Adapting Snow White: Tracing Female Maturation and Ageing Across Film, Television and the Comic Book

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Abstract

This thesis analyses 21st century filmic, televisual and comic “Snow White” adaptations. The research is interdisciplinary, bringing together scholarship on gender, childhood, ageing, adaptation, media and fairy tales.

The first half of the thesis contextualises the broader historical and sociocultural conversation “Snow White” tellings are immersed in by nature of their shared culture and history. It also identifies the tale’s core and traces the tale’s formation as a tale type from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century. The second half of this thesis moves to an analysis of two films (Mirror Mirror, 2012; Snow White and the Huntsman, 2012), a television series (Once Upon a Time, 2011–present) and a comic book series (Fables, 2002–2015). It considers the kinds of stories about female growth and ageing different media adaptations of “Snow White” enable, and contemplates how issues of time and temporality and growth and ageing play out in these four versions.

In analysing the relationship between form and content, this thesis illustrates how a study of different media adaptations of “Snow White” can enrich fairy–tale scholarship and the fairy–tale canon. It also details the imaginative space different media adaptations of “Snow White” provide when engaging with dominant discourses around female growth and ageing in the West. Using “Snow White” as a case study, this thesis centrally facilitates a dialogue between ageing, childhood, fairy–tale and adaptation studies.
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Introduction

There is, for instance, no suggestion that the queen’s absorption in her beauty ever gives her pleasure, or that the desire for power through sexual attractiveness is itself a sexual feeling. What is stressed is the anger and fear that attend the queen’s realization that as she and Snow White both get older, she must lose. (Sale, 1978, p. 41)

Thus Snow White’s desire is the same as the queen’s; it is for beauty and sexual power as goals in themselves. It is not a demonic desire as we see it in Snow White, though we know it is a fearful wish indeed, laden with danger and the potentiality of becoming like the queen. (Sale, 1978, p. 42)

This thesis derives from an interest in how contemporary fairy-tale adaptations depict female growth and ageing—specifically in adaptations of “Snow White.”¹ Having previously conducted research on the child and representations of sexual maturation in three versions of “Little Red Riding Hood,” I became aware of fairy tales’ muddled temporalities, and convoluted articulations of time and space. I wanted to investigate how contemporary fairy-tale adaptations of tales like “Snow White,” address the temporal, lived experiences of growth and ageing in a genre that scholars assert is “not driven or defined by time or temporal considerations” (Haase, 2000, p. 362).

While vague geographic and historical settings, one-dimensional characters and temporal dislocation (i.e., “once upon a time”) are all said to contribute to early fairy tales’ apparent “timelessness” (Lüthi, 1982; Zipes, 1988b; Haase, 2000),² at the end of my master’s research I was left with questions about how issues of time and temporality, and their relation to growth and ageing are played out in different media forms. These queries drove me to specifically explore how the interplay between different media forms and “Snow White’s” core (i.e., the story or premise that remains largely consistent between versions; discussed further in chapter one) give additional insight into how growth and ageing in contemporary tellings take shape—particularly in

¹ When Snow White appears in quotations I am referring to the tale type. When Snow White is not in quotations, I am referring to the character Snow White.
² My use of the word “timeless” does not refer to the sentimental meaning of the word but fairy tales’ disconnect from measured, linear time within the story itself.
relation to Western ideological norms and understandings of growing and ageing bodies.

As Snow White and the queen’s story and relationship centre around their changing bodies and social roles as developing and ageing females, “Snow White” is the ideal tale for such an exploration. The tension between these two figures results, not from intimate hostilities, but from a social system that sees the newly developed youthful woman usurp and erase her older counterpart. On the surface, these characters have been depicted in diametric opposition as the angel and devil woman, the virgin and the crone. However, as Roger Sale’s above remarks highlight, these characters are bound by similar constraints, as their youth and beauty signify their only power.

Feminist fairy–tale scholars have considered the “Snow White” characters as “man-made constructs,” 3 or as bipolar representations of the same female figure at different stages of life. 4 Their research has centred on the characters’ relationship to patriarchy and has primarily considered these characters in static terms as virgin and crone, or in terms of their narrative function as the princess and villain. My thesis will contribute to this scholarship by detailing how contemporary tellings represent the female characters as (complex and psychologically develop(ed)(ing)) individuals in and through moments of transition. In so doing, I will demonstrate how contemporary female fairy–tale characters can be understood beyond their narrative function, explaining how their growing and ageing bodies, and shifting social roles speak directly to and/or reflect complex ideologies, discourses and social norms in a Western context.

Tied to this work is a consideration of the role different media play in contemporary adaptations. When analysing fairy–tale films, Donald Haase (1988) stresses the important links between form and content. While he does so to identify the

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3 Bacchilega, 1997 & 1988
4 Bacchilega, 1988; Steinchen, 1984; Gilbert & Gubar, 1979; Daly, 1978
problematic “relationship between original written text and the visual counterpart” (i.e.,
filmic adaptation) (Haase, 1988, p. 196)—describing the visual demands of film, and
the expansion and concretisation of scenes as largely “compromising” and “complicated”

factors in a tale’s retelling—his assessment nonetheless reinforces the value of
accounting for form when exploring content in contemporary fairy tales. Leaving

behind value judgments about whether a tale is “compromised,” I wish to investigate
whether media’s material differences invite different readings of the tale and as such

provide varied avenues to explore characters’ identities and roles as females.

Research on the adaptation of fairy tales, primarily in literature and film, has

been undertaken by scholars such as Pauline Greenhill & Jill Terry Rudy (2014),
Eve Matrix (2010), and Haase (2004 & 1988). Much of this research explores the
adaptations’ narratives, motifs and storylines, their sociocultural histories, and their
intertextual nature. Only Haase (2004) and Greenhill & Rudy (2014) stress the
important links between form and content, and assert that more research needs to be
done into different media contexts. This is not to suggest that Bacchilega, Zipes and
Lury ignore form, but rather to indicate that form is not their central concern.

