is the most well known in today’s culture and because Disney has cemented its place within the twentieth century as the dominant producer of old fairy tales, it

²⁹² Alison Lurie, *Don’t Tell the Grown-Ups: The Subversive Power of Children’s Literature* (Boston: Back Bay Books/ Little, Brown and Company, 1990), 30.

²⁹³ This was not in the first edition of the Grimm version, but was in the subsequent versions.

²⁹⁴ Behlmer, 49.

²⁹⁵ Scenes 62-69.

is no surprise that Cohn wanted not to just update the Disney version, but to revert to the original Grimm version and update it. Cohn wanted to make a psychological horror film of what is now considered by the general public as a children's tale. Seitz comments, "The base stock is the original Brothers Grimm fairy tale, but screenwriters Tom Szollosi and Deborah Serra and director Michael Cohn have also stirred in overt Freudian symbolism, Catholic iconography, sexual perversity, circa-1943 Eastern European customs and generous helpings of gore."²⁹⁶ Gilbert adds to this by stating, "The makers of this "Snow White" have reached back to the original text to add some interestingly dark psychological shadings and gothic horror touches to the now familiar story."²⁹⁷ The Grimm version is notably darker than the Disney version. It seems that Cohn wanted to recapture that original darkness, but also wanted to magnify those dark themes to make this a more disturbing film for the 1990's audiences.

While Cohn tried to make this film more historically accurate, the adding of blood and gore does not make this more faithful to the historical time period or to the Grimm version. Sigourney Weaver, who stars in the film as the Queen, stated in an interview, "We certainly never wanted it to be perceived as a children's movie, but a psychological thriller."²⁹⁸ Cohn's presentation of the movie as a thriller makes the timing of the film important. A psychological thriller from thirty years earlier, such as Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window*, played on the suspense factor, but did not focus on the gore at all. For a 1990's audience, with horror films being as explicitly suspenseful and gory, Cohn tried to mix the two elements in a way that would shock the audience. Holston describes such mixing, "As perversely intriguing as this approach may sound,²⁹⁹ however, it doesn't quite work. Just as a lot of action movies these days collapse under the weight of excess special effects, "Snow White" sags under the burden of more psychodrama

²⁹⁶ Matt Zoller Seitz, "The Dark Side of Snow White," *The Star-Ledger* (Newark, NJ), 22 August 1997, 23.

²⁹⁷ Matthew Gilbert, "A Bloody 'Snow White': Showtime Adaptation is Not Children's TV," *Boston Globe*, 23 August 1997, C1.

²⁹⁸ Lynn Elber, "Sigourney Weaver Stars in a Harrowing 'Snow White' That's Definitely Not for Children," *Wichita Eagle*, 26 August 1997, 5B.

²⁹⁹ The author is discussing how the prince dies in the film, but it applies to the larger approach as well.

than the familiar, simple story can bear.”³⁰⁰ Holston’s comment seems to assert that Cohn was trying to add too many dramatic elements to the story, which made it hard for an audience to unravel and understand.

Cohn seems to try too hard to fill this film with every historical and fairy tale nuance that is possible. Graves adds, “This is a fairy tale – ugly, dark, violent and complex, to prove everything Bruno Bettelheim ever wrote about the genre.”³⁰¹ The film is important to the body of genre criticism, but the violence overloads the film. It attempts to be historically accurate for the late 1500’s in Europe. Seitz notes, “The story is set in Eastern Europe during the aftermath of the Crusades and Christianity – specifically the Roman Catholic variety – is presented as a malevolent force, as frightening, inscrutable and pervasive as the paganism it supplants.”³⁰² The film was shot in the Czech Republic just to help the setting of the film in Austria’s Black Forest.³⁰³ Noting the physical location is significant because the other versions do not give specific years or places for the tale to occur. By establishing a specific year and place, this film loses some of the “timeliness” of the other version.

Many authors use realism as a way to change a fairy tale for a new audience. Scheib notes, “Like *Ever After*, *Snow White* also roots itself in a pseudo-historical verisimilitude. It gives it a sense of taking place in the real world. On the minus side this makes the wicked stepmother’s motivation seem vague – in the fairy-tale, a desire to be the fairest in the land needed no psychological explanation, but in trying to root the story amid more historical believability the film has to play such melodramatic motivation down – and as a result we’re never quite certain

³⁰⁰ Noel Holston, “Showtime’s ‘Snow White’ is Scary, But Tiresome,” *Star Tribune: Newspaper of the Twin Cities*, 23 August 1997, 08E.

³⁰¹ Anita Graves, “Weaver Bewitching as Evil Stepmother,” *The Plain Dealer* (Cleveland, OH), 23 August 1997, 8E.

³⁰² Seitz, 23.

³⁰³ Kate O’Hare, “Sigourney Weaver Stars in a Dark ‘Snow White’,” *The Buffalo News*, 24 August 1997, TV46.

why the wicked stepmother so pathologically hates Snow White.”³⁰⁴ By adding all of this psychological baggage to the characters and the narrative, the film becomes harder to access for those not familiar with many of the aspects of fairy tales. For the common viewer, this film is much harder to follow when compared to the other versions. Gilbert reviews the film and notes, “The nuances of the daughter-stepmother dynamic are completely thrown away, and good and evil duke it out without any gloves on.”³⁰⁵ Even some of the major aspects of the meta-narrative, like the Queen’s sole focus on Snow White or the Dwarfs plutonic love for Snow White, that are clearly seen in other versions become clouded. They are recognizable, but do not take the fore front of the narrative like the other versions do.

Because Cohn added so much to his version of the film that was not in other versions, separating the cultural traces is laborious. The 1990’s also provided an incredibly diverse historical context to refer to. However, the cultural markers in Cohn’s film do highlight much of the 1990’s film culture even as it is trying to present a story in the 1500’s. The following episodes present the aesthetics and narrative changes that Cohn made to explain possible rationales for his strategic decisions concerning how to present his version.

Origin³⁰⁶

The movie begins with a carriage racing through the woods.³⁰⁷ Mink and Bianculli describe this as, “The chirping bluebirds and chattering squirrels of Disney’s sun-dappled forest have been replaced with glowing-eyed wolves and ravens.”³⁰⁸ The opening credits demonstrate to the audience that this is a very different film than the Disney version that most audience members

³⁰⁴ Scheib.

³⁰⁵ Gilbert.

³⁰⁶ All scenes discussed in this section can be found in Appendix C.

³⁰⁷ Scenes 1-6.

³⁰⁸ Eric Mink and David Bianculli, “ ‘Snow White’ on Showtime Isn’t Kids Play,” *Austin American-Statesman*, 23 August 1997, C12.

would be familiar with. The carriage carrying the King and Queen falls into a ravine and the Queen tells the King to cut out the baby. The removal of the child kills the mother, but allows the child to live. This scene ends with the mother's blood flowing over the fresh snow. As the opening credits roll, the audience sees wolves attack the carriage driver, a King killing his Queen to save a baby, and blood openly flowing over snow. The virginal symbolism that Disney tried to preserve by not showing blood is now washed away with the new fallen snow. The innocence of Disney is ripped away by Cohn.

Several elements are present in this first set of scenes. The audience can see a dark and savage country as the setting of the film. The birth mother is shown and willingly gives up her life for the baby. Such representation of the birth mother helps an audience with the "splitting" of the good and evil so that the birth mother is seen only briefly and commits the ultimate unselfish act by giving her life for another.³⁰⁹ By showing the birth mother, there is a connection with the Brothers Grimm version, but the details of the Queen's death are all new to this version and used visually for the shock value to begin the film.

By scene 7, Lily³¹⁰ is seven years old. From scene 6 to 7 there is a jump of seven years. Lily is being chased by her nanny and hides behind her mother's grave. The tombstone could symbolize the mother's attempt to still protect Lily even from the grave. This is the first grave presented in any of the three versions. Lily asks the nanny about her mother. As the nanny begins the story, Lily begins to recite the part about hair black as ebony, lips red as blood, and skin like snow. This is interesting to note because the first mention of these characteristics changes in each version being examined. It is presented by different characters in each version, but it always presented.

³⁰⁹ See Bettelheim, 69 for the Freudian reference and explanation.

³¹⁰ The child is named Lily, not Snow White. This also offers a departure from the original narrative and gives the child the characteristics of Snow White only visually. Lily white is different from Snow White, but still has the same purity connotations.

Scene 12 shows the soon-to-be Queen arrives and gives Lily a puppy as a present. The Queen appears to have a pleasant demeanor and is nice to Lily. At age seven, Lily provides no threat to the Queen and the Queen seems humane. This positions the Queen for a more dramatic change of personality, since she will become evil by the end of the story. As the Queen tours the castle, she introduces her mute brother. The brother does magic tricks for the children. This is the first mention of any family on the side of the new Queen. The Queen is shown to her room and sees portraits of Lily's mother. This is the first hint of unpleasantness. As the Queen moves her things in, she looks in a normal mirror and her face reflects in a distorted fashion. Once she opens her magic mirror, her image is normal, but nothing magical happens.

Cohn adds in the wedding of the King to his new Queen.³¹¹ The wedding is not mentioned in the other versions. In fact, the King is hardly ever seen or heard of in any of the other versions. Part of this can be explained by the push for positive father figures in film during the 1980's and 1990's. Because of this, the King plays a much larger part in this film than any other version. Historically, the Kings' presence is one aspect that would be incorrect. Fathers would remarry for the sake of the children and would have very little to do with their new wives. This King seems intent on creating a happy family, which can only be explained by the theme of fathers during this era in film.

The wedding scene ends with the King and his new Queen in bed as people give them blessings. Next to the bed is a chest with a comb, laces, and a potion bottle filled with a liquid. This presents a referent to the Grimm version, especially since two of the three attempts to kill Lily in this version are different. This blessing was a common religious practice for royalty in the fifteenth century and fits in here as Cohn tries to add in many historical markers from that time period. However, since men rarely remarried for love, especially royalty, this would also seem to be a historical inaccuracy that was added to the film just to strengthen the father's character.

³¹¹ Scenes 17-18.

Jealousy

About nine or ten years have passed since the wedding of the King and Queen and Lily is now a young woman in her mid-to-late teens.³¹² Also, the Queen is now pregnant. This element is not in any other version. Scene 24 shows the Queen talking to her unborn child about how she feels more beautiful now. The Queen's pregnancy adds to the psychological tension. Scenes 23 and 26 present Peter. He is the Prince who is a suitor for Lily. The beginning of this episode presents two new characters, one of which is new to the narrative.

Scene 27 begins with a feast. The Queen rebukes the King for not telling her how beautiful she looks. Here we see the Queen's vanity growing. During the feast, the Queen sings to the audience. Every eye is on her until Lily arrives wearing one of her mother's dresses. The Queen stops singing as every eye is now on Lily. The King remarks about how much Lily looks like her mother and then orders the band to play so he can dance with Lily. The Queen comes down from her stage and her look of confusion turns quickly into a look of rage. The Queen goes into labor, delivers a stillborn child, and is now barren. The Queen tells her brother to save the body of the baby. This adds another grotesque element to this dark version.

The magic mirror opens up to the Queen and she begins to put on make-up as she no longer feels beautiful.³¹³ The magic mirror begins to talk to her, but the image in the mirror and the voice is the Queen's own. The very elegant image tells the Queen of other's jealousy. Elber notes, "Claudia (The Queen) turns to the mirror more for therapy than for affirmation of her beauty – and the image that speaks to her is her own."³¹⁴ This is interesting because in the Grimm version, the voice was referred to as an "it." The Disney film made the mirror masculine. Now the Cohn version makes the mirror feminine, but also makes the image that of a more beautiful

³¹² Her exact age is not noted, but there is an obvious physical difference in Lily, especially since she is being portrayed by a different actress by this time.

³¹³ Scenes 34-35.

³¹⁴ Elber.

Queen. The representation of the Queen's "self" in the mirror creates an additional element of darkness because the enemy is within her.

Expulsion

Lily and Peter are riding horses. Once they stop, Peter proposes to Lily. Just as this happens, a messenger arrives and tells Peter he is needed immediately at the castle. He leaves and now Lily is alone. Lily then sees the Queen's brother in the woods. He chases her and tries to kill her.³¹⁵ Lily fights off the brother and runs through the forest. She falls in a hole and the brother loses her. The brother takes the place of the Huntsman, but the audience is never shown the brother being given instructions to kill Lily. This may be seen as enthymematic since this audience would be familiar with that scene from the Disney film.

After the brother can not find Lily, he kills a pig to get its organs for the Queen.³¹⁶ Upon his arrival in the Queen's quarters, she asks him how Lily looked before death. She knows he can not answer, but poses it more as a rhetorical question. Then, in a sense of rewarding a command followed, the Queen kisses her brother. Incest was common within royal families during these times, so historically this can be accurate. The brother empties a burlap bag with the bloody organs. The Queen keeps the heart and sends the rest to the kitchen to be cooked into a stew. This version combines the organs used in the Grimm and Disney versions. She keeps the heart for herself like the Disney version and sends the lungs, liver, and other organs to the kitchen to be cooked like in the Grimm version.

Scenes 44-45 present the King and Queen at dinner. The Queen notes how delicious the stew is, thinking that it is Lily. She encourages the King to eat repeatedly and the King always

³¹⁵ Scenes 37-41.

³¹⁶ Scenes 42-43.

refuses as he looks incredibly worried over Lily's disappearance. This desire of the Queen to have the King eat his own child's organs seems to be an attempt to share in her cannibalistic desires and add further insult to the dead princess. The dinner is interrupted by a messenger who tells the King that Lily's horse has been found by a search party. This is the first mention of anyone searching for Lily after she runs into the forest.³¹⁷ As the King joins the search party in scene 47, the Queen is in bed laughing manically while rubbing Lily's heart on her own face. This adds a deeper psychological level to the Queen. She has already eaten what she thought to be Lily's other organs and now is literally playing with her heart. While the King is out searching for Lily, he falls off his horse and breaks his leg. This further incapacitates the King from helping Lily or fighting against the Queen anymore. In the previous versions, the King is inept by his absence. Cohn makes the King inability to ride a horse properly a symbol of this ineptitude.