The limited attention given to different media adaptations of fairy tales likely

stems from fairy–tale scholars’ tendency to criticise the production of non-literary
mass-mediated fairy tales, and fairy–tale scholars’ open criticism of filmic, televisual
and/or comic fairy tales. As fairy–tale scholarship privileges folkloric and literary

perspectives, the potential contributions of different media adaptations of fairy tales to


5 Greenhill & Rudy, 2014; Bacchilega, 2013; Lury, 2010; Greenhill & Matrix, 2010; Haase, 1988
7 Greenhill & Rudy, 2014; Bacchilega, 2013; Greenhill & Matrix; 2010
8 Zipes, 2009; Haase, 1988; Ben–Amos, 1971
9 Zipes, 2009 & 1988b; Briggs, 1986; Virtanen, 1986; Dégh & Vázsonyi, 1979
the fairy-tale canon requires further exploration. This thesis will thus expand on Haase’s (2004) and Greenhill & Rudy’s (2014) interest in form and content to question whether media’s material differences accommodates varied avenues for the analysis of “Snow White” and the female characters’ growth and ageing in contemporary tellings of the tale.

Scope & Aims

This thesis brings together scholarship on gender, childhood, ageing, adaptation, media and fairy tales, providing me with an interdisciplinary frame. Though it is conceptually and theoretically situated in a broader Western context—drawing on Western conceptions of fairy tales, adaptation, growth and ageing, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood—its engagement with critical debates concerning film, television and comic books is largely situated in an Anglo-American context, with the thesis focused on Anglo-American adaptations. Furthermore, the thesis specifically engages with contemporary Western understandings of femininity and the discursive phenomenon of postfeminism, which, concretised in the 1990s, finds continued resonance in contemporary popular culture texts.

As an additional boundary to this research, my investigation is confined to one tale, “Snow White,” and its filmic, televisual and comic adaptations. In focusing on “Snow White,” I begin by tracing common narrative threads, tropes and motifs, specifically identifying the tale’s core in chapter three. This work will allow me to identify aspects of the adaptations that are connected to the tale’s core and formation as a tale type, providing the context to subsequently unpack and identify aspects of the adaptations’ enunciations that may be more specifically linked to different media forms.
Ultimately, I contemplate the relationship between form and content, and explore the types of stories that are enabled by a given medium.

My research will add to fairy-tale scholarship by illustrating how the study of different media can further unpack the complex ways fairy tales continue to evolve. It will also allow me to contribute to feminist fairy-tale scholarship (discussed in chapters one and three) by considering whether different media facilitate a re-imagining of the tale and with it a restructuring of previously one-dimensional and static female character identities and roles. Further, in investigating contemporary representations of Snow White and the queen, in chapters four and five I will unpack the adaptations’ engagement with post-feminist culture, exploring whether or how these texts respond to, reimagine or perpetuate post-feminist discourses and norms (as described by Negra, 2009). Finally, this research will further scholarship on female growth and ageing by exploring and analysing the interplay between media forms, and the identities and roles female characters assume as they move through/into different age categories. In so doing, I will demonstrate how the dominant discourses of growth and ageing take shape in each adaptation, and consider whether an adaptation’s at times competing discourses inform the female characters’ performance of child, adolescent and/or adult identities within the confines of each “Snow White” telling.

With this in mind, the thesis’ aims can be summarised as follows:

- To establish the components that are consistent across various versions of “Snow White” when identifying the tale’s core and detailing its formation as a tale type.
- To analyse the kinds of stories about female growth and ageing that are enabled by different media adaptations of “Snow White.”
- To explain how issues of time and temporality, and growth and ageing play out in contemporary film, television and comic book adaptations of “Snow White.”
• To facilitate a dialogue between ageing, childhood, fairy-tale and adaptation studies by using “Snow White” as a case study.

These aims are addressed via a historical survey of debates around childhood, adolescents and adulthood, in which I identify dominant ideologies and discourses surrounding growth and ageing, particularly as it pertains to females and post-feminist culture (Chapter two); by a historical survey of “Snow White” in which I provide an overview of the tale’s evolution, detail its narrative patterns and identify the tale’s core (Chapter three); as well as via textual analyses of two films, a television programme and comic book series (Chapters four, five & six).

The surveys conducted in the first half of this thesis contextualise the broader historical and sociocultural conversation contemporary adaptations of “Snow White” are immersed in by nature of their shared culture, history and production. These chapters provide definitions for the terms “adaptation,” “child,” “adolescent,” “adult,” “growth” and “ageing,” and help to identify the scholarly conversations this thesis participates in. My analysis in the second half of the thesis provides specific insights into the interplay between media, fairy tales and representations of changing female identities/roles. These chapters explore the fantastical space different media adaptations of “Snow White” provide when re-imagining and/or re-articulating cultural norms and expectations for growing and ageing female characters in contemporary Western (post-feminist) popular culture texts.

Finally, when detailing how issues of time and temporality, and growth and ageing play out in contemporary “Snow White” adaptations, I will unpack how each adaptation challenges chronological notions of time. While in contemporary Western society, chronometric time “tends to be seen as the only concept of time that exists or that should be taken seriously” (Baars, 2012, p. 146; also see Jennings & Kramitzki,
2015), time is inherently difficult to define as it takes shape in many forms and because, as we are both living in time and living time, it is inherently difficult to distance ourselves from time as an object of study (Baars, 2012). Chronometric (also referred to as chronological) time measures regular change. Although, as Jan Baars (2012) notes, this concept of time has its practical uses and merits, the dominance of chronometric time in 21st century Western society, overshadows other understandings of time, such as experiential (i.e., felt) time; Augustinian time (time that takes shape through an understanding and overlap of the past, present and future; Baars, 2012; Jennings & Kramitzki, 2015); and Kairotic time (which “emerges between past and future, beyond cycles of time, notions of finite and infinite in a felt moment of insight”; Crowther, Smythe & Spence, 2014).