Adoption

In scene 46, Lily is wandering through the forest and finds an old castle that looks abandoned. Inside she finds a loaf of bread and begins to eat. The seven men come home to find Lily asleep.³¹⁸ One of the seven tries to rape Lily, but is stopped by another one. The first one is kicked out by the other six. This is the first time the seven are seen as a group of outcasts and degenerates. The audience has also never seen these seven be reduced in number before in any version. Cohn seems to be trying to present the seven in a more realistic fashion since they live alone and are far away from civilized society. The six are miners, but do not seem to be anything close to the homogeneous groups from previous versions. The six allow Lily to stay and even

³¹⁷ The Queen does search for Lily, but this search party is the only one mentioned in the three versions that seeks Lily for her own safety.

³¹⁸ They will be referred to as men since that are not given names and few of them are actually dwarfs.

give her a knife for her protection. However, they do not seem overly concerned for her safety or well being.

Renewed Jealousy

The Queen learns that Lily is still alive and is furious. The Queen's brother is haunted by his lie to the Queen and gets drunk in a pub. He keeps hearing her voice calling him a "traitor," runs from the pub, and then stabs himself in the street. Here we have a suicide by a minor character. The brother takes the place of the Huntsman in this version, but the other versions never mention what happened to the Huntsman after the Queen realized that he lied to her. Making the Huntsman the Queen's brother provides the audience with a need to learn his fate, since there is a familial connection.

The only other action within this episode is the Queen trying to seduce Peter.³¹⁹ This can be seen as the Queen trying to prove her own beauty to herself by stealing the man that has proposed to Lily. This scene occurs well into the next episode, but is a delayed scene as the Queen makes one attempt to kill Lily before this. The reason for this delay is that the Queen is becoming more methodical in her attempts to kill Lily and gain her revenge. The Queen also takes her dead baby into the woods and places it on an alter, as she swears revenge.

Death

When the six go to work in the mine, Lily gets scared and follows them. The Queen has realized that Lily is still alive. The Queen's first attempt to kill Lily comes in the form of an

³¹⁹ Scene 73.

hourglass.³²⁰ The Queen has a small bird trapped in an hourglass. She turns the hourglass over and as the bird begins to be covered in sand, the mine begins to collapse. Lily is saved by the six, but one of them dies in the cave-in. Now they are down to five.

For the second attempt, Lily is in the woods getting water from a stream.³²¹ The Queen, using her magic, conjures smoke to fill the woods. The Queen then starts dancing through the castle knocking things over. As she does this, trees begin to fall in the woods. One of the five saves Lily, but another one dies. The death count is beginning to add up unlike any of the other versions. Cohn continues playing to an audience that is largely desensitized to seeing death in a way that no audiences before have been.³²²

The Queen visits her magic mirror to ask why Lily lives and her baby son is dead. The mirror tells the Queen to collect the Kings blood and seed to resurrect her child. This is yet another element added by Cohn to elevate the grotesqueness of this version. Blood, and especially semen, are not discussed so openly in any other version. The Queen briefly takes her eyes off of Lily and focuses on seducing the King. Once she has the King's blood and seed, she returns her focus to Lily for another attempt. Her hatred for Lily is only briefly diminished by the Queen's desire for her own child to live. This could be seen as the power of maternity overruling vanity. However, vanity is simply suspended, not supplanted.

The Queen asks the mirror what to do.³²³ The mirror replies to act like a snake. The Queen takes her brothers heart and uses it to change herself magically. The Queen has a poisoned apple. She approaches Lily while she is bathing by a creek. The Queen eats one apple and offers Lily the poisoned one. Lily bites the apple and starts choking. The Queen then explains to Lily

³²⁰ Scene 65.

³²¹ Scenes 75-80.

³²² This desensitizing began slowly for Americans with pictures from Vietnam in the 1970's, the space shuttle Challenger blowing up in the 1980's, to the coverage of the many school shootings in the 1990's.

³²³ Scenes 84-89.

what the poison is doing. This is the first time the Queen tells her victim what is happening and why. This presents the Queen more much more vindictive than the other versions do.

Exhibition and Resuscitation³²⁴

Peter finds the four men and together they find Lily.³²⁵ Peter wants to give Lily a proper funeral, but one of the four, who seems to have developed romantic feelings for Lily, says no. The one's feelings for Lily have been building throughout the film, but now one of the four makes an implicit declaration of love for Lily. Once again, the realism that Cohn tries to produce in the film can be seen. The Dwarfs in the other versions do not present any overt romantic or sexual feelings toward Snow White.³²⁶

The four create a glass coffin for Lily, but she is not put on display anywhere like in the other versions. She is lowered into the ground to be buried.³²⁷ This could also be explained by the historical context. With no means to embalm a deceased person, very little time was wasted from death to burial.

When Peter drops a handful of dirt into the grave, Lily opens her eyes. The one of four, who loves her jumps into the grave, opens the coffin, pulls Lily out, and shakes her until she spits the apple out and breathes. Lily now seems romantically attracted to the one of four instead of Peter, who she is engaged to. Lily realizes that she is attracted to the one of four, but is engaged to Peter, so she says goodbye to the four and leaves with Peter.

³²⁴ These two episodes are both brief and intermingled.

³²⁵ Scenes 90-92.

³²⁶ The closest any of the Dwarfs got to this was in the Disney version when Dopey wanted a second kiss goodbye from Snow White.

³²⁷ Scene 92.

Resolution

Peter and Lily race to the Castle. The one who loves Lily follows.³²⁸ While they travel, the Queen is dragging the King to the alter she built in the woods. Since she feels like Lily is out of the way, she can get rid of the King to resurrect her baby and then she will rule the kingdom. The Queen places the King upside down on a cross above her dead baby.³²⁹ This crucifixion brings in deeply religious overtones that are never seen in other versions.

Peter goes to search for the Queen and the one and Lily go to find the King. Peter finds the Queen and she throws him out of a window.³³⁰ Now the Queen is killing all those who have loved Lily. The murderous rampage continues. The King is still alive, but badly hurt. While trying to take the King to safety, the one of four accidentally knocks over a burning oil lamp, which sets the castle on fire.

While Lily is looking for the Queen, she finds a crossbow. Lily is now hunting the Queen and looks very similar to Sigourney Weaver's character at the end of *Alien*, and especially *Aliens*, almost twenty years before. Lily begins to break mirrors all over the castle to take away the Queen's magical powers.

Lily finds the Queen, who is holding her live son.³³¹ The Queen magically disappears and then reappears to cut Lily's face to make her ugly. Vanity and jealousy are still alive in the Queen and has not been replaced completely by rage and revenge. The Queen hears her baby crying and her maternal instincts kick in again. Lily stabs the magic mirror, which mortally wounds the Queen. The Queen is bleeding and then the mirror shatters, covering the Queen. She falls and then catches fire. This shows a referent to how the Queen dies in the Grimm version, but takes

³²⁸ Scene 94.

³²⁹ This can be used to represent an anti-Christian sentiment, or could be an homage to St. Peter who asked to be crucified upside down because he was not worthy to be crucified in the same way that Jesus was.

³³⁰ Scene 101.

³³¹ Scenes 105-109.

great lengths to make the scene much more dramatic as the Queen's baby dies again right before the Queen dies.

The wounded individuals gather outside the castle.³³² It begins to snow. There is almost a sense of the ending of a 1990's action film here at the end. One could almost replace this ending with the ending from *Die Hard II* with the heroes gathered outside in the snow once the bad guys have been defeated and the change would be minimal. This may be explained by examining how many of the action films of the 1990's ended. The final scene of the movie shows the magic mirror closing.³³³ This could be seen as paying homage to the Disney version that ended with a storybook closing.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented a close textual analysis of the three versions of the Snow White fairy tale. Each analysis did not cover every unique aspect for each version. However, all of the major events were examined and all aspects of the narratives that showed cultural traces were analyzed and explained. The Grimm version showed traces of the early 1800's German culture that produced it. Dark uses of symbolism and elements of primitive cultures emerge. The Disney version displayed many traces of 1930's American culture and developed the emerging medium that it utilized. The American working man can be seen in the Dwarfs and the role of Snow White's domesticity, but with some power, is presented. The Cohn version displayed an interesting mix of combining fifteenth century historical facts with a 1990's attitude toward the grotesque that left many markers within the film. The ineptitude of the King and the neurosis of the Queen add elements to this version that were not present before. Individually, these cultural

³³² Scene 110.

³³³ Scene 111.

traces would not stand out, but when compared to other versions of the same tale, these cultural markers become highlighted and can give the critic additional insight into the culture and author that produced each version.

Chapter 4

Analysis of the Individual Characters

“For every fairy tale worth recording at all is the remnant of a tradition possessing true historical value; - historical, at least in so far as it has naturally arisen out of the mind of a people under special circumstances, and risen not without meaning, nor removed altogether from their sphere of religious faith. As long as these changes are natural and effortless, accidental and inevitable, the story remains essentially true, altering its form, indeed, like a flying cloud, but remaining a sign of the sky.”

John Ruskin³³⁴

The characters in fairy tales may contain the greatest possible repertoire of individual idiosyncrasies that any fictional character can have. With sometimes hundreds of versions of a single tale and each version carrying the mark of the individual storyteller, the characters constantly adapt and change to fit every minute change that an author might devise. Röhrich states, “A single story or single figure in a fairy tale or legend will be reinterpreted through the centuries – and the meaning is indeed different every time.”³³⁵ With each variation, core characteristics have to remain constant for that character to be identified from one version to the next. However, there are an infinite number of detail variations that can anchor a version of a character to a particular retelling.

Characters in fairy tales are not the same as individuals in real life. Bettelheim explains this, “The figures in fairy tales are not ambivalent – not good and bad at the same time, as we are in reality. But since polarization dominates the child’s mind, it also dominates fairy tales.”³³⁶ This seems to position fairy tales as simply children’s stories, even though history displays the

³³⁴ John Ruskin, introduction to Edgar Taylor ed., *German Popular Stories* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1868), ix-x.

³³⁵ Röhrich, 2.

³³⁶ Bettelheim, 9.

opposite. However, Bettelheim makes a good point concerning the simplistic moral nature of characters in fairy tales, a polarization that is necessary for these fairy tales to work. Bettelheim continues, “Contrary to what takes place in many modern children’s stories, in fairy tales evil is as omnipresent as virtue. In practically every fairy tale, good and evil are given body in the form of some figures and their actions, as good and evil are omnipresent in life and the propensities for both are present in every man.”³³⁷ Good and evil work almost like the Yin and the Yang when present in fairy tales. Each is necessary for the other to take shape and to keep a pressure between them, but the two do not mix together.

This chapter presents an analysis of the main characters that are in each version of the Snow White fairy tale. Each character is presented with certain core characteristics as well as the many details that make a character unique to a particular version. First, Snow White will be examined. Secondly, the Queen will be presented. Thirdly, the Dwarfs collectively and individually, as necessary, will be analyzed. Fourthly, this chapter will examine the King. Fifthly, the Huntsman will be examined. Sixthly, the Prince will be presented. Finally, the mirror will be analyzed. Not every nuance of each character in every version will be explained, but the core characteristics will be covered and necessary details, especially details that carry a specific cultural trace, will be analyzed.

Each character in all three versions presents a complex personality that must remain true to the core of the narrative, but must also continually adapt themselves to identify with new audiences. The following character sketches establish the core of each character and then highlight the character elements that were altered for each of the three versions. By examining how the characters were changed, each author’s strategic choices will be examined. Issues of gender, sexuality, and power are primary concerns for such character analysis.

³³⁷ Bettelheim, 8-9.

Snow White

Snow White is a very interesting character within all versions of this fairy tale. In some versions, she is a very complex character, while in other versions, she becomes overly simplistic. Even her name is changed in many of the versions. One Italian version presents her as “the girl of milk and blood.” Bettelheim explains this as a cultural trace due to the fact that snow rarely falls in some parts of Southern Italy.³³⁸ Her name changes and many of the aspects of her character change. How is this continually recognizable as the Snow White fairy tale when the main character is always different? The scenario that Snow White is placed in and the relationship with her mother or stepmother must have some level of consistency.

Snow White’s character is often attacked by critics, especially contemporary ones. Some critics, such as Gilbert and Gubar, say she is a horrible role model for young girls because she is weak, or she is helpless without a man around, or she can only find happiness when serving others.³³⁹ Many of these critiques are valid with contemporary readings of various versions of this text. However, many of these critics disregard the historical context that provides Snow White with many of her attributes. Historically, the empowerment of women in regards to men and to society is a relatively new concept. Unless a version is produced that changes the historical context of the narrative, Snow White is stuck being, as we would term this now, a stereotypical fifteenth century woman who has no power and must find happiness in her domesticated role.

The subject of rescues of the feminine character by the masculine character is continually debated. Many fairy tales, Bottigheimer notes, “conclude with a prince coming upon a sleeping young woman, a subject that has been a magnet for discussion of gender roles in passivity and sexuality.”³⁴⁰ Gender roles and how literature, especially children’s literature, helps shape such

³³⁸ Bettelheim, 199.

³³⁹ Gilbert and Gubar, 38-39.

³⁴⁰ Bottigheimer, 164.

roles is an important issue. The majority of the versions of fairy tales in circulation today remain within the time period they were originally set in. A continually re-emerging importance of how these tales fashion gender, or gendered, roles must be examined. However, recognizing historical context must be acknowledged to not force current standards on historical texts.

This section examines Snow White as a character in each of the three versions. First, Snow White will be examined in the Brothers Grimm version. Next, Snow White will be analyzed in the Disney version. Finally, Lily will be presented from the Cohn version. Specific character traits will be presented and cultural traces will be highlighted.

The Brothers Grimm Edition

Snow White is seven years old. She does not age within the narrative. Her age is very important to note because of everything that she goes through. The audience sees Snow White to have had her life seriously threatened by her mother, been exiled from her home, been killed, resurrected, and wed by the time she turns eight years old. These traumatic events seem to be a bit much for a girl of eight, especially since she emerges fairly unscathed emotionally. Even with childhood being relatively short during this time period, this is more than many adults today could handle.