The dominance of chronometric time in 21st century Western society directly influences contemporary understandings of ageing, as ageing is interpreted in chronometric terms. However, as Baars (2012) and Ros Jennings & Eva Kramitzk (2015) suggest, in accounting for alternative understandings of time, one can gain a broader and more nuanced understanding of ageing, and in turn the intersection between time, temporality and ageing. For this reason, my analysis chapters will explore the different ways time and temporality take shape and are represented. Centrally, I will detail how the depiction and/or use of time and temporality in each adaptation in turn relates, shapes, influences and informs a reading of female growth and ageing in contemporary Western “Snow White” tellings.

**Research Origins, Methods and Design**

To address the aims set out in this thesis, I first undertook the process of identifying “Snow White” adaptations to classify and define “Snow White’s” core. Aligning with
Jack Zipes’ (2006) and Steven Jones’ (1979) assertions that an understanding of a tale takes shape through its collected versions, I began compiling a catalogue of “Snow White” tellings by first taking note of versions previously addressed by fairy-tale scholars. Using this list I sourced original documents, or reliable translations of the documents through the *Osborne Collection of Early Children’s Books* in Toronto;¹⁰ interlibrary loans; electronic archives and databases such as *Open Library, Endicott Studios, Folklore and Mythology Electronic Texts, SurLaLune Fairytales, Internet Broadway Database (IBDB), Internet Movie Database (IMDb);* as well as directly from Zipes, who provided me with translations of the Grimms’ “Snow White.”

I identified and located additional versions of “Snow White” by searching fairy-tale collections produced by prevalent authors and publishers of fairy-tale texts. Through more general searches via *Google, Google Books, Amazon, Daily Motion* and *Youtube,* I located many contemporary versions of the tale using keyword searches such as “Snow Drop,” “Crystal Casket,” “Maria and the Seven Robbers,” “Gold Tree, Silver Tree,” “Evil Queen,” “Poison Apple,” “Magic Mirror,” “Mirror Mirror” and “Seven Dwarfs.” These terms were used in addition to “Snow White” because adaptations of the tale do not always reference the “Snow White” title or character name. These terms were taken from early versions of “Snow White” identified by scholars, and reflect the dominant motifs, character names and descriptions found in early versions of the tale.

I categorised the various versions of “Snow White” based on the year they were produced, their medium, author/producer/director/creator and title (as seen in appendix A). In some cases, I identified versions of the tale, but was unable to obtain original copies or (reliable) translations of original copies. Although these works were included in my overall catalogue, for obvious reasons they were not included in the overview and

¹⁰ This archive was visited in person on two occasions in 2012 and 2013
survey conducted in chapter three. For the most part, I was able to obtain the originals or reliable translations, and did read or watch these works. In regard to referenced video games, as I did not have access to the various game consoles, I did not play these games. However, I did watch online videos about gameplay, and read reviews and game guides.

Due to the sheer number of adaptations and time constraints there was a need to narrow my focus when identifying commonalities between versions. As such, I began to identify texts that had wide distribution; were marked by scholars as significant versions; remained prevalent and/or in circulation over a number of years or centuries; and/or were part of significant movements, such as the feminist rewritings discussed in chapters one and three. I also sought to include versions that demonstrated deviations in the tale. This enabled me to discuss the variety of “Snow White” tellings that exist, while also helping to narrowly define the components that connect all versions.

These texts were selected from the 17th to 21st century to give a sense of “Snow White’s” chronology and evolution. Undertaking a study of these texts, I identified commonalities and variances in themes, motifs, imagery, length, medium, characters, character types, character roles, conflicts, resolutions, characters’ ages, descriptions of time and temporality, and descriptions of characters’ physical growth and ageing (where stated/depicted). In mapping out each telling, I separated elements that were commonly found in the tale, from aspects that were consistent across all versions, ultimately identifying the tale’s core (as detailed in chapter three). This work also helped me to identify significant shifts in the tale, particularly in regards to the incorporation of romantic plotlines; the inclusion and alteration of characters/characters’ roles; and the tellings’ increasing self-reflectivity and self-awareness.
With this understanding I selected four contemporary adaptations to analyse in my analysis chapters, specifically the films, *Mirror Mirror* (Singh, 2012) and *Snow White and the Huntsman* (Sanders, 2012); the television programme, *Once Upon a Time* (ABC, 2011–present); and the comic book series, *Fables* (Willingham & Buckingham, 2002–2015). These texts were selected based on their contemporary status; incorporation of the tale’s core, with “Snow White” presented as the adaptations’ central focus; inclusion of dominant characters, motifs, themes and conflicts; and the medium (i.e., film, television or comic book). All of these adaptations are Western Anglo-American texts. This enabled me to situate each analysis chapter in a similar ideological, socio-cultural and socio-historic context. These works are self-aware and self-reflective, drawing attention to their status as adaptations to explore and reimagine “Snow White.”


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11 Fairy-tale scholars view oral and literary forms as the traditional media for fairy tales

In analysing different media adaptations of “Snow White,” I address the scholarly tensions surrounding the manifestation of fairy–tale adaptations in “non-traditional” media forms and further develop the research done in this area of study. Where fairy–tale scholars tend to analyse filmic, televisual and comic fairy tales from a literary or folkloric perspective, this thesis accounts for film’s, television’s and comic books’ different forms when unpacking these four adaptations of “Snow White.”

As Imelda Whelehan (1999) argues, when analysing texts as adaptations it is important to develop the specific skills needed to understand and unpack each form. Coming from a literary background, I thus had to familiarise myself with film, television and comic studies—both in terms of fairy tales and these disciplines’ approaches as a whole—and develop the specific skill set needed to conduct an analysis
of each form. Each chapter, focusing on a different medium, is thus directly informed by the related discipline, an explanation of which can be found at the point of analysis, specifically at the start of each chapter.

Though this analysis is informed by different disciplines, each chapter similarly uses textual analysis. As Deborah Cartmell (2012) notes, textual analysis has been the dominant approach in adaptation studies. It provides a means to explore the meaning making potential of a work, and to unpack the various avenues for interpretation that a text affords. Although, as Elfriede Fürsich (2009) notes, it has been assumed that textual analysis elevates one dominant reading at the expense of others, as Bonnie Dow (1996) highlights, textual analysis is not a search “for the holy grail of truth but an exploration, with unavoidable twists and turns, towards the many, sometimes contradictory, possibilities of understanding” (p. 4). Thus, as Fürsich (2009) and Dow (1996) note, textual analysis draws attention to “the possibility of meaning rather than its certainty” (Dow, 1996, p. 4).

Although textual analysis is a “type of qualitative analysis that […] focuses on the underlying ideological and cultural assumptions of the text” (Fürsich, 2009, p. 240), this method has been implemented in a myriad of ways, “drawing on linguistic, literary-critical, rhetorical and semiotic interpretive strategies” (Fürsich, 2009, p. 241). It also encompasses diverse types of analysis such as thematic, critical, discourse, ideological, genre and cultural analyses (Fürsich, 2009). The flexibility of this approach has been vital when addressing the thesis’ aims, as it allows me to approach the texts from slightly different perspectives and disciplines, as well as to address the texts for different strategic purposes.

For example, my textual analysis in chapters four, five and six, while all focusing on the meaning making potential of specific texts (as detailed above),
contemplates different media and draws upon different disciplines (i.e., film studies, television studies and comic studies). These chapters directly explore cultural and ideological signifiers, and use discipline-specific skills to further unpack the adaptations’ features. The subtle differences between these interpretative strategies help to provide a broad understanding of the tale and its adaptation, while, on the other hand, enabling an exploration of specific examples, and the socio-cultural and ideological discourses that said texts negotiate.

With this in mind, I will now provide an overview of the thesis, giving a clearer sense of how each of my chapters takes shape.

**Thesis Outline**

**Chapter One** begins by reflecting on scholarship in adaptation and fairy-tale studies, specifically detailing how, despite their differences, these fields similarly developed out of debates of fidelity. Outlining how adaptation theory has since evolved through the recognition of adaptations as both autonomous and adaptive works, the chapter highlights scholars’ continued struggle to define what is meant by adaptation. In this context, I argue that Linda Hutcheon’s definition offers a productive and flexible way to explore adapted texts, and indicate how her theory will enable me to identify, analyse and define “Snow White” adaptations in the analysis chapters.

The chapter then turns to a consideration of fairy-tale literature and scholarship. I address the historical development of the genre and outline fairy tales’ adaptive nature. In this section, particular attention is paid to the different social functions fairy tales have served, specifically in regards to feminism. I highlight how fairy tales can accommodate various, and conflicting, discourses about girls and women, and conclude
by indicating how an analysis of fairy tales as adaptations will contribute to feminist fairy–tale scholarship.

Chapter Two centrally clarifies the dominant ideologies and discourses surrounding age categories, growth and ageing. It begins by contemplating scholarship on children and childhood, outlining how the Enlightenment era changed societal perceptions of children, childhood and childrearing by re-imagining the figure of the child. I explain how this imagined child fundamentally (re-)shaped fairy tales and the stories told about and for children, accounting for the nostalgic childhood narratives and coming-of-age stories that idealise childhood innocence and deny child sexuality. Centrally, this section establishes a working definition for the terms children and childhood, and explains my usage throughout the thesis.

The chapter then seeks to establish a working definition for adolescence and to clarify the difference between the terms “growth” and “ageing.” This leads to an investigation of how adulthood and old age is represented and defined in post-feminist culture, popular culture and social theory, particularly as it pertains to females. Considering the social stigmas associated with the ageing female body, I detail how the “girling” of ageing bodies in post-feminist culture and texts muddles age categories and further stigmatises older women. The section concludes by specifically detailing why “Snow White” adaptations provide the ideal space to analyse female growth and ageing, and outlines how an understanding of childhood, ageing and fairy–tale studies can help to develop the scholarship in these fields.

Providing an overview survey, Chapter Three outlines the historical development of “Snow White.” While this chapter does not present an exhaustive list of “Snow White” adaptations, it incorporates versions of the tale that fairy–tale scholars

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identify as the most significant and widely recognised,\textsuperscript{13} as well as adaptations that had wide distribution, were prevalent over a number of years or centuries, or which demonstrated significant variances in the tale’s retelling. I establish common themes, tropes, symbols, events, motifs and patterns, and consider the significance of textual variance. The chapter outlines literary, filmic, animated, televiusal, comic and theatrical adaptations, ranging from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century; and contextualises my remaining chapters by identifying “Snow White’s” core and its prominent features.

**Chapter Four** examines the adaptations, *Mirror Mirror* (2012) and *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012). I detail the films’ engagement with complex themes, stereotypes and ideological understandings of female growth and ageing, accounting for the possible readings these films facilitate, and critically investigating the tensions and complex socio-cultural norms at work in both films.

The chapter, reflecting the significant attention given to representations of female ageing in both films, primarily analyses the role and depiction of the queen as an ageing woman. Detailing the films’ alignment with different film genres, I argue that the films’ engagement with comedy (*Mirror Mirror*) and action-adventure (*Snow White and the Huntsman*) provides alternative story worlds for the queen’s character and role to develop, giving further depth to the queen’s identity. The chapter also unpacks how these films function as metanarratives for the treatment of ageing female stars in Hollywood and post-feminist culture by accounting for the overlap between the queen’s and Snow White’s roles and the actresses star life-cycles. Finally, chapter four demonstrates how the films’ use of dialogue, digital ageing, CGI and editing frames the aged woman as an a-temporal figure who resides within the logic of the disappearing

\textsuperscript{13} Zipes, 2013; Bacchilega, 2013; Maria Tatar, 1992; Haase, 1988; Ruth Bottigheimer, 1987; Steven Jones, 1979; Marcia Lieberman, 1972
older woman in postfeminist popular culture. I conclude by illustrating how these filmic adaptations extend the tale’s conflict beyond the queen and Snow White, alternatively depicting their rivalry as a struggle that plays out across various generations of women.