The Queen, the Huntsman, and the Dwarfs commonly refer to Snow White as “child.” This continual reference to her as a child presents a specific rhetoric in that her place around others is continually reinforced through their language. Snow White is very young and has not begun to mature either physically or emotionally. Gilbert and Gubar describe Snow White as an angel who was childlike, docile, and submissive. Her youth and innocence seem to juxtapose the

Queen who embodied the old, evil witch.³⁴¹ It is possible that her youth remains intact throughout the story specifically to preserve her innocence and ignorance, which allows her to experience these events without being damaged by them. Tatar furthers, “Still, Snow White’s youth is difficult to square with the fact that she marries at the end of the story, particularly since there are no markers of aging.”³⁴²

The relationship Snow White has with her mother is highly suspect. This is the main reason the mother was changed to a stepmother beginning with the Grimms second edition. Jones explains this change as, “The child’s difficulty in dealing with her ambiguous feelings towards the mother provides an apparent explanation why in nearly half of the versions of “Snow White” it is the step mother with whom the child has problems.”³⁴³ This statement positions the mother as the evil one in over half of the versions of this tale. This also supports the historical nature of stepmothers being a fairly recent domestic product.

What becomes interesting in the Grimm version is that even though Snow White and the Queen are portrayed as being polar opposites on the good to evil spectrum, it is actually the one similarity that causes Snow White’s downfall. Cashdan comments, “If we pay close attention to the business being conducted, we see that Snow White allows the Queen into the cottage for precisely the same reason that fuels the wicked Queen’s murderous quest. Like the Queen, Snow White wants to be pretty, to be elegant, to be admired.”³⁴⁴ Vanity is being presented here as a common trait for all women.

Once Snow White is at the Dwarfs’ cottage, she is told to clean and do the domestic chores for her to be able to remain there. “In carrying out domestic chores,” Tatar comments, “Snow White moves into a new developmental stage, demonstrating her ability to engage in labor

³⁴¹ Gilbert and Gubar, 39.

³⁴² Tatar, *The Annotated Brothers Grimm*, 244.

³⁴³ Jones, *The New Comparative Method*, 41.

³⁴⁴ Cashdan, 53.

and to carry out the terms of the contract. No longer a child, she is preparing herself for the state of matrimony.”³⁴⁵ Golden and Canan note that “Snow White was given tasks consistent with the duties of a bourgeois girl, and these were implicitly part of her moral obligations.”³⁴⁶ These tasks that she is required to perform actually make her more attractive as a mate for a possible suitor. Historically, the ability to keep a clean house was considered a necessary quality for a prospective bride, and, therefore, fits the historical context. Within her role as a woman, Snow White is continually serving someone other than herself, whether it is the Queen, the Dwarfs, or the Prince.

Bettelheim presents the sexual dynamics that Snow White found herself in. She discovers her way to the cottage of the seven Dwarfs. At this point in Snow White’s life, she still possesses her innocence and comes to live with seven men. Snow White’s sexual growth can be seen as stunted as well because she has not matured into a woman yet. Bettelheim made a Freudian analysis of the sexual tension present within the cottage. The Dwarfs represented stunted penises that did not present a threat to Snow White’s innocence. They allowed her to stay with them and work for them. The Dwarfs represent inability of the male stamina and, in Bettelheim’s words, “These ‘little men’ with their stunted bodies and their mining occupation—they skillfully penetrate into dark holes—all suggest phallic connotations.”³⁴⁷ This physical reduction also helps dilute these characters for Snow White to begin to trust them and places them within a framework to do no harm to Snow White. Once again, her age dictates her physical maturity that places a sexual tension between her character and the Dwarfs.

There is also the promise of future sexual maturity for Snow White present when she is at the Dwarfs’ cottage. The Dwarfs’ display loyalty her, but still leave her alone until after the third attempt on her life. The Dwarfs warn Snow White to be careful, but make no provisions for her to

³⁴⁵ Tatar, *The Annotated Brothers Grimm*, 248.

³⁴⁶ Golden and Canan, 4.

³⁴⁷ Bettelheim, 210.

have any help in case of danger. Lurie notes that this seems to present the Dwarfs not so much protecting Snow White *from* the Queen as they are saving her *for* the Prince.³⁴⁸ This also justifies the Dwarfs forcing her to do chores around the cottage. They are aiding in her development as a possible mate. Snow White's age, relationship with her mother, domestic skills, and sexual maturity are all major components of Snow White's character in this version.

Additional symbolism is found in Snow White's death. Snow White may be representative of the Bible's Eve, who ate the forbidden fruit that was offered by the snake in the Garden.³⁴⁹ Snow White is met by an agent of evil, the Queen, who offers her a forbidden fruit that Snow White knows she should not eat. Giving in to this temptation leads to her downfall.

The Disney Edition

In the first scene of the Disney version, a book opens to set up the story. It presents the current relationship between Snow White and her stepmother by stating that the Queen is evil and forces Snow White to dress in rags and work as a scullery maid. This automatically places Snow White into a subservient role by giving her menial tasks to perform. Being the first in a long series of fairy tale adaptations by Disney, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* establishes the ideal princess as being no different from common women, at least in regard to chores. The only difference displayed is Snow White's beauty. This would forward the notion that, regardless of appearance or status within a society, any woman will be confined to such roles without any rescue regardless of who they are.³⁵⁰ The fact that Snow White is of royal blood is of no consequence here.

³⁴⁸ Lurie, 30.

³⁴⁹ Genesis 3:1-24 NIV.

³⁵⁰ Elanor Byrne and Martin McQuillan, *Deconstructing Disney* (Sterling: Pluto Press, 1999), 62-62.

Snow White's attire furthers her domestication. Windling notes, "Snow White is wide-eyed, giddy, and childish, wearing rags at the start of the film, down-trodden but plucky. This gives Disney's rendition of the tale its particularly American flavor, implying that what we are watching is a Horatio-Alger-type "rags to riches" story."³⁵¹ This presentation of Snow White's beauty despite her clothing sets up the Queen's hatred for Snow White before the mirror ever tells the Queen that Snow White is more beautiful.

When the audience first sees Snow White, she appears to be older than seven years old. The 1934 outline that Disney wrote states that Snow White should be drawn to look fourteen years old.³⁵² By having Snow White presented initially as twice the age of the other versions, Disney displays Snow White aesthetically as being ready for romantic love.³⁵³ She is singing of her ideal love in her first scene. She does begin talking to the animals here, which might present her as being more childish than a fourteen year old girl during this time period. However, Snow White's monologue is mainly used to set up animals as having human characteristics for this film.³⁵⁴

The audience sees Snow White in a different light when the Huntsman tries to kill her. She appears confused and unaware of what is happening. The Huntsman holds up a knife and Snow White does not move, but looks at the Huntsman with a confused concern. She does not flee into the forest until the Huntsman tells her to. This act by Snow White suggests a message of female stupidity that is dominant for Snow White's character throughout the film. Snow White is continually confused and it was only by luck that she escapes death, not by her wits.

While Snow White remains in a subservient role throughout the film, she shows moments of character strength that are not in the previous version. The audience is shown this strength

³⁵¹ Windling, 7.

³⁵² Hollis and Sibley, 14.

³⁵³ Bell, Haas, and Sells, 109.

³⁵⁴ Snow White talks to animals in scenes 4, 9, 12-21, and 65.

when she sets the demands for her to stay in the Dwarf's cottage, as opposed to letting the Dwarfs state conditions like in the previous version. This new strength in character does not offset the stupidity that Snow White shows in places, but does give her character a dose of strength.

The audience is shown a foreshadowing of what will lead to Snow White's downfall. When she arrives at the Dwarfs door, she fixes her hair before she knocks on the door.³⁵⁵ This act of making sure she is presentable establishes her vanity as well as her manners. She is about to meet some she does not know and has been taught to look presentable.³⁵⁶ These manners are also seen in the first scene with Snow White running away from the Prince because she is wearing rags that would be deemed "unsuitable for such company." Around the Prince, or in the possible event that a male could be around, Snow White must look her best.

From the first scene, the audience can see that Snow White is hopelessly in love with the Prince. She continually speaks and sings of him. Snow White dreams of him carrying her away to his castle. Every mention of the Prince places Snow White in a passive role, which she seems to gladly take. In the final scene of the movie, Snow White is kissed by the Prince and is awakened from her death-like state. By changing Snow White's resurrection from an accident to a romantic event, Disney places her, once again, in a subservient role. She was powerless to awaken herself on her own and needed a man to do this for her. Disney presents Snow White as being older and stronger, but more naïve and stupid than in previous versions. She also is consumed with romantic interest that she did not show in any previous version.

³⁵⁵ Scene 15.

³⁵⁶ These elements of proper manners have not changed much. They are being highlighted here to establish the importance Snow White puts on her appearance.

The Cohn Edition

The Cohn edition first changes Snow White's name to Lily. Lily white is close to snow white, but does represent a change. It is not uncommon for some versions to change the names. However, the film is still titled *Snow White: A Tale of Terror*, which establishes this as an adaptation of the meta-narrative despite the name Snow White not being used. One notable change for this version is that the audience sees Lily in three stages of her life. The birth is shown. The audience sees her again at age seven, and finally again at age sixteen or seventeen. This progression of age seems to combine the ages used in previous version, but it also makes Lily much more of an adult by the time the traumatic events happen to her.

Lily's character is much stronger in this version than in any other. She openly defies the new Queen in scenes 25 and 29. In scene 38, she fights off the Queen's brother who is trying to kill her until she can get away. She has both physical and mental strength that she displays as needed. She argues with the seven who are keeping her captive in scene 70 and is much more aggressive toward the Queen in the final scenes of the movie. Lily escapes many threatening situations, not by being aloof or accidentally, but by being strong. The change in her behavior is why Cohn had to make Lily appear older in this version.

Lily's relationship with the Queen is much more complex and it ebbs and flows within the narrative. She openly defies the Queen, but then apologizes to her later. By giving Lily a more realistic personality, Cohn is trying to break the mold of Snow White in the traditional Fairy tale. She is no longer purely good. Lily becomes attracted to one of the seven even though she is engaged to be married to another man.

Cohn presents Lily as a much older and stronger version of Snow White. The realism of the entire film can be seen in Lily's character as well. She shows strength and weakness, happiness and remorse, love and hatred. The core element of Lily's relationship to her mother is

even twisted to make this version closer to the Grimm version in its adult nature, but far away in how the narrative and the characters are presented.

The Queen

The Queen in this fairy tale is synonymous with the term “evil.” This does not vary between versions. She can be portrayed as being less evil or a little more humanistic in some versions, but she is never portrayed as a “good” person. Olrick’s “Law of Contrast” considers this to be an epic law that positions primary fairy tale characters to always have opposing character traits.³⁵⁷ Figures in fairy tales can not be average or mediocre like most humans. Characters and their actions must be at one end of a spectrum to function properly within a fairy tale. With Snow White being a young, innocent, and good person, the Queen must be presented as much older, full of vanity and hatred, and capable of evil.

Unfortunately, the maternal figure, be she a Queen, mother, or stepmother, is often presented in fairy tales as the antithesis of the heroine. Tatar states, “Folklorists would be hard pressed to name a single good stepmother.”³⁵⁸ The genre here has already typecast the Queen or stepmother as a consistent source of evil. Bottigheimer further excludes most masculine characters from this by noting, “Although the blood of princesses and queens may flow when angry sentences are pronounced, princes and kings are notably absent from this list of summarily executed victims.”³⁵⁹ However, it seems that princes and kings are largely absent generally and the Prince serves only as a *dues-ex-machina* that fixes things romantically. The matriarchal role almost develops as the evil one in many stories by default. Tatar explain this by saying, “In the vast majority of German tales in which stepmothers figure as prominent villains, it is the

³⁵⁷ Axel Olrick, “Epic Laws of Folk Narrative,” in *The Study of Folklore*, ed. Alan Dundes (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 129-141.

³⁵⁸ Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimms Fairy Tales*, 141.

³⁵⁹ Bottigheimer, 98.

stepdaughter who takes on the role of innocent martyr and patient sufferer. If the stepmother of these tales is not literally a witch, she possesses qualities that place her firmly in the class of ogres and fiends.”³⁶⁰ The tension between the maternal figure and the female child becomes crucial to the characters and the story. Each needs the other to define her own characteristics.

The Queen’s character is similar to a witch that many other fairy tales have. Lurie supports this with, “The other fairy tale character related to the witch is the stepmother. These categories often overlap: a lot of stepmothers are witches, and some witches are stepmothers or even mothers.”³⁶¹ However, a witch does not have the familial connection that the Queen in this fairy tale does. This absence of a family for the Queen provides the audience with a character of pure evil that can easily be hated.

Many early versions of this tale had the birth mother as the antagonist, not a step mother.³⁶² Historically, keeping the mother present would be understandable as the role of stepmothers and the phrase itself were not common until the beginning of the nineteenth century. What audiences now know and expect from the stepmother as a fairy tale villain, is not the standard historically. Bettelheim notes, “While the fantasy of the evil stepmother thus preserves the image of the good mother, the fairy tale also helps the child not to be devastated by experiencing the mother as evil.” He continues to say, “So the typical fairy-tale splitting of the mother into a good (usually dead) mother and an evil stepmother serves the child well. It is not only a means of preserving an internal all-good mother when the real mother is not all-good, but it also permits anger at this bad “stepmother” without endangering the good will of the true mother, who is viewed as a different person.”³⁶³ This shift from the birth mother to a stepmother

³⁶⁰ Maria Tatar, “From Nags to Witches: Stepmothers in the Grimms’ Fairy Tales,” in *Opening Texts: Psychoanalysis and the Culture of the Child*, eds. Joseph H. Smith and William Kerrigan (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 33.

³⁶¹ Lurie, 35-36.

³⁶² These are versions that were printed or told before the Grimm Brothers’ version in 1811.

³⁶³ Bettelheim, 69.

is historically significant because children were slowly becoming the target audience for fairy tales and this switch was accommodating the newer, younger audience.

Vanity is the primary root of the Queen's evil thoughts and deeds. The tension between the aging beauty and the emerging beauty is continual. With this story focusing primarily on the tension between a mother figure and a daughter figure, vanity is the deadly sin that would affect this relationship between a female protagonist and antagonist.³⁶⁴ The timing of this sin is also important. The Queen's beauty is just starting to fade and Snow White's is just starting to emerge. "Although we are told that her mother died when she was born," Bettelheim explains, "during the first years nothing bad happens to Snow White, despite the fact that her mother is replaced by a stepmother. The latter turns into the "typical" fairytale stepmother only *after* Snow White reaches the age of seven and starts to mature: then the stepmother begins to feel threatened by Snow White and becomes jealous."³⁶⁵ This entrance into womanhood is what makes Snow White's age and the Queen's age so important to this tension.

Within each version, the Queen's vanity causes her to make attempts on Snow White's life. The Queen's uncontrollable desire to continually be the most beautiful in the land drives her to have Snow White killed by a servant or someone who is close to the Queen. When the attempt is not successful, she attempts to kill Snow White herself. The methods of killing Snow White vary and the number of attempts varies depending on the specific version. Regardless of how she wants to kill Snow White, the entire narrative revolves around the Queen's need to eliminate what she sees as competition.

The following section will present the Queen as she is portrayed in the three versions. The Queen's character retains this position of evil in all versions, but many of the details of her

³⁶⁴ This is not to say that vanity is confined to the female character, but it is the one deadly sin that is presented almost exclusively to the female character to such an extent.

³⁶⁵ Bettelheim, 202.

character change from the Grimm version to the Disney version to the Cohn version. Also, the Queen's vanity and her resulting actions change between the versions.

The Brothers Grimm Edition

The Queen has two major characteristics that make the first edition of the Grimms unique. The fact that the Queen is Snow White's mother is the first notable difference that later versions have all changed.³⁶⁶ The second unique character element would be the Queen's cannibalistic nature that is not shown to the same extent in later versions. There are other notable changes in the Queen's behavior in this version, but these were discussed in the previous chapter as part of the narrative structure.

The Grimms Queen is central to this narrative. However, her direct relationship to Snow White changes between editions, which changes the tension between the Queen and Snow White. This altering of the direct relationship also changes how the potential audience relates to this character. Bottigheimer comments, "Implicit in most tales is the narrative, textual, and lexical silence of the biological mother."³⁶⁷ The first edition of the Grimms has the biological mother as the Queen throughout the entire narrative. She is not silenced. The mother was not changed to a stepmother until the second edition in 1819. The Grimms leaving the mother in the narrative, as the oral tradition most likely presented, gives the Queen a deeper capacity for evil than in subsequent versions. Tatar notes, "[For the second edition] Wilhelm Grimm recognized that most children [along with those who read to them] find the idea of a wicked stepmother easier to tolerate than that of cruel mothers."³⁶⁸ The first edition seems to more accurately capture the oral

³⁶⁶ This would include later editions by the Grimms as well as many other popular versions published after the early 1800's.

³⁶⁷ Bottigheimer, 53.

³⁶⁸ Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimms Fairy Tales*, 37.

tradition, whereas later editions were strategically shaped for younger audiences. This is the primary reason for examining the Queen in the first edition published by the Grimms.

With the mother acting upon vain impulses, the story presents a child who should be wary of her birth mother. Murderous attempts are commonplace in fairy tales. However, the element of having a parent trying to kill a child has been strategically weeded out of most popular versions over the last two centuries. Historically, the killing of relatives within royal families did occur.³⁶⁹ Having a mother trying to kill a daughter within a royal family would not sound absurd to a pre-1800 audience, as it would today.

Despite the royal family connotations, the killing of a child by a mother still would seem unnatural to most audiences. The original publication of the Grimms fairy tales is considered by most scholars to be the darkest collection of fairy tales.³⁷⁰ Having the birth mother as a murderer is a prime example of this. This direct familial connection presents all comparisons between mother and daughter in this narrative to become strikingly distinct.

Despite the lack of any other female presence in the tale besides the Queen and Snow White, there is still an implied kingdom that the Queen sees herself as a member. This displays a sliver of humanity within her character. When the Queen asks her usual question to the looking glass, she says, “Who is the fairest of all?”³⁷¹ Even before Snow White’s beauty begins to bloom, the Queen is comparing herself to every other woman in the kingdom. This overt narcissism establishes the breadth of her vanity and her recognition of feminine beauty. These human characteristics ground the Queen in a realistic scenario even if her other actions seem unworldly.

³⁶⁹ See Elizabeth MacLeod, *Royal Murder: The Deadly Intrigue of Ten Sovereigns* (Toronto: Annick Press, 2008) and Terry Deary, *Horrible Histories: Cruel Kings and Mean Queens* (London: Scholastic Hippo, 1995). These are intermediate children’s books, but they cover murder within royal families from several different time frames and in several different countries.

³⁷⁰ Most every scholar cited in this work that has examined the Grimms fairy tales has made a similar claim about the first edition being more for adults and the later editions becoming more child friendly as they were published.

³⁷¹ See scenes 3, 15, 19, 22, 26, and 34 in Appendix A.

The next event that pushes the Queen's personality further into evil is her desire to eat Snow White's organs once the Huntsman has killed her. Tatar states, "Like the witches and ogres of folklore, the queen engages in cannibalistic acts, hoping that by incorporating her stepdaughter,³⁷² she will acquire her beauty."³⁷³ This is another trace of the primitive cultures that produced the oral tales the Brothers Grimm were trying to capture. Cashdan notes, "Flesh eating is an altogether reprehensible act that identifies its practitioner as a thoroughly repugnant human being. If the witch is to perish, as she must, the reader must be convinced that she deserves to die. Whereas killing another person can be understood, even condoned if there are mitigating circumstances, cutting them up into little pieces and consuming them extends beyond the pale."³⁷⁴ The ability to willingly eat one's own child, not to sustain life or with any other possible noble intent, further distances the Queen from any shred of humanity. Her vanity is so strong that she will stoop to such an unforgivable act. This presents the Queen as having no moral reservations concerning any of her actions to achieve and maintain her personal beauty.

The Queen as Snow White's birth mother, not step mother, and her cannibalistic nature both portray her character as one of the most evil characters within the fairy tale realm. While the Brothers Grimm did change her character for all subsequent editions, all of the later changes were made for younger audiences. This version seems to present the Queen as she was probably presented in the oral tradition. She was pure evil with barely a trace of humanity.

The Disney Edition

Disney aimed to create the Queen as a strong, more strategic character, but one that would not scare children when they saw her on screen. His version of the Queen is very different

³⁷² This would also apply to the daughter for this particular edition.

³⁷³ Tatar, *The Annotated Brothers Grimm*, 245.

³⁷⁴ Cashdan, 47.

from the Grimms Queen. The three main characteristic changes for the Queen in the Disney film are her physical looks, her strategic nature, and her use of magic. These attributes distinguish the Disney Queen. Disney chose to stay with the Queen as Snow White's stepmother that the Grimms had fashioned in their later editions. Disney also removed any mention of the birth mother, which gave the audience only Snow White to contrast with the Queen.

Disney knew his audience; he knew that the Queen would have to look scary without being too scary. This was one element that the Brothers Grimm did not have to contend with. By introducing the narrative to the relatively new media of animated film, Disney did not just have to worry about the Queen's character, but also had to deal with the aesthetics. Disney envisioned the Queen as a mixture of Lady Macbeth and the Big Bad Wolf.³⁷⁵ Disney wanted to present the Queen as more devious and witch-like than the Grimms had. Some of the first drawings of the Queen pictured her as a short fat woman who was rather stupid looking.³⁷⁶ However, these drawings seemed to make the Queen look too comical.

By drawing the Queen as a slender woman with a strong face, Disney created an aging beauty. Her age is also a mystery because the Queen's hair is never shown. She always wears a shawl over her hair. This could be to conceal traces of aging, or it could have been an attempt by Disney to make her look less like a mother figure. The only body parts of the Queen that are shown to the audience are her face and hands. This also portrays her sense of vanity by covering up any traces of age that could have disrupted her beauty.

The Queen's strategic nature is shown in two ways. In scene 8,³⁷⁷ the Queen directs the Huntsman to kill Snow White. She tells him, "You know the penalty if you fail." This establishes the Queen as more controlling of the kingdom and the servants than the Grimms version

³⁷⁵ Behlmer, 42.

³⁷⁶ Holliss and Sibley, 10-12. These drawings were later used as the main design for the Queen of Hearts in Disney's *Alice in Wonderland*.

³⁷⁷ All scenes referenced in this section are in Appendix B.

displayed. She seems to have more authority as the Queen than in the Grimms version. The Queen makes only one attempt to kill Snow White herself. The audience does not see two failed attempts by the Queen before she is successful. Disney presents her as being much more methodical and competent. Even when she meets Snow White as the peddler, she tells Snow White that apple pies are what men want, not the gooseberry pie that Snow White is currently making. This knowledge of what men desire makes the Queen appear as a woman who knows how to use her beauty. The Queen knows that Snow White wants to please and uses tricky persuasive tactics to lure Snow White to eat the apple. Disney makes the Queen more cerebral and proficient.

Disney makes the Queen more like a witch than a human. In scene 27, Grumpy says that the Queen is full of black magic. This referent establishes that the Queen is known in the kingdom for her magic abilities. The Grimms only present her as knowing how to use a disguise. This addition of black magic makes the Queen more mysterious and provides Disney with many visual aspects that work well with the medium. Scenes 31 and 32 show the Queen in her basement laboratory mixing potions to both change her appearance and to poison the apple. Visually, magical elements do not fit the Grimms Queen, but by making her a witch as well, Disney allows himself the license to display these wonderfully vibrant visual images.

Disney's Queen is a different sort of character than the one that the Grimms presented, but she remains a dark character. She does not have a cannibalistic nature, but she uses black magic. Thus, she is even further removed from the humanistic qualities that Snow White possesses. Her visual character is imposing, but not terrifying. She is more meticulous in her actions and her death at the end of the movie comes at her own hands. This portrayal of the Queen's persona and death allows the young audience to be a little afraid of her, but they still do not see any of the other characters intentionally do her harm when she dies. She is also drawn in

every scene with an evil presence so that there would be minimal traces to looking like a mother figure.

The Cohn Edition

Aspects of the Grimms Queen and Disney's Queen are present in the Claudia's character in the Cohn Film. However, Cohn presents the Queen as having more humanistic qualities. She is given the name Claudia, which the other versions do not reveal. This makes her more familiar as a woman and a mother to the audience. While Cohn tries to make Claudia a darker character, like the Grimms did, he also makes her magical, as Disney's character was. The two major character differences in this version are Claudia's more humanistic nature and her role within her new family.

Claudia's character undergoes a transformation within the Cohn version. At the beginning of the film, Claudia shows kindness, but with a possible capacity for evil. Sigourney Weaver, who plays the part of Claudia, stated,

There's a constant conflict between the stepdaughter and the stepmother, and I think the father blames it on the stepmother. And so when she loses her own child, she becomes increasingly unstable. But I certainly didn't want to play her as bad throughout. It seemed to me far more interesting to show someone who had the best intentions, but things don't work out for her.³⁷⁸

Weaver's comments provide insight into the changes that Cohn made to the Queen's character. The transformation that Claudia encounters to become evil now overpowers her character. She loses a child and the attention that she feels she deserves is continually being stolen by Lily.

³⁷⁸ O'Hare, TV46.

Claudia is not a cartoon character by any means. Her character is not toned down for a younger audience. Movie goers in the 1990's had slowly been desensitized to characters with a capacity for evil. Movies like *I Know What You Did Last Summer* and *Hellraiser III*, both released in 1997, were in a long line of films released prior to and during 1997 that had characters with no morally redeemable qualities. Cohn creates a character that gains this capacity for evil, yet is not purely evil throughout the entire narrative. Gilbert reports that Claudia becomes "crazy enough to literally crucify her husband to try to bring their infant back to life."³⁷⁹ Her descent into darkness develops as the film progresses.

Cohn's Queen is not as singularly evil as in other versions. She shares her demons with many dark elements of her character, more so than the Grimms or Disney. Such presentation makes the Queen's character more confusing for an audience to understand and identify with. Seitz notes that Claudia, "seems more neurotic than evil."³⁸⁰ This also attends to the claim that Claudia is more humanistic. Only after Claudia loses her child does she begin to talk to her magic mirror.³⁸¹ This loss of her child begins her dealings with witchcraft, but only after she experiences several traumatic events. Audiences are shown the moment where Claudia succumbs to the potential for evil as a means to get what she desires most that she has lost.³⁸² However, to remain true to earlier versions of the story, Claudia loses her humanity completely as she dies by fire in scene 109. The audience never sees Claudia make any amends to Lily or those who she has hurt. By making Claudia more humanistic, Cohn presents a tragic character whose demise is a direct result of her conscious, though mentally unstable, decisions.

Claudia's role within the family is different for this version partially due to the family being larger. The King and Claudia's brother are both present; thus changing the dynamics of

³⁷⁹ Gilbert, C1.

³⁸⁰ Seitz, 23.

³⁸¹ Scene 35 in Appendix C.

³⁸² This transformation is not present in other versions, but is a popular technique in films in the later half of the twentieth century. See Anakin Skywalker's transformation in the *Star Wars* saga for a great example of this.

Claudia's character. Weaver stated of these relationships, "This is really a late-15th-century psychological thriller about a medieval dysfunctional family."³⁸³ The audience sees the wedding of the King to Claudia. She is shown in social settings and appears to be a gracious Queen. Once her baby is stillborn, Claudia then distances herself from the King and even makes an attempt on his life to resurrect her child's body. It was not uncommon for royals to be married during this time for more political reasons than for love. This possible political connection could explain Claudia's lack of genuine affection for her new husband.

The relationship Claudia has with her brother is the only relationship that existed prior to the beginning of the film. She discusses her past and many of her plots with her brother. Scene 43 shows Claudia kissing her brother,³⁸⁴ implying an incestuous relationship that pre-dates her marriage to the King. This direct familial bond also explains why Claudia sends her brother to kill Lily instead of a servant as the other versions depict. They have a close, if dysfunctional, relationship. These two relationships give Claudia a deeper character that displays a human side to her, but one that is unstable from the beginning.

The Dwarfs

The Dwarfs play a pivotal role in the Snow White fairy tale. They provide Snow White with sanctuary from the evil Queen and act as her guardians when she is alone and destitute. Golden and Canan describe this relationship, "The role of the dwarfs, similar to that of peasant and artisan classes, is echoed in the valuing of hard work and solidarity needed for survival."³⁸⁵ These seven dwarfed men are isolated from the rest of the kingdom, but are self-sufficient. They provide Snow White with respite seemingly outside of the Queen's power or control.