**Chapter Five** examines ABC’s television series *Once Upon a Time* (2011–present), considering how the programme’s hybridisation of series and serial structures facilitates a complex retelling of “Snow White.” I explain how the introduction of episodic, short and serial storylines, that function independently and in relation to one another, enables the programme to tell new stories about Snow White and the queen while still connecting these tellings to “Snow White’s” core. The chapter outlines how the negotiation of these storylines allows the characters’ pasts as children, adolescents and young adults in the fairy world to inform their identities and roles as adults on earth, creating a narrative complexity that allows for the emergence of dynamic female characters.

In this chapter, I detail how the programme’s visual muddling of ages, age categories and generational divisions roots female character development in lived experiences, social responsibilities and relationships, rather than in a clear knowledge and understanding of what it means to physically age. In downplaying the impact ageing has on the characters’ lives, a story about rivalling young and old beauties is seemingly evaded. Nonetheless, as the chapter demonstrates, the blurring of ages simply masks the programme’s elevation of youth and critique of the older woman. I demonstrate how youth and old age take shape through the characters’ ideological associations with postfeminism (Snow White) and the stereotypical perceptions of second-wave-feminism (the queen) found in post-feminist discourse, arguing that the programme idealises a post-feminist rhetoric.
The chapter also clarifies how the adaptation’s overarching storyline and open structure provides the space for the adult female characters to explore, develop and (seek to) redefine their identities and roles, arguing that the programme moves away from storylines that see Snow White transition into a stabilised adult identity and the queen die as an abject older woman. It illustrates how the characters’ struggles as mothers and community members provide the platform for them to improve as people and citizens, and investigates the ideological discourses surrounding this “self-improvement,” specifically as it pertains to new-momism (a central justifying ideology found in postfeminism; see Negra, 2009 and Douglas & Michaels, 2004).

This chapter asserts that while the adaptation expands “Snow White” by adding character complexity, additional screen time and multiple intersecting storylines, it nonetheless confines ideal female character development to contemporary values and ideologies that elevate “youthful” post-feminists over older women and their “dated” values.

Chapter Six explains how the comic book series *Fables* (2002–2015) uses space to adapt and re-imagine “Snow White.” Outlining how the comic universalises the figure of the child, I demonstrate how childhood is explored as a concept within the adaptation. In so doing, the chapter illustrates how the comic criticises narratives that frame childhood innocence as a means to assure ideal maturation into adulthood. This leads to an account of how the comic disconnects physical and emotional growth from linear experiences of time. I assert that while the comic gives the illusion of forward motion, it in fact controls tempo and complicates the characters’ relationship to a chronological and measured process of ageing, specifically detailing how narration, the characters’ dialogue, panel sequence and the gutter shape the stories told about female character growth, from adolescence to young adulthood.
The chapter concludes by considering how the introduction of an additional character named Rose Red and the comic’s filtration of events alter the tale’s narrative trajectory, casting Snow White’s experiences, physical growth and emotional development as secondary within the adaptation. I outline how this shift in focus reimagines a story about female rivalry, subverts heteronormative frames of “happily ever after” and establishes female bonding as central to ideal female character development.

Finally, **Chapter Seven** outlines the thesis’ findings and contributions, and clarifies how my analysis chapters collectively facilitate a dialogue between ageing, childhood, fairy–tale and adaptation studies. The thesis concludes by identifying gaps for future research.
Chapter One
From Adaptation Theory to Fairy–Tale Studies

Fairy tales, deriving from oral narratives’ ambiguous and heterogeneous roots, act as adaptations by engaging with preceding versions and/or dominant memories of the tales. Yet, in early scholarship adaptation and fairy–tale studies were disconnected—with adaptation theorists focusing on how or whether adaptations could adapt an original, and fairy–tale scholars seeking to define fairy tales’ relationship to and division from folk tales. Nonetheless, as these fields (independently of each other) acknowledged that adaptations and fairy tales contain a Benjaminian aura (a concept detailed below), and as such simultaneously exist as both autonomous and adaptive works, adaptation and fairy–tale studies mirrored each other and overlapped.

The recognition of fairy tales as autonomous and adaptive works facilitated the separation of fairy–tale and folk–tale genres, leaving scholars free to contemplate fairy tales in and of them selves. Fairy–tale scholarship, while at times directly aided by adaptation theory, primarily accounts for the tales’ sociohistorical evolutions. This body of work largely ignores the technical process of adaptation, and the relationship between form and content. My thesis expands this scholarship by considering how the interplay between form and content facilitates the emergence of new and old stories about growing girls and ageing women in contemporary filmic, televisual and comic adaptations of “Snow White.”

To do this work, I will draw on Linda Hutcheon’s (2006) theory of adaptation. Partially aligning with theories that assume “that the story is the common denominator, the core of what is transposed across different media and genres” (Hutcheon, 2006, p.

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14 While my statement that fairy tales and adaptations are both autonomous and adaptive works seems contradictory, my consideration of adaptation theory below will help to clarify their dual status.
Chapter One: From Adaptation Theory

10), Hutcheon merges the idea of a core with the notion that adaptations are autonomous works shaped by their own history, adaptors and medium of adaptation. She recognises that within this autonomy the adaptation is “haunted” by preceding versions, cultural memories and societal beliefs. As these hauntings take shape through recognition and remembrance, for Hutcheon, adaptation can be read as both a process and a product. Her nuanced definition facilitates a rich exploration of “Snow White” as I detail what is shared and adapted between versions; as I analyse the manifestation of the tale in different media; and as I account for whether these “Snow White” adaptations are haunted by preceding versions and/or cultural understandings of childhood, adolescence, adulthood, growth and ageing.