³⁸³ Stephen Schaefer, "Grim-er Version of the Fairy Tale – New 'Snow White' Shows a Darker Side of Disney," *Boston Herald*, 20 August 1997, 42.

³⁸⁴ Appendix C.

³⁸⁵ Golden and Canan, 44.

The relationship that they establish with Snow White varies from version to version. Some versions make them stern and controlling, while others use them primarily for comic relief. “Though the hospitality of the little men indicates that Snow White has indeed found a safe-base, feminist critics tend to cast the dwarfs’ proposal in a somewhat different light.” Cashdan comments, “They contend that the dwarfs’ offer of sanctuary symbolizes a more widespread attempt of society to force women into domestic roles, thus relegating them in a position of subservience.”³⁸⁶ This explanation may be trying to force contemporary values onto a historical tale. However, it does highlight the tension between seven men and a young girl co-existing in a common dwelling. Bettelheim tries to downplay the sexual tension, while also acknowledging it, by stating, “They are certainly not men in any sexual sense – their way of life, their interest in material goods to the exclusion of love, suggest a pre-oedipal existence.”³⁸⁷

The Dwarfs’ role within the narrative and in regard to Snow White is continually a point of tension. The Dwarfs generally seems to have Snow White’s best interest in mind. However, the conditions of their acceptance of her are modified by both parties within these three versions. Their position and roles will be examined for all three versions. Specifically, the characteristics of the Dwarfs as individuals or as a unit and their relationship to Snow White will be presented.

The Brothers Grimm Edition

The Dwarfs play a relatively quiet role in the Grimms version. The Dwarfs are not individuals in this version. They are simply identified as, “The first one, “The second one,” and so forth. There is no mention of any individual characteristics in the narrative. Their cottage is neat and clean. They are portrayed as simple, hardworking Dwarfs who have control over their

³⁸⁶ Cashdan, 50.

³⁸⁷ Bettelheim, 210.

lives and dwelling. By not giving them personalities, the Grimms present them as minor characters who just serve a specific narrative function.

Once Snow White appears, the Dwarfs initially act as if she is an intruder that must be dealt with. After hearing her story, they dictate conditions for Snow White to stay and to have their protection. However, they do not let protection interfere with the work they have to do. They still go to the mines every day and find Snow White's body only after they return from work. They are indeed sorrowful after the Queen's third, and only successful, attempt to kill her. However, they do allow the Prince to take her body when they see that he loves her.

Their portrayal in the Grimms version is minimalistic, but functional. They provide Snow White with what she needs when she needs it. This is not to say that a relationship does not evolve between them, but it does not evolve to the extent that it does in other versions.

The Disney Edition

The role of the Dwarfs in the Disney film is much more involved and creates a larger part for them in the overall narrative. They are still functional within the story, but now they also constitute comic relief for the audience. Their relationship with Snow White is also more complex in the Disney film.

The first notable difference is that they have specific names and individual characteristics. The audience sees the Dwarfs before their names are presented. In scene 21, Snow White enters the Dwarf's bedroom and reads their names which are carved onto their beds.³⁸⁸ The dwarfs are named Bashful, Doc, Dopey, Grumpy, Happy, Sleepy, and Sneezy. Disney is preparing the audience for individual characters here by giving the Dwarfs names that represent

³⁸⁸ Appendix B.

their primary characteristics. When Snow White finally sees the Dwarfs in Scene, 26, she can correctly attach their names to them because they enact what their name describes.

Bashful becomes red in the face and hides behind his beard when Snow White speaks to him. Doc seems to be the oldest and smartest, but has a hard time verbalizing all that he thinks. Dopey never speaks but whistles a good deal. He appears to be the youngest and is the only one without a beard.³⁸⁹ Grumpy is the only one who seems distant to Snow White and seems suspicious of females. He does, however, become very attached to Snow White and is the first to chase after the Queen at the end of the film. Happy is fat and jolly, much like a Santa Claus figure. Sleepy is continually yawning and Sneezzy sneezes a lot. Each individual possesses a distinct and memorable characteristic.

Disney and his writers had a discussion to come up with fifty names that would, as Behlmer notes, “immediately identify the character in the minds of the audience” for each Dwarf.³⁹⁰ Disney wanted each Dwarf to be an individual character that audiences could recognize. This portrayal of the Dwarfs as individuals, instead of merely a collective, allowed Disney to make these characters marketable so that he could exploit his potential audience. Disney also made them into slobs. The Dwarfs were filthy and their cottage was dirty and unkempt. Cashdan explain their boyish nature turned them “from maternal icons into miniature clowns.”³⁹¹ Their characteristics and actions made them comic relief, but did not lessen their functionality within the story.

By making the Dwarfs more personable and bumbling, Disney highlighted their comic potential over their potential as guardians for Snow White. They are more entertaining to Snow White and to potential audiences than the Grimms ever presented them as. The Dwarfs provide

³⁸⁹ One could make a possible connection with Dopey to Harpo Marx of the Marx Brothers. Neither speaks, but they both whistle. In many respects they both provide a silent, but effective form of comic relief.

³⁹⁰ Behlmer, 42.

³⁹¹ Cashdan, 51-52.

slapstick comedy and memorable songs that present them as more endearing. These alterations seem purely for the benefit of the medium as their singsong verse and bumbling antics would not transfer well to the written text.

This personification does not detract from their work ethic or attitude toward work. When they are in the mines, they sing, but are continually hard at work. Zipes explains this as, “The dwarfs can be interpreted as the humble American workers, who pull together during a depression. They keep their spirits up by singing a song, “Hi-ho, it’s home from work we go,” or, “Hi-ho, it’s off to work we go,” and their determination is the determination of every worker, who will succeed just as long as he does his share while women stay at home and keep the house clean.”³⁹² The contexts of the American Depression and the spirit of the American working man are personified through the Dwarfs.

The relationship they have with Snow White is very different than the Grimms present. The Dwarfs act like children around Snow White, which places her in a maternal role. Snow White dictates the terms of her staying with them. She seems to take over the entire household and the Dwarfs do not fight this at all. The Dwarfs are reluctant to wash their hands and only do so when told.³⁹³ They are sent to bed by Snow White instead of just going to sleep as they normally would.³⁹⁴ These events lessen the masculinity of the Dwarfs and place Snow White as the sole authority figure within the cottage. This presentation of the Dwarfs more as children would allow a 1930’s audience to be comfortable with a woman living with seven strange men that she was not related to by birth or marriage.

³⁹² Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell,” 37.

³⁹³ Scene 28 in Appendix B.

³⁹⁴ Scene 35.

The Cohn Edition

Cohn's presentation of the Dwarfs is completely different than previous versions. In fact, the majority of the seven are not dwarfs, but regular sized men. Gates comments on this variations from other versions, "The band of men who represent the Seven Dwarfs aren't harmless little eunuchs, and they're not all that respectful toward Lilli (sic), the Snow White character, at first."³⁹⁵ These men are dirty like the Disney Dwarfs, but are stronger and are presented more as a group of outcasts that have come together, than a natural group. The men show Lily scars that they have from stealing and getting caught.³⁹⁶ They are rude to Lily and one of them even tries to rape her.³⁹⁷ They are never given names, much like the Grimms version, but do seem to have individual personalities like the Disney version, however these personalities are much darker.

The seven lose members of their party as the film progresses. The remaining ones mourn these deaths but quickly move on. This displays a lack of solidarity between them. Their actions are brasher toward each other and Lily. The seven take Lily in and provide some protection to her, but ulterior motives continually abound. The biggest difference within this version is that one of the seven falls in love with Lily and is with her at the end of the film. This removes any shred of innocence that the seven had in previous versions and adds a sexual charge to the film. This could explain why the seven were not all dwarfs. By having some of them as grown men, Cohn allowed for a sexual tension to exist between one of them and Lily that is notably absent in other versions.

³⁹⁵ Gates, 8E.

³⁹⁶ Scene 54 in Appendix C.

³⁹⁷ Scenes 57-58.

The King

The king plays a central role in the Snow White fairy tale, even if his role is merely implied. Two of the three versions examined never mention the King within the text itself. His presence is assumed and implicates the relationship between the Queen and Snow White. Tatar notes that the King's role is necessary, even if invisible, because this positions a competition between the Queen and Snow White for the King's recognition and affection.³⁹⁸ Barzilai furthers this by stating, "Yet, in "Snow White" the oedipal rivalry is not evident in the narrative itself, and the object of contention – the father – is virtually absent from the story."³⁹⁹ The King's character is essential and the Queen's actions are predicated upon him. While the Queen questions who is the fairest of them all, she seems to be asking who the King finds the fairest.

The role of the King as a father is often implied, but not directly stated. Bettelheim explains this by, "We are told nothing of her (Snow White's) relation to her father, although it is reasonable to assume that it is competition for him which sets (step) mother against daughter."⁴⁰⁰ Neither the Grimms nor Disney makes any allusions to the relationship between Snow White and her father. Historically, the lack of a visible relationship would work as the King would be away expanding his kingdom, while the Queen is left to tend to the household. Bettelheim states, "A weak father is as little use to Snow White as he was to Hansel and Gretel. The frequent appearance of such figures in fairy tales suggests that wife-dominated husbands are not exactly new to this world."⁴⁰¹ This claim positions the King as not having any control over the household, which could also make sense in the larger context.

The male representation, besides the Dwarfs, in the Snow White narrative is minimal as the story revolves around Snow White and the Queen. Gilbert and Gubar make the assessment

³⁹⁸ Tatar, *The Classic Fairy Tales*, 76.

³⁹⁹ Barzilai, 517.

⁴⁰⁰ Bettelheim, 203.

⁴⁰¹ Bettelheim, 206.

that the King may have been manifest in the mirror that makes judgment concerning the beauty of his new wife and daughter.⁴⁰² Even with the King physically absent, his judgment of beauty is a subconscious undercurrent to the entire narrative. Some scholars may see this as a phallus-centric interpretation, but it does feed the vanity of the Queen and help explain why Snow White's emerging beauty can be seen as threatening to the Queen.

The King is absent in the Grimms version and the Disney version. His character remains fundamentally the same for both. The only changes occur in the Cohn version where the King is largely present. This is not to say that the King's role is dramatically altered; it is not altered much at all. However, his physical presence and actions give the audience a visual explanation of the Queen's growing vanity and jealousy of Lily that is only implied in the other versions. There is an established relationship between the King and Lily that is shown to the audience that gives the audience some idea of who the King is.⁴⁰³ The grounds for the Queen's vanity are deliberately shown in scenes 29 and 30 where all eyes are on the Queen until Lily enters the ballroom. All eyes, including the King's, turn to Lily and the King remarks how beautiful she is. This is a blatant marker of the King being the focal point for the Queen's beauty that the other two versions only allude to in the text. Cohn may have decided to include this aspect in the film because of the larger role father played in films on the 1980's and 1990's, but it also adds depth to the Queen's behavior and can help an audience better understand the psychological aspects of the narrative.

⁴⁰² Gilbert and Gubar, 38.

⁴⁰³ Scene 9 in Appendix C.

The Huntsman

The Huntsman is the first to make an attempt on the life of Snow White. He does not make this attempt for any personal reason. He is merely following the Queen's orders. Bettelheim describes this phenomenon as, "In "Snow White," as in "Little Red Riding Hood," a male who can be viewed as an unconscious representation of the father appears – the hunter who is ordered to kill Snow White, but instead saves her life. Who else but a father substitute would seem to acquiesce to the stepmother's dominance and nevertheless, for the child's sake, dare to go against the queen's will?"⁴⁰⁴ Bettelheim positions the Huntsman as a servant of the King who is obeying the Queen. The Huntsman's relationships are important to note because the Huntsman is the only character in the Snow White fairy tale that directly disobeys the Queen. Two of the three versions only mention the Huntsman when he is ordered to kill Snow White, when he lets he go, and when he returns an animal's organs to the Queen. His fate is never revealed, but his role is primary in forcing the Queen to accept the responsibility of killing Snow White herself.

The Grimms present the Huntsman as merely a soldier. He accepts the order without any questions and when he lets Snow White go, it is almost as if he sees this as less work for him. He is indifferent to Snow White's life. Within the oral tradition, His role would work because the Huntsman serves his purpose for the story, but is easily forgettable. The 1800's audience would not have to deal with any of his moral objections or obligations.

The Huntsman presented by Disney is a much more humane subject of the Queen. In scene 8, the Huntsman argues when told to kill Snow White and the Queen threatens him by saying, "You know the penalty if you fail."⁴⁰⁵ The Huntsman has a conscientious objection, but acts out of fear of the Queen. In scene 10 when he tries to kill Snow White, but can not do it, Snow White does not have to beg for her life. The Huntsman apologizes to her and tells her to

⁴⁰⁴ Bettelheim, 204-205.

⁴⁰⁵ Appendix B.

run. This act isolates the Queen. By having no other character capable of killing Snow White, the full responsibility, once again, falls on the Queen herself. Like the Grimms version, the Huntsman is not heard from again.

The Cohn version changes the role of the Huntsman by making him Claudia's brother. This displays a much larger allegiance to the Claudia. The brother never allows Lily to beg for mercy or willingly lets her go. He loses her in the forest. Now the brother is portrayed to the audience as being incompetent. When he returns to Claudia, he gives her the bag of animal organs and then goes to get drunk in the pub. He continually hears the Queen's voice calling him a traitor and soon impales himself. Once again, Cohn adds more to the story and gives the audience a darker image on what happens to the brother. His demise is never directly implied in other versions, but is shown here and adds to the horror aspect of the film.

The Prince

The Prince is a marginal character in the Snow White narrative. He is the one who rescues Snow White at the end, despite how it may occur. This is his only real function within the story. Zipes presents the Prince as, "If we recall the Grimms texts – with the exception of Collodi's *Pinocchio* – the male hero is practically incidental to "Snow White," "Sleeping Beauty," and "Cinderella," for these tales are primarily about struggles between women."⁴⁰⁶ The only differences in the Prince's character and actions between versions are the basic relationship to Snow White and how he tries to save her.