Centrally, this chapter explains the research conducted in adaptation and fairy–tale studies. The first section defines my use of the term adaptation, and outlines how adaptation theory serves as a conceptual frame for this project. In the second section, I detail the history of the fairy–tale genre, its changing socio-cultural function and the dominant debates and scholarship in the field. I conclude by explaining the importance of considering fairy tales as adaptations, and of detailing the manifestation of “Snow White” in different media contexts.

**Defining Adaptation**

In early scholarship, adaptation theorists debated whether and/or how variances in communication impeded the “faithful” (re-)representation/interpretation of an “original,” namely when adapting literature into film. Central to this discussion was Walter Benjamin’s (1989) article “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological
Reproducibility”\textsuperscript{16} in which he suggests that the core of an artwork, that which makes it authentic, is directly tied to “the here and now of the work of art—its unique existence in a particular place” (p. 21). He suggests that this existence, space and time bound, “is jeopardized by reproduction” (p. 22), concluding that “[b]y replicating the work many times over, it substitutes a mass existence for a unique existence,” and detaches the reproduction from the historical testimony of the original (p. 22). As a consequence the replicated work loses its aura (Benjamin, 1989).

While Benjamin discusses the mechanical replication of art rather than adaptation per se, fidelity criticism assumes that adaptations seek to replicate an original and thus, following Benjamin’s logic, fail to embody the here and now of the original work. Fidelity criticism appraises adaptations based on their ability to be “faithful to the ‘letter’ […] or] to the ‘spirit’ or ‘essence’ of the work” (McFarlane, 1996, pp. 8–9). However, in order for an adaptation to stay true to an original, the text would have to remain static in form and/or content. To remain the same, which I would argue is impossible due to ever changing cultural beliefs as well as variances in media’s mechanisms or modes of storytelling, is not to adapt—a term that in its own definition speaks to evolution and development. In adapting, the adaptation becomes a piece of art that embodies the here and now of its creation, with an adaptation’s autonomy enabling it to have its own aura.

The critical appraisal of adaptations based on their level of fidelity, has raised scholarly concern that an adaptation’s value and “unique” existence will be overlooked or undermined by scholars, critics and/or audiences who fail to recognise how adaptations discursively engage with, challenge and re-imagine preceding texts, and

\textsuperscript{16} This is the second version of Benjamin’s article found in Jennings, Doherty, & Levin’s (eds) (2008) \textit{Walter Benjamin: The work of art in the age of its technological reproducibility and other writings on media.}
seek to define an adaptation’s success based on its ability to replicate.\textsuperscript{17} As Hutcheon (2006) maintains, “[a]n adaptation’s double nature does not mean […] that proximity or fidelity to the adapted text should be the criterion of judgment or the focus of analysis” (p. 6). She, like Deborah Cartmell & Imelda Whelehan (1999) and Christine Geraghty (2008), encourages a rethinking of adaptations, presenting them as autonomous works that, though connected to preceding texts, are not constrained by an “original.”

Following Hutcheon’s logic, this thesis abandons the term “original” as it suggests that adaptations stem from a singular source (which is not always true) and that the “original” text is the superior text (the text that contains the artwork’s aura). Alternatively, as adaptations can be identified by their shared core—a story or premise that remains largely consistent amongst (various) versions—rather than their replication of a singular work, I will refer to earlier adaptations as preceding texts, preceding works or preceding versions. This will allow me to give a sense of chronology without identifying an adapted text as “the original.”

While aligning with adaptation theorists’ desire to step away from the comparative and hierarchal nature of fidelity criticism, one cannot dismiss the impact fidelity criticism has had on adaptation studies. Though adaptation scholars largely view fidelity criticism as a “suppression of potentially more rewarding approaches to the phenomenon of adaptation” (McFarlane, 1996, p. 10),\textsuperscript{18} their discussion of fidelity gives the needed context to define and explore what it means to adapt. As such, rather than disregarding fidelity criticism, a comparison between the two approaches that builds away from ideas of fidelity can outline how adaptations are, as Dudley Andrew (1984) concludes, not simply occurrences of replication but “acts of discourse” (p. 428).

\textsuperscript{17} See Hutcheon, 2006; Cardwell, 2002; Cartmell & Whelehan, 1999; McFarlane, 1996; and Andrew, 1984
\textsuperscript{18} See Hutcheon, 2006; Stam, 2000; Cartmell & Whelehan, 1999; and Andrew, 1984
Fidelity criticism finds roots in debates of medium specificity. These debates consider the “unique” characteristics of different forms and detail the “basis of how [media] can and should be used” (Maras and Sutton, 2000, p. 98). Believing that any form of artistic expression must be assessed “in relation to the constraints of the chosen materials of expression” (Gaudreault and Marion, 2004, p. 60), scholars such as André Gaudreault and Philippe Marion assert that “[f]ables and stories have the possibility of being brought to life in the best possible way by choosing the most appropriate mediatic partner” (p. 68).

From this perspective, a story’s “ideal” adaptation is dependent on two main components. As Noël Carroll (1985) notes,

One component is the idea that there is something that each medium does best. The other is that each of the arts should do what differentiates it from the other arts. These two components can be called the excellence requirement and the differentiation requirement. The two can be combined in the imperative that each art form should explore only those avenues of development in which it exclusively excels above all the other arts. (p. 83).

According to these components, an adaptation may “fail” when it attempts to establish a “false proximity” between two different means of telling or when it is “incapable” of adapting a story using the ideals of excellence that govern the medium’s artistic expression (Gaudreault and Marion, 2004).

The ability to select the “best” possible form for expression highlights the possibility of choosing the “wrong” medium. It also draws attention to the apparent “limitations” and “shortcomings” of particular media. These pronouncements highlight the dominant perception in fidelity criticism that an adaptation’s “limitations” may cause “enormous losses in the transition from one medium to another” (Gaudreault and Marion, 2004, p. 68).

This theoretical perception seemingly limits the way and conditions in which media can “effectively” and “ideally” be used, and, as Carroll (1996) argues,
undermines and threatens media’s diverse capabilities and the value in their overlapping qualities. As “[a] medium may excel in more than one effect” (Carroll, 1996, p. 28), and more importantly because the “excellence” of a medium is subjective, it is impossible to say what a medium does best, and as such, how this excellence is to be pursued and achieved.

Adaptation, in and of itself, is not tied to the medium–specificity debates, as an adaptation can be produced within the same medium as the work(s) it adapts (Hutcheon, 2006). Rather, as Hutcheon (2006) notes,

it is when adaptations make the move across modes of engagement and thus across media, especially in the most common shift, that is, from the printed page to performance in stage and radio plays, dance, opera, musical, film, or television, that they find themselves most enmeshed in the intricacies of the medium–specificity debates […]. (p. 35)

Adaptation studies has specifically overlapped with these debates and reflected the values of fidelity criticism when making pronouncements that elevate the “source text” and its medium above the adapted work (Geraghty, 2008). As Geraghty (2008) and Robert Stam (2000) suggest, these pronouncements are “more or less overtly, on a hierarchy of judgment that brings together and privileges literature, reading, and authorship over screen, viewing, and mass production” (Geraghty, 2008, p. 2). It is in these moments that adaptation studies’ focus on the process (and at times “success”) of an adaptation not only engages with fidelity criticism but recalls, “usually to its disadvantage, the idea of a hierarchy in the arts” (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 34).

Though adaptation scholarship is increasingly moving away from debates of fidelity, differentiating the two approaches helps to define adaptation and to identify how adaptations function as autonomous works. What defines “adaptation” is debated, with part of the difficulty resulting in the “conflation of (the process of) adaptation and (the end-product) adaptation—a conflation which is typically reproduced by
comparative writers on adaptation in their work” (Cardwell, 2002, p. 11). Early scholarship “assumed that [as] the task of adaptation is the reproduction […] of something essential about an original text[…][…][a]daptation […] become[s] a matter of searching two systems of communication for elements of equivalent position in the systems” (Andrew, 1966, pp. 423–25). However, as different media are governed by different conventions, the ability to find equivalent positions was hotly debated. Andrew’s definition of adaptation thus fuelled criticisms from scholars, such as Jean Mitry (1971), who argued that adaptations’ inability to implement and replicate equivalent forms of communication simply ‘reduced’ great texts.

From these debates, Brian McFarlane (1996) developed a working definition of adaptation by separating what is adapted from what is “transferred.” He states, ‘transfer’ will be used to denote the process whereby certain narrative elements of novels are revealed as amenable to display in film, whereas the widely used term ‘adaptation’ will refer to the processes by which other novelistic elements must find quite different equivalences in the film medium, when such equivalences are sought or are available at all. (p. 13)

In defining adaptation as a process, McFarlane attempted to move the definition of adaptation away from fidelity criticism by recognising that the product’s relationship with a source text is framed by the complex function of replication (“transference”) with variance (“adaptation”), rather than replication alone.

However, McFarlane’s definition still identified the primacy of the source text during adaptation. This framing downplayed adaptations’ roles as autonomous texts with individuated Benjaminian auras, and in this way, accommodated evaluations that privileged the “original.” As such, scholars who saw adaptation as much as a product as a process sought to “destabilize[…] the tendency to believe that the origin text is of primary importance” (Whelehan, 1999, p. 3) when defining what an adaptation is and

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19 See Geraghty, 2008; Hutcheon, 2006; Cartmell and Whelehan, 1999; McFarlane, 1996; Mitry, 1971; Andrew, 1966; and Bluestone, 1957
does. To accomplish this, scholars considered texts that were so well known that “audience[s] would have an idea of the ‘authentic’ version regardless of whether they’d ever actually read it” (pp. 3–4); refuted the notion that a work has an “extractable ‘essence’” (Stam, 2000); or considered adaptation on the level of reception (Grant, 2002; Geraghty, 2008).

This scholarship helps to identify the range of approaches taken to adaptation. Yet, in seeking to categorise and define what an adaptation is and does, these debates “quickly disintegrate[d] into a list of do and don’ts, a set of requirements and prohibitions […] often resembl[ing] the advice offered in handbooks to potential screen writers” (Geraghty, 2008, pp. 1–2). Consequently, as scholars assigned restrictive boundaries based on personal opinions and judgments, adaptation proved difficult to theoretically and consistently define.

In contrast, Hutcheon (2006), seeing adaptation as “repetition, but repetition without replication” (p. 7), offers a flexible approach by defining the process and product of adaptation “from three distinct but interrelated perspectives” (p. 7). Namely, she contemplates the “formal entity or product” of an adaptation as “an announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works” (p. 7). She asserts that

[t]his ‘transcoding’ can involve a shift of medium (a poem to a film) or genre (an epic to a novel), […] a change of frame and therefore context […] or] a shift in ontology from the real to the fictional. (Hutcheon, 2006, pp. 7–8)

She then details adaptation as a process of creation (primarily from the perspective of the artist, with the act involving both (re-)interpretation and (re-)creation), and as a process of reception, asserting that “adaptation is a form of intertextuality: we experience adaptations (as adaptations) as palimpsests through our memory of other works that resonate through repetition with variation” (p. 8).
Although my research doesn’t address adaptation in terms of reception or artistic process, Hutcheon’s definition of adaptation as a product allows me to contemplate the shapes adaptations take in different media and genres. Her definition will centrally enable me to interpret how an adaptation could be understood based on its mode of address, its use and representation of time/temporality, and the content it adapts.

Hutcheon’s work, while creating a flexible definition for adaptation, also bridges an important gap between scholars who believe that an adaptation is identifiable by the “transference” of a core and those who view adaptation as a product of diverse intertextuality. Reflecting dominant understandings of adaptation, McFarlane (1996) states that “narrative, at certain levels, is undeniably not only the chief factor novels and the films based on them have in common but is the chief transferable element” (p. 12). According to McFarlane, while adaptations share this “raw material,” this core, with their adapted text, they “are distinguished by means of different plot strategies which alter sequence, highlight different emphases, which—in a word—defamiliarize the story” (p. 23). From this perspective, adaptation takes shape through the dual process of transferring a core and adapting “aspects of [a story’s] enunciation” (p. 21).