In the Grimms first edition, the Prince is the King's Son, Snow White's brother. This fact is never highlighted, but historically fits as incest was not uncommon within royal families during this time period. In most other versions past the early 1800's, the Prince is presented as being

⁴⁰⁶ Zipes, *The Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forests to the Modern World*, 60.

from another kingdom. The Grimms also only present the Prince at the end of the story. He finds Snow White's coffin with the Dwarfs and makes an agreement for him to take her. It is a servant who actually awakens Snow White and then she and the Prince marry. The only positive action the Prince makes is to find the Dwarfs' cottage. This greatly diminishes his role as a character and within the narrative. However, his role was not as important to the development of the story for these early audiences.

Disney makes the Prince a much more necessary character. The Prince is introduced at the beginning of the story and provides Snow White with the object of her affection for the entire film. Windling notes, "His love for Snow White, demonstrated at the very beginning of the Disney Film, becomes the spark that sets off the powder keg of the stepmother's rage."⁴⁰⁷ With the King absent from the Disney film, the Prince enters at the beginning to establish Snow White's budding beauty and the Queen's emerging jealousy. Disney actually wanted more scenes with the Prince, but many were cut because of time and later used in *Sleeping Beauty*.⁴⁰⁸ At the end of the film, he kisses Snow White to wake her and then they go off into the sunset. Disney makes the Prince more central to the story as a love interest and makes him proactive in waking her. This changed *Snow White* into a love story that kids could watch and enjoy.

Cohn makes a dramatic change to the Prince's character. The Prince, named Peter, is a love interest of Lily's and is introduced in scene 26.⁴⁰⁹ He proposes to Lily right before the brother tries to kill her and chases her into the forest. Peter is very proactive in finding Lily, but begins to bury her after finding her coffin. He is later killed by Claudia when trying to help Lily find the King. This allows for one of the seven to become Lily's romantic interest. Cohn takes the Prince's character in the opposite direction from what Disney presented. This removal of the

⁴⁰⁷ Windling, 7.

⁴⁰⁸ Stone, "Three Transformations of Snow White," 59-60.

⁴⁰⁹ Appendix C.

Prince may have been an attempt to shock the audience that would have grown up knowing the Disney version of *Snow White*.

The Magic Mirror

The Magic Mirror possesses the ultimate role of judgment in the Snow White tale. It provides the Queen with confirmation of her own beauty as well as fuel for her jealousy. Its role within the story is not antagonistic toward Snow White, but rather to openly confirm the thoughts of vanity that the Queen already possesses. The Queen is the only one who speaks to the Magic Mirror. Tatar positions the mirror's character, "The voice in the mirror may be viewed as a judgmental voice, representing the absent father or patriarchy in general, which places a premium on beauty. But that voice could also be an echo of the queen's own self-assessment, one that is, to be sure, informed by cultural norms about physical appearance."⁴¹⁰ How the voice is manifest changes between versions and causes such conflicting opinion as to who the voice belongs to.

The Grimms text does not dictate the gender of the voice in the Magic Mirror. Barzilai states, "The voice in the mirror thus belongs to neither the king nor the queen's daughter. The voice she hears is her own."⁴¹¹ By presenting a gender-neutral voice, the Grimms present a voice that only the Queen can hear that must be her own.

Disney makes the voice very clear as a deep masculine voice. Gilbert and Gubar position the Magic Mirror in the Disney version as the male gaze that represents the absent King.⁴¹² By giving the Magic Mirror a male voice, Disney is almost giving the Queen an excuse for her vanity. Women in the 1930's were beginning to enter the work force in larger numbers and were making bold strides for recognition as equals to men. However, such a dynamic would take

⁴¹⁰ Tatar, *The Annotated Brothers Grimm*, 244.

⁴¹¹ Barzilai, 530.

⁴¹² Gilbert and Gubar, 38.

longer for the film industry to present openly. By keeping the male presence in the Magic Mirror, Disney was keeping in line with the norm of the time. Also, aesthetically, the deeper male voice sounded better within this medium.

Cohn presented the voice and image in the Magic Mirror and Claudia's own. The Magic Mirror begins speaking to Claudia when her own neurosis begins controlling her. This voice is the subconscious self of Claudia. This change of the image in the mirror to that of the Queen removes the male gaze and highlights the psychological damage that is occurring within Claudia's character.

Conclusion

Each of the characters in these three versions of *Snow White* contains aspects of the character from the meta-narrative, but also contains traces of the cultural contexts that bred them. As the characters change, their roles within the stories change. This furthers the idea of these texts as evolving. We do not see carbon copies of the characters just placed in updated scenarios. The characters adapt with the stories. Snow White retains her innocence, but her ways of dealing with the other characters changes dramatically. The Queen's character displays different capacities for evil and different causes of her vanity. The Dwarfs evolve from a gruff, but forgettable, collective to a vibrant group of unique individuals to a band of outlaws that are not dwarfs at all. Each of the other minor characters plays their part, but to different lengths and in different capacities and all of the character changes alter the rhetoric of the specific versions.

Each change of a characteristic of the characters presents audiences with a different identity for them to find resonance. Each author will have an intended audience in mind when producing their version. However, what these characters present to an audience and ask them to be or become hinges upon the strategic, rhetorical alterations that the authors make. Making

Snow White more or less virginal alters how audiences will see her character and her role in the narrative. The Queen can become more or less evil depending on what the author believes the audience can tolerate. These character changes dramatically alter the story and how audiences can receive them.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

“We just try to make a good picture and then the professors come along and tell us what we do.”

Walt Disney⁴¹³

The Culture

Fairy tales are cultural and the rhetoric of these versions of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* is contingent upon culture. These stories emerged from the oral tradition and have been continually popular everywhere from the big screen to a child’s bedroom. The timelessness and adaptability of these tales as they have traveled through cultures and generations have made them iconic texts. Each version presents a unique rhetorical construct that an author has created for a specific audience in place and time. These constructs do not remove the timelessness of these tales. However, they do carry traces of the culture that produced each version.

While traces of culture are evident in specific versions of fairy tales, they do not completely portray the specific culture for which and from which the version was produced. Eliade comments, “We never find in folk tales an accurate memory of a particular stage of culture; cultural styles and historical styles are telescoped in them. All that remains is the structure of an exemplary behavior – that is, one that can be vitally experienced in a great number of cultural cycles and at many historical moments.”⁴¹⁴ These cultural traces bear aspects of culture that can be examined to explain why specific variations between versions exist. Authors do not make modifications to a tale in a vacuum. In the words of Jones, “If we are concerned

⁴¹³ Time, “Mouse and Man,” *Time Magazine*, 27 December 1937, 21.

⁴¹⁴ Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963), 196-197.

specifically with individual narrators' idiosyncrasies, then certainly examining their entire repertoire is crucial, but if we are concerned with the appeal and significance of a given folktale, then examining the various versions of this tale can stand alone and be most illuminating."⁴¹⁵ The individual authors are important to examine, but tracing the variants over time becomes more important is presenting these cultural traces.

The Medium

Technology has advanced the way storytellers present their tales; however, these stories still live within both oral and literate realms. The stories are told, read, and shown to each new generation. Ward notes, "Storytelling is vital to every society as a way of searching for and sharing truth, but the role of the storyteller in a culture has changed, affecting what is told. Today popular film has become a central storyteller for contemporary culture."⁴¹⁶ The ways storytellers utilize options for presenting their versions of these fairy tales has changed and the stories have changed with them. However, a change in medium does not alter many of the basic fundamentals of telling a story that have existed for centuries. The medium does change the message.⁴¹⁷ Stone explains this as, "The Grimms could not have furnished an esthetically powerful printed version of the oral tale any more than the Disneys could have produced an exact filmed version of the printed Grimm story."⁴¹⁸ The change in medium changes how the story is told.

With the popular media today being dominant in how new generations encounter classic fairy tales, Disney, by virtue of its vast worldwide appeal, has largely controlled how children have been and continue to be introduced to these tales over the past eighty years. "If children or adults think of the great classical fairy tales today, be it *Snow White*, *Sleeping Beauty*,

⁴¹⁵ Jones, *The New Comparative Method*, 10.

⁴¹⁶ Ward, 1.

⁴¹⁷ McLuhan.

⁴¹⁸ Stone, "Three Transformations of Snow White," 54.

or *Cinderella*, they will think Walt Disney.” Zipes comments, “Their first and perhaps lasting impressions of these tales and others will have emanated from a Disney film, book, or artifact.”⁴¹⁹ Disney did popularize many of these tales for the film medium, but this popularity in terms of coverage and box office receipts only magnified the stories that were already popular worldwide. The downside of Disney’s popularity is that his versions have placed many other versions, both before and since, into the shadows.

The Authors and Their Versions

The contextual circumstances that surrounded these authors directly influences how they shaped their versions. O’Hare states, “Before Disney turned them into sweet, cute family films, the folk tales gathered from peasants by brothers Jacob Ludwig Carl and Wilhelm Carl Grimm...were horrific stories of murder, demons, cannibalism and evil.”⁴²⁰ The Brothers Grimm wanted to capture the German oral tales and preserve them in a literate form to bolster nationalistic pride and heritage. Many aspects of these tales were dark in nature and never intended for children. Zipes presents this darkness as, “Essentially, the Grimm Brothers contributed to the literary “bourgeoisification” of oral tales, which had belonged to the peasantry and lower classes and had been informed by the interests and aspirations of these groups.”⁴²¹ The Grimms made these narratives accessible to groups of people that would not hear them otherwise and continued to modify them for larger, and younger, audiences.

Despite the popularity of the Grimms versions in the 1800’s, Disney would adapt many of the Grimms tales into a new medium and increase their popularity. Bronner notes, “The Grimms’ tales have been translated into 140 languages and are indeed known worldwide, but they

⁴¹⁹ Zipes, “Breaking the Disney Spell,” 21.

⁴²⁰ O’Hare, TV46.

⁴²¹ Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 47.

have a special American impact because of Hollywood's recontextulization of Grimms' tales into mass culture. As Walt Disney and countless children's authors re-created Grimms' fairy tales for popular consumption, the German quality of the original has given way to media fantasy. Indeed they have become Americanized, given a cheery message and romantic core, and thereby globalized."⁴²²

By changing the focus from what Freud described Snow White as, "being in love with one parent and hating the other,"⁴²³ into a tale primarily about romantic love, Disney reinvented this story for a new audience. Snow White had become a love story, as many fairy tales would become at the hands of Disney. McGlathery furthers this, "Just as the Grimms tale was not a version that existed exactly as such in oral tradition, the Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* fundamentally altered the sense of the Grimm version."⁴²⁴

Disney is a huge part of American culture and has become the "Stories R Us" for generations of children.⁴²⁵ Giroux notes, "Disney's image as an icon of American culture is consistently reinforced through the penetration of the Disney empire into every aspect of social life. Children experience Disney's cultural influence through a maze of representations and products found in home videos, shopping malls, classroom instructional films, box offices, popular television programs and family restaurants."⁴²⁶ Disney's place in the current world market makes their products and influence inescapable. Children are consistently bombarded with these fragments of a cultural product.⁴²⁷ Because of Disney's saturation of the fairy tale market, the Disney version must be examined for what he did to make this, and other fairy tales, so

⁴²² Simon Bronner, "The Americanization of the Brothers Grimm," in *Following Tradition: Folklore in the Discourse of American Culture* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1998), 187.

⁴²³ Sigmund Freud, "The Interpretation of Dreams," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London: Hogarth, 1953-1974) 4:260.

⁴²⁴ McGlathery, X.

⁴²⁵ Ward, 1.

⁴²⁶ Henry Giroux, "Are Disney Movies Good for Your Kids?" in Shirley Steinberg and Joe Kincheloe, *Kinderculture: The Corporate Construction of Childhood* (New York: Westview Press, 2004), 54.

⁴²⁷ McGee.

popular. Disney placed American values in his version of Snow White and presented the story in a new medium and in a new way to make it generally accessible and marketable. This film was presented to Depression Era America and possessed many of the ideals of the American condition at the time. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* has achieved so much success since its release in 1938 that Snow White even has a star on Hollywood's "Walk of Fame."⁴²⁸

The Disney version received critical acclaim and criticism since its release. One newspaper reported, "It is so delightful, so engaging, so very merry a fantasy that I suspect Santa Claus himself must have had a hand in its making."⁴²⁹ Other critics have noted, "Reading Disney is like having one's own exploited condition rammed with honey down one's throat."⁴³⁰ Because Disney blatantly targeted children with his films, some critics have questioned the messages that Disney is sending to audiences. Lurie raised the question of what the story of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* might be advocating to young girls who see the film. Will they carry away the message of being wary of a mother or stepmother who might be continually envious of the daughter's youth and good looks?⁴³¹ Adults may be able to differentiate the difference between what is a historical element and what is applicable today. Children, however, do not have such filters. A young girl may see Snow White as the ever beautiful princess who is only happy when pleasing males. Such a message can be damaging to the self esteem, but this does not warrant the removal of all fairy tale representations. Despite the success of Disney's film, his versions have called into question his methods for popularizing these tales and the potential damaging values presented to children.

With the Disney film being so popular and having its fiftieth anniversary in 1989, the Cohn version was viewed by both the studio and critics as an adult version of the Disney tale.

⁴²⁸ Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, "Walk of Fame Directory," 1987. <http://www.tibp.com/cgi-bin/foxweb.dll/wlx/dir/wlxdirectory?cc=WOFAME>, (accessed September 18, 2007).

⁴²⁹ Nugent, 157.

⁴³⁰ Ariel Dorfman & Armand Mattelart, *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic* (New York: International General, 1984), 95.

⁴³¹ Lurie, 24.

However, Cohn was not trying to remake the Disney film, but make a film that would capture much of the darkness of the Grimm version in a new way for the 1990's audience. Warren describes Cohn's film as, "This bold movie out-grims the Brothers Grimm, telling their oft-told tale as a horror movie/adventure – and it works. In fact, the weakness of the movie is precisely that the story is so familiar, but the changes wrought by the writers and director keep it fresh for most of its length."⁴³² This film was not intended for children and added elements to the story that would make it acceptable to adults in the 1990's, who had become immersed in the horror film genre.

The Evolution of *Snow White*

The Snow White fairy tale emerged from the oral tradition and escaped into the ether until it was transcribed into a literate form. As Ong would note, the tale began in primary orality and then moved into secondary orality as it began to develop a literateness.⁴³³ The influence of writing spread from just the learned scholars and clergy slowly to the masses. As reading and writing became more commonplace, versions of these tales were transcribed. When the Brothers Grimm collected the German folk tales to preserve their heritage, *Snow White* was among them. The brothers collected the tales and fashioned them into a literate form. With this change in medium came a more concrete version. The Grimms would change the tale from edition to edition to make them more appealing to larger audiences, but the meta-narrative stayed the same.

The Grimms presented Snow White as the innocent, virginal child who was hated for possessing the physical attributes of youth that the vain mother coveted. The Dwarfs would help Snow White, but would not realize themselves in a patriarchal role or have any identity outside of

⁴³² Bill Warren, "Review of Snow White: A Tale of Terror, " in *All Movie Guide*, 1997. <http://movies.nytimes.com/movie/158567/Snow-White-A-Tale-of-Terror/overview> (accessed January 10 2007).

⁴³³ Ong, 11.

their collective. The Queen would attempt to kill Snow White three times and would meet her own demise at the hands of Snow White and her Prince as a consequence of her evil actions. The conflict between the mother and the daughter provided the crux of the narrative.

Disney presented a much older Snow White who physically was becoming a woman. The continual presence of the Prince and Snow White's longing for him turned this version into a romantic love story. The Queen was removed from having direct familial ties and made only one attempt to kill Snow White. The Dwarfs were lively and unique as they guarded Snow White for her love, the Prince. The Queen meets her demise at her own hands while running away from the Dwarfs. The Prince rescues Snow White and they ride off in the sunset.

Cohn's film presents more complex characters. The audience sees Lily grow up after seeing the death of her mother. The Queen has several psychological problems that arise from the dramatic elements that Cohn adds into the film. These problems manifest themselves in ways that audiences would be familiar with because of the popularity of previous versions. The Dwarfs are now outlaws and one gains a romantic interest in Lily. The Prince is present, but dies at the hands of the Queen. Claudia finally dies by fire in a grotesque fashion that seems more intended to provide gore for the audience than justice.

Analysis

As the Snow White fairy tale has passed from storyteller to storyteller and from generation to generation, each individual author has imprinted upon their versions of the tale aspects of themselves and the time and culture that surrounded them. The meta-narrative would largely stay the same, but so many of the details would change. These changes provide the greatest interest for this study. By establishing what aspects remain intact from version to version, the alterations become highlighted and can be seen as specific cultural and rhetorical constructs

that are imbedded into the versions. Only through a comparative analysis can these cultural traces be singled out and examined for their rhetorical potential to critics and consumers of these tales.

This study presented a contextual, although not exhaustive, analysis of the specific cultures that produced each version. The second chapter did not present every possible cultural attribute associated with these cultures. Each text was examined first to see what cultural traces emerged. The contextual chapter was presented before the textual and character analysis to provide the reader with the necessary context to then highlight those contextual traces within the text and characters. Germany in the early 1800's, America in the 1930's and America in the 1990's were all distinct cultural contexts that provided a rich soil for these tales to grow and emerge from. The political and economic situation in Germany during the early 1800's influenced the darkness of the tales used for recreation and a need for nationalism through the German folk tales. The Depression and the emerging medium of animated film established a need for memorable and enjoyable entertainment for all Americans who were struggling to regain their control over their political and economic footing. The horror films and the emerging importance of the role of the father in film gave the 1990's audience a desire to see films that would shock them with gore and deeper psychological drama, but also placed them to see a father figure emerge from the shadows in a tale they were well accustomed to.

The third chapter examined the text of the three versions to present the specific changes to each version that would change their rhetoric. Each author altered the storyline and structure of the plot around themes and values present during the writing and production of the tales. Two versions contained three attempts and the other only one. How the Queen attempted to kill Snow White changed. The use of magic was added to two versions to make the Queen less human and make her more fantastical on the silver screen. Each variant can be traced to a specific cultural product of the time.

The fourth chapter presented each of the characters involved with the tale. The characters underwent vast changes in their personalities and actions each to further the narrative in a new way. These changes presented different audiences with different human, or other-worldly, attributes with which to identify or reject. Characters were amended to make them more lovable or easier to vilify. This does not mean that each character is polysemic and open to any and every interpretation.⁴³⁴ However, children will not possess the same methods for internalizing and interpreting characters and actions like adults do. The audience changes how the authors present their versions because of the possibilities for them to read into a text.

With the context established and the changes highlighted between versions of the text for the narrative points and the characters, this study presents a contextual and textual analysis of three versions of one narrative over almost two hundred years. Much like Stephen Browne's work on Jefferson's first inaugural, this study is closely combing the text and context. However, my work is more expansive due to the number of versions available of the one text.⁴³⁵ The story is a common one and has been well known throughout the world for centuries. However, the evolution this one story takes just within these three versions makes it a rich text for rhetorical examination. Most stories do not evolve with new audiences over time. The adaptability of *Snow White* to possess continual flexibility while retaining the core aspects that make it readily recognizable provides the rhetorical critic with a unique text for examination.

My study can add to current scholarship by synthesizing much of what other fields have presented about fairy tales and how they have been adapted. Also, the way each of the three storytellers approached the Snow White fairy tale is highlighted for what makes each storyteller unique. Despite the unique identifying characteristics of each storyteller, there are, however,

⁴³⁴ Celeste Michelle Condit, "The Rhetorical Limits of Polysemy," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 6 (1989): 103-122.

⁴³⁵ Stephen Howard Browne, "'The Circle of Our Felicities': Thomas Jefferson's First Inaugural Address and the Rhetoric of Nationhood," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 5:2 (2002): 409-438.

similarities in how the basic process of telling the story moves. The Grimms, Disney, and Cohn all considered aspects of plot, character development, drama, and resolution. Each wished to produce a compelling version of Snow White that would captivate audiences. With this process, each author had certain situational constraints to work against, such as the medium, economics, and the attributes of the audiences.

While the process of creating a unique version has been discussed in other fields, the specific rhetorical actions have not been discussed previously. Each author made specific changes to the story and to the characters to adapt the story to their own ideas and to modify it for a different audience. All changes, which are present in the unique aspects of each version, display specific rhetorical decisions made by each author to fulfill a specific need. This need could be scholarly, capitalistic, or artistic. By analyzing the different versions, specific rhetorical choices can be isolated to better understand how storytellers adapt established stories for new audiences.

Future Implications

This study provides a possible framework for examining evolving texts. Distinct versions of a meta-narrative over an extended period of time were examined. Each version was situated in a specific cultural context. The versions were compared for narrative structure and character development. Once the consistent aspects were isolated, the variants were closely analyzed for cultural traces to explain why those variants were included in a particular version.

The majority of texts most rhetorical critics find useful for examination do not change as dramatically over time, or with new audiences, as fairy tales do. By looking at versions of a meta-narrative over time to discern what is constant and what is variable, the changes made to a text can be isolated for examination of why these aspects were strategically changed. Such a methodology can be useful for narratives that are retold or reinvented, films that are remade for

new audiences, or even websites that are continually updated for a similar audience, but are changed to provide new information.

Conclusion

This work has examined three versions of the Snow White fairy tale in an attempt to understand what changes were made between versions and why they were made. By examining the specific cultural traces found in each version, I make the claim that a culture can be read by examining the products of that culture and then comparing them to similar products from other cultures to highlight the variations. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* is a classic story that innumerable adults and children have listened to or watched and enjoyed for centuries. Part of this study has been to illuminate many of the core aspects of this tale that make it so timeless and increase its desirability to be continually reinvented and retold to each emerging generation. This classic tale deserves such attention.

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Appendix A

Scene Index for the 1811 Brothers Grimm Version

1. The Queen sees white snow, red blood, and a black ebony wood frame and wishes for a child.
2. Snow White is born and her mother names her.
3. The Queen asks her mirror who is the fairest in the land, and the mirror answers that she is.
4. When Snow White turns seven, the Queen asks the mirror again and the answer is Snow White. The Queen becomes insanely jealous.
5. The Queen summons the Huntsman and instructs him to take Snow White into the woods, stab her to death, and bring back her lungs and liver so the Queen can cook and eat them.
6. The Huntsman takes Snow White into the woods and Snow White begs for her life. The Huntsman figures the wild animals will kill her anyway and lets her go.
7. The Huntsman then kills a wild boar to get the lungs and liver for the Queen.
8. Once the Queen received the lungs and liver, she cooks them with salt and eats them.
9. Snow White is alone in the great forest. She is afraid and begins to run. At dusk, she finds a little house belonging to the seven dwarfs.
10. Snow White finds seven of everything in the dwarfs' house.
11. Snow White eats vegetables from the plates and drank a little wine from each glass. She tries every bed and finally falls asleep on the last one.
12. The dwarfs come home and ask who has disturbed their chair, plate, bread, vegetables, fork, knife, mug, and bed.

13. The dwarfs find Snow White asleep. They do not wake her, but just look and admire her beauty. The seventh dwarf sleeps with each of the others until morning.
14. Snow White wakes up and the dwarfs offer her a deal to stay with them.
15. The Queen asks the mirror and it answers Snow White. The Queen knows now the Huntsman lied to her and begins to plan how to kill Snow White.
16. The Queen disguises herself as an old peddler woman.
17. The Queen goes to sell Snow White bodice laces. The Queen ties the laces so tight that Snow White can not breathe and she falls over as if she were dead.
18. The dwarfs return home, find Snow White, cut the laces and revive her. Snow White is warned not to let anyone else in.
19. The Queen asks the mirror again and finds out that Snow White is still alive. She makes another plan to kill Snow White involving a poisoned comb.
20. The Queen disguises herself differently and visits Snow White. Snow White does not let her in. The Queen shows Snow White the pretty comb and offers to comb Snow White's hair. The Queen puts the comb into Snow White's hair and she falls over dead.
21. The dwarfs come home, revive Snow White by taking the comb out and tell her not to let anyone in again.
22. The Queen asks the mirror again and it still replies that Snow White is fairest.
23. The furious Queen goes to her secret room and makes a poisoned apple.
24. The Queen disguises herself differently and goes to visit Snow White.
25. Snow White refuses to let the Queen in, but the Queen offers to eat half the apple and give Snow White the other half. Snow White eats it and falls over dead.
26. The Queen returns home, asks mirror, and she is the fairest in the land.
27. The dwarfs return home and can not resuscitate Snow White. They cry for three days.

28. The dwarfs want to bury Snow White, but she still has red cheeks like a live person. The dwarfs make a glass coffin for her and always leave at least one dwarf to watch over her.
29. A young prince seeking shelter finds the dwarfs' house. He falls in love with Snow White and offers to buy her. The dwarfs refuse. He asks if he can have her as he can not live without her. The dwarfs agree.
30. The prince returns to his castle with Snow White. He has servants carry Snow White with him everywhere he goes.
31. One day, one of the servants gets tired of carrying Snow White around. He opens the coffin and hits Snow White in the back. The apple comes out of her mouth and she is alive again.
32. Snow White sees the prince, falls in love and they eat together.
33. The wedding is planned for the next day and the Queen is invited.
34. The Queen asks her mirror and the mirror replies that the young queen is a thousand times fairer.
35. Jealousy drives the Queen to go to the wedding. She realizes that the young queen is Snow White. The wedding party puts a pair of iron shoes into a fire until they glow. Then the shoes are placed on the Queen's feet and she is forced to dance until she dances herself to death.

Appendix B

Scene Index for the 1937 Walt Disney Version

1. Opening credits.
2. A book opens and introduces the story.
3. Zoom in on a castle. The Queen approaches the magic mirror and asks who is the fairest in the land. Snow White is the answer.
4. Snow White is dressed as a servant and scrubs the steps while singing “I’m Wishing.”
5. The Prince approaches.
6. Snow White is still singing and the Prince joins in.
7. Snow White runs into the castle and the Prince sings “One Song” to her. The Queen is spying on them from a high window.
8. The Queen instructs the Huntsman to take Snow White into the forest, kill her, and bring back her heart.
9. Snow White is picking wild flowers while the Huntsman watches.
10. The Huntsman attempts to kill Snow White, but can not do it.
11. Snow White flees through the woods.
12. Snow White stops running and meets several forest animals.
13. Snow White sings “With a Smile and a Song” with the animals. She asks the animals if they know a place where she can sleep.
14. The animals lead Snow White to the dwarfs’ cottage.
15. Snow White knocks on the door and, after no answer, enters the cottage. The animals follow her.
16. Snow White looks around the dirty cottage.

17. Snow White and the animals clean the cottage while singing “Whistle While You Work.”
18. The animals do the laundry and finish cleaning the cottage.
19. The dwarfs are in the diamond mine and are singing about digging.
20. The dwarfs finish working and sing “Heigh Ho” while walking home.
21. Snow White goes upstairs and finds the bedroom. She goes to sleep and the animals join her.
22. The dwarfs are coming home. The animals hear them and leave the cottage.
23. The dwarfs realize someone is in the cottage and sneak in to search for the intruder.
24. The dwarfs send Dopey upstairs to see who is there. Dopey finds Snow White and gets scared.
25. All of the dwarfs go upstairs to confront Snow White.
26. Snow White wakes up, sees the dwarfs and guesses their names based on how they look and act.
27. Snow White tells the dwarfs that the Queen is trying to kill her. The Snow White makes a deal with the dwarfs to stay with them.
28. Snow White gets dinner ready and tells the dwarfs to go wash up.
29. The dwarfs wash up and sing “Bluddle-Uddle-Um-Dum.”
30. The Queen, holding the box she thinks has Snow White’s heart, asks the magic mirror who is the fairest. The mirror replies that Snow White who lives with the seven dwarfs is.
31. The Queen prepares a disguise using magic and changes into an old peddler woman.
32. The Queen makes the poison for the apple.
33. The dwarfs dance with Snow White and sing “The Dwarfs’ Yodel Song.”
34. Snow White tells a love story to the dwarfs and sings “Someday My Prince Will Come.”
35. Snow White sends the dwarfs to bed.
36. The dwarfs all find odd places to sleep.

37. Snow White prays.
38. The dwarfs are sleeping.
39. The Queen puts the poison in the apple.
40. The Queen looks for any possible antidote for the poison and realizes it is love's first kiss.
41. The Queen goes through the dungeon to a boat and sails away from the castle.
42. The dwarfs go to work. Snow White kisses each of them goodbye. They warn Snow White not to let anyone in the cottage while they are away.
43. The Queen approaches the cottage while saying her plan aloud.
44. Snow White is baking and singing "Someday My Prince Will Come."
45. The Queen shows up and offers Snow White an apple.
46. Birds try to stop the Queen, but she fakes a heart problem to get inside the cottage.
47. The animals run off to get the dwarfs.
48. The Queen tells Snow White that the apple is a magic wishing apple.
49. The animals are dragging the dwarfs toward the cottage and the dwarfs realize that Snow White is in trouble.
50. The Queen plays on Snow White's love for the Prince to get her to bite the apple.
51. The dwarfs are running through the woods.
52. Snow White states her wish to be with the Prince
53. The dwarfs are still running through the woods.
54. Snow White bites the apple and falls over as if she is dead.
55. The Queen is leaving just as the dwarfs are returning. The dwarfs chase the Queen.
56. The Queen is trapped on a cliff and tries to roll a boulder onto the dwarfs. Lightning strikes the cliff, the Queen falls off, and the boulder falls off too.

57. Snow White is lying on the bed. The dwarfs stand around her crying. The animals gather around outside in the rain.
58. A leaf falls from a branch and the screen states, "...so beautiful, even in death, that the dwarfs could not find it in their hearts to bury her..."
59. The branch is covered with snow and the screen states, "...they fashioned a coffin of glass and gold, and kept eternal vigil at her side..."
60. Leaves are growing on the branch and the screen states, "...the Prince, who had searched far and wide, heard of the maiden who slept in the glass coffin."
61. Snow White lies in the coffin and the dwarfs bring flowers to put around the coffin.
62. The Prince arrives singing "One Song."
63. The Prince kisses Snow White and wakes her up.
64. The Prince carries Snow White to his horse.
65. Snow White says goodbye to the dwarfs.
66. The Prince leads the horse with Snow White on it away from the cottage.
67. Zoom in on a brightly lit castle while "Someday My Prince Will Come" plays in the background.
68. A book is open and the page has written on it, "...and they lived happily ever after."
69. The book closes.
70. The End

Appendix C

Scene Index for the 1997 Michael Cohn Version

1. Opening credits. A horse drawn carriage travels through the woods.
2. Wolves are following the carriage. The carriage is temporarily blocked.
3. The carriage falls over into a ravine.
4. The wolves attack the horses and the driver.
5. The Queen is dying and tells the King to cut the baby out.
6. Blood flows over the snow. The movie title appears.
7. Young Lily is hiding from the Nanny behind her mother's grave. Lily grabs an apple and asks about her mother.
8. Lily runs through the castle.
9. Lily finds her father, the King, and asks about love, religion, and her dead mother. Lily asks why the new woman is coming.
10. The new soon-to-be Queen is approaching.
11. The New Queen arrives. Lily is presented to the new Queen. The Queen gives Lily a puppy.
12. The Queen tours the castle. The Queen's brother is introduced.
13. The Queen sees a portrait of the first Queen.
14. The Queen moves her things in and talks to her brother about their mother and anger.
15. The Queen opens her magic mirror, but nothing happens yet.
16. The Queen flirts with the King. Lily watches in secret, but the Queen sees her.
17. The royal wedding. The Queen sings for the audience. The brother does magic.

18. The King and Queen are in bed and are receiving blessings from clergy members. Lily throws the blessed liquid on the Queen, instead of the foot of the bed, and she runs off.
19. Lily chases the puppy into the Queen's room. Lily hides under the bed and the mirror opens magically. The Nanny looks at the mirror and then dies. The mirror closes.
20. The burial of Nanny.
21. Lily is crying in bed. She looks at a locket with a picture of her mother in it.
22. Lily is now 16. Lily asks a servant about her mother.
23. Lily is excited because Peter arrives. Lily talks about wanting to go out beyond the castle because it does not feel like home to her anymore.
24. The Queen is now pregnant.
25. The King prays for a son.
26. Peter tells Lily about Paris. The Queen rebukes Lily for inappropriate clothing.
27. There is a feast. The Queen rebukes the King for not telling her how beautiful she looks in her new dress. The King wonders where Lily is.
28. Lily is in a storage room looking through some of her mother's possessions.
29. The Queen is singing at the feast. Lily arrives wearing her mother's dress. All eyes turn to Lily and the Queen stops singing.
30. The King dances with Lily. The Queen goes into labor.
31. The Queen delivers a stillborn child and is now barren.
32. The Queen tells her brother to save the baby's body.
33. The brother grabs the body out of a fire the servants have made to burn it.
34. The magic mirror opens. The Queen is not pleased with her reflection and in her grief from losing her child, she tries to make herself feel better by putting on make-up.

35. The magic mirror begins talking to the Queen. The image in the mirror is of the Queen, but a very beautiful image of her. The mirror explains the jealousy of all other people to the Queen.
36. Lily visits the Queen and apologizes for pushing her away.
37. Peter walks and talks with Lily. Peter proposes. A servant calls for Peter and he rides off to meet with the Queen.
38. Lily sees the Queen's brother in the woods. He tries to kill her and chases her through the woods.
39. Lily runs through the forest and falls in a hole.
40. The brother can not find Lily.
41. Lily continues to run.
42. The brother kills a pig to get the insides.
43. The brother gives the Queen a package. It is a heart. The Queen asks for details of Lily's death. The Queen keeps the heart and sends the brother with the remaining organs to the kitchen to be put into a stew.
44. The stew, with the pig's organs in it, is served to the King and Queen.
45. A servant interrupts dinner to tell the King that Lily's horse was found. The King leaves immediately before eating any of the stew.
46. Lily is walking in the forest. Wolves are lurking. She finds an old castle and enters. She finds a loaf of bread and begins to eat.
47. A search party scours the forest for Lily.
48. The Queen is in bed and rubs the heart on her face while laughing manically.
49. The search party continues. The king falls off his horse.
50. The Queen is still celebrating and dancing. She feeds the heart to the dog she gave Lily years ago.

51. The magic mirror tells the Queen that her attempt to kill Lily failed.
52. The seven men⁴³⁶ come home. Lily is asleep.
53. The King returns home and his leg is broken. The Queen acts very supportive.
54. The seven⁴³⁷ question Lily. She introduces herself as the princess.
55. The Queen learns that Lily is alive and well and is now in the forest.
56. The brother is getting drunk in a pub and keeps hearing the Queen's voice saying
"traitor."
57. The brother runs from the pub and stabs himself to death.
58. The seven taunt Lily. One of them devises a scheme to get a ransom for her from the
King. He is kicked out by the others
59. The Queen sends her raven to find Lily in the forest.
60. One of the six gives Lily a knife. The six leave to go to work. Lily sees a snake and gets
scared.
61. The six are on their way to the mine. The Queen's raven sees them.
62. The six enter the mine and Lily shows up.
63. The six work in the mine.
64. The Queen talks to her dead baby and places it on a wooden altar in the woods.
65. The Queen turns over an hourglass with a bird in it. As she does this, the mine begins to
cave in. The six save Lily, but one of them dies.
66. The Queen enters the kitchen and poisons the stew that is to feed everyone in the castle.
67. The five and Lily return to the cottage through the woods. The five contemplate whether
they should ransom Lily or not.
68. The King and the rest of the servants in the castle all become sick.

⁴³⁶ I will refer to them as men. Some are dwarfs, but the majority of them are normal size.

⁴³⁷ I will just use the number of men for the remainder of the index as they have no names and their number changes.

69. The Queen talks to the mirror and sees Lily's image in the mirror.
70. Lily sees the raven in the woods. One of the five flirts with Lily.
71. Peter looks for the King in the dark castle. He only finds the Queen.
72. All of the servants are gone because they got sick and the Queen sent them away because they might have the plague.
73. The Queen kisses Peter and then sends him off to find Lily.
74. Lily is at the five's castle. One of the five is dreaming and making noises like he is scared.
75. Lily is getting water from a stream in the forest and starts hearing her name.
76. The Queen is using magic and creates smoke.
77. Lily is in the woods searching for the voice calling her name.
78. The Queen dances in the castle and causes a great wind in the forest. The Queen knocks things over in the castle and this causes trees to fall around Lily in the forest. One of the five saves her and another one dies.
79. One of the four kills the raven and the Queen feels it.
80. The four bury their dead.
81. The Queen asks the mirror why Lily lives and her child is dead. The mirror tells the Queen to collect the King's seed and blood to resurrect her dead child.
82. The Queen approaches the sick King and is wearing a sexy gown. She seduces the King to get his seed.
83. The four are with Lily and tell her stories of their scars and hardships. She kisses one of them.
84. The mirror tells the Queen to become like a snake. The Queen uses her brother's heart to change.

85. Lily is bathing in the woods and sees the Queen, who is now in disguise. The Queen eats one apple and gives Lily the other one, which is poisoned.
86. Lily says she will save the apple for her boyfriend and the disguised Queen tells her about youth and love. Then Lily bites the apple and starts choking. The Queen tells Lily that she is now in eternal sleep and is alive, but will appear dead.
87. One of the four finds Lily.
88. Peter finds the four and Lily and tries to help her.
89. Lily has a dream sequence of her running through the forest and the King saying she is dead.
90. Peter wants to take Lily back to the castle for a proper funeral, but one of the four says no.
91. The Queen is laughing manically again.
92. Lily is in a stained glass coffin being lowered into the ground. Peter drops dirt onto the coffin and Lily's eyes open. One of the four jumps into the grave, opens the coffin, and pulls Lily out; He shakes her and tells her to breathe. Lily finally starts coughing and spits the apple out. Lily stares romantically at the one who pulled her out.
93. The four say goodbye to Lily before she leaves with Peter.
94. Peter and Lily ride back to the castle.
95. The Queen is dragging the King, who is tied up, to an altar.
96. Peter and Lily ride through a graveyard and stop. The one of the four has followed them.
97. The King is hanging on an upside down cross over the dead baby.
98. Lily, the one, and Peter search for the Queen. Peter continues searching one way, and one of the four and Lily go another way.
99. Lily's dog attacks the one.
100. Lily finds the King sick, weak, and bleeding.

101. Peter finds the Queen and is thrown out a window.
102. One accidentally knocks over a lamp and starts a fire.
103. Lily is attacked by a servant who seems to be possessed. Lily stabs the servant in the eye with a candle.
104. Lily finds a crossbow, starts looking for the Queen, and then starts breaking mirrors.
105. Lily finds the Queen holding the dead baby, but the baby is now alive. The Queen magically changes appearance and then disappears.
106. The Queen attacks Lily and cuts her face to make her ugly. Lily knocks over a Lamp, which starts a fire. The Queen hears the baby crying. Lily stabs the Magic mirror, which mortally wounds the Queen.
107. The Queen pulls the knife from the mirror. The mirror bleeds and the Queen Ages as the mirror breaks.
108. The mirror shatters and glass rains all over the Queen.
109. The Queen catches fire and is dying. The mirror rebuilds itself.
110. One is with the King as Lily approaches. The King sees Lily and snow begins to fall.
111. The mirror cabinet closes.
112. End credits.

John H. Saunders

336 Walden Chase Lane
Columbus, GA
Home: (706)-507-5594

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND:

University of Memphis, 1997 – B.A Communication; 2000 – M.A Communication
The Pennsylvania State University, 2008 (expected) – Ph.D. Speech Communication

CAREER SUMMARY:

Teaching Assistant, The Pennsylvania State University, 2001–2004.
Fixed Term Instructor, The Pennsylvania State University, 2004-2005.
Adjunct Instructor, The University of Memphis, 2005-2006.
Adjunct Instructor, Columbus State University, 2006-present.

RELATED PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Guest lecturer at the University of Montevallo. Judge for the Penn State University Public Speaking Contest for six semesters. Elected secretary for the Popular Communication division of the Southern States Communication Association for 2008-2010. Co-organizer of and judge for the first annual “CSU’s Top Public Speaker” contest at Columbus State University, 2007. Presenter at Columbus State University’s “Read Out Children’s Books 2007” events in both Spring 2007 and Fall 2007. Reviewer for the fourth edition of the Dan O’Hair, Rob Stewart, and Hannah Rubenstein textbook *A Speaker’s Guidebook*. Reviewer for the third edition of the Cindy L. Griffin textbook *Invitation to Public Speaking*. Chair of three panels at SSCA conferences. Chair of one panel at SSCA conference. Chair and panel member for over twenty-five exit exams at Columbus State University.

PUBLICATIONS:

MacKenzie, Lauren and Saunders, John. “Facing the Fear’: Methods for Addressing Speech Anxiety in Public Speaking Class.” *Texas Speech Communication Journal*. (31:1, winter 2007)
Also available online at: <http://www.etsca.com/tscjonline/1206-fear/>.

PAPERS PRESENTED:

Disney’s Gendering of Snow White. Paper presented at Southern States Communication Association Conference, Tampa, 2004. *The Cat in the Hat: The Complexity of a Simple Tale*. Paper presented at Southern States Communication Association Conference, Baton Rouge, 2004. The Prescription of Literacy for the Appreciation of Public Memory Texts. Paper presented at Southern States Communication Association Conference, Baton Rouge, 2005. Snow White Through the Ages. Paper presented at the Eastern Communication Association Conference, Pittsburgh, 2005. The Camera and the Invalid: Jeffries’ Wheelchair and Control of Narrative In Hitchcock’s *Rear Window*. Paper presented at National Communication Association Conference, Boston, 2005. Controversy Through Absence and Distortion: The Misrepresentation of the Rosa Parks Story in Children’s Biographies, Historical Accounts of the Civil Rights Movement, and Elementary Textbooks. Paper presented at the Southern States Communication Association Conference, Dallas, 2006. “The Pedagogical Dr. Seuss’’: Using Children’s Literature to Illustrate Aspects of Public Speaking. Paper presented at The Southern States Communication Association Conference, Louisville, 2007. “What is Your Favorite Pizza Topping?’’: Using Open Ended Questions for Roll Calling. Paper presented at The Southern States Communication Association conference, Savannah, 2008.