McFarlane (1996) also recognises adaptations’ intertextual qualities, arguing that “fidelity to the original undervalues other aspects of the film’s intertextuality” (p. 54). However, this argument primarily centres on how adaptations can exist and be considered as films, with McFarlane asserting that the “[c]onditions within the film industry and the prevailing cultural and social climate at the time of the film’s making […] are two major determinants in shaping any film, adaptation or not” (p. 54). As such, this intertextuality is not specifically accredited to the formal processes of adaptation.
and is alternatively concerned with unpacking a text as a film beyond judgments of fidelity.

In opposition, Stam (2000) rejects the idea of a core and identifies intertextuality as central to what an adaptation is and does. Stam (2000) states,

The notion of ‘fidelity’ is essentialist in relation to both media involved. First, it assumes that a novel ‘contains’ an extractable ‘essence,’ a kind of heart of the artichoke’ hidden ‘underneath’ the surface details of style […] But in fact there is no such transferable core: a single novelistic text comprises a series of verbal signals that can generate a plethora of possible readings, including even readings of the narrative itself. (p. 57)

His theory extends the definition of adaptation by suggesting that all texts consciously and unconsciously are adaptations, with “every text form[ing] an intersection of textual surfaces” and engaging in an ongoing dialogue with other texts (p. 64).

Although this approach provides an open way to consider adaptation, as Geraghty (2008) points out, in too broadly extending the term, such considerations lose their pertinency as all texts seemingly are and are not adaptations. In terms of this thesis, Stam’s approach is particularly problematic as it hinders my ability to concisely define and classify what is or is not a “Snow White” adaptation—the popularity of “Snow White” resulting in numerous (at times fleeting) references to the tale. Further, as Stam rejects the idea of a core, determining a basis for a shared analysis would be near impossible. This being said, I don’t intend to completely disregard Stam’s approach, as to ignore adaptations’ intertextual qualities is to undermine the sophisticated ways these works take part in and respond to various texts, as well as larger social and cultural happenings.

Negotiating McFarlane’s and Stam’s perspectives, Hutcheon (2006) offers a useful way to explore adaptations, asserting, “[t]o deal with adaptations is to think of them as […] inherently ‘palimpsestuous’ works, haunted at all times by their adapted texts” (p. 6). She suggests that adaptations’ “multilaminated” nature brings “our
intertextual expectations about medium and genre, as well as about [a] specific work, […] to the forefront of our attention” (p. 22) and encourages recall through “the familiarity bred [in] repetition and memory” (p. 21).

Hutcheon’s consideration, while reaffirming and building on Stam’s perception, reins in Stam’s approach by confining a contemplation of adaptations’ intertextuality to texts that have a shared core. In aligning with Hutcheon, the thesis can identify and define “Snow White” adaptations based on a shared core while still recognising how intertextual references can emerge and shape a reading of these texts. Her work thus enables me to approach each adaptation in terms of their immersion in culture and, to a certain extent, in terms of the contingency of their meaning.

Having outlined how the dominant theories in adaptation studies have taken shape and indicated how Hutcheon’s theory frames my own approach and analysis, I will now detail the history of the fairy–tale genre and scholarship. I will explore fairy tales’ changing social functions and explain why fairy tales’ changeability is crucial to this thesis’ consideration of emotionally and physically developing female characters. The section concludes by exploring the significance and purpose of contemplating fairy tales’ adaptation in different media contexts and in relation to twentieth- and twenty-first–century representations of girls and women.

Finding Fairy Tales: Origins and Sociocultural Adaptations

Zipes (2006) indicates that the literary appropriation of folk tales gave rise to fairy–tales in the fourteenth century. However, as the fairy–tale’s development depended on the appropriation of vernacular language into literary language, its formation was constrained due to low literacy standards (Zipes, 2006). Additionally, as early fairy tales overlapped with the wonderment and moral elements found in many Medieval
tales, the genre was not clearly defined or identifiable until, in seventeenth-century France and Italy, “textual communities such as court entertainment, schools, reading societies, academies, literary associations and institutions, and salons” took an interest in cultivating and recording these narratives (pp. 21–22). These occurrences popularised and solidified the genre by and through the eighteenth century (Zipes, 2006).

Fairy and folk tales differ in both medium and history. Yet, early scholarship struggled or failed to independently define fairy tales, either conflating the fairy– and folk– tale genres or exploring their similar use of motifs, conventions and topoi (Zipes, 2006). Scholarship, such as the work of Kay F. Stone (1975), Max Lüthi (1982) and Alan Dundes (1962), used the terms “fairy tales” and “folk tales” interchangeably. The conflation of these terms and the genres’ conventions led to debates about the value and independence of fairy tales as a literary genre. As Jack Zipes (1985) asserts,

> The literary fairy tale was a marginalized genre, and, if it was taken seriously, then it was by folklorists, who actually had a fraught relationship with what some considered to be a contaminated genre: either they studied and celebrated the fairy tale to show its roots in the oral tradition or they condemned it for defiling the ‘authentic’ folktales. (p. xi)

Either way, fairy–tale scholarship was constrained by comparative studies that cast fairy tales as secondary to the “superior” and “authentic” folk tale.

Even much of Zipes’ early work, drawing on Benjamin, critically assessed fairy tales as the capitalist re-appropriation of the folk tale. Specifically, Zipes (1979) suggested that by adapting, recording and re-appropriating the folk tale, “the folk tale as an oral art form […] lost its aura and [gave] way to the literary fairy tale and other mass-mediated forms” (p. 5). Because at this time Zipes did not recognise fairy tales as adaptations, he did not appreciate how, as Hutcheon details in her contemplation of adaptation theory, “adaptations are never simply reproductions that lose the Benjaminian aura. Rather, [an adaptation …] carr[ies] that aura with [it …].” and “has
its own aura, its own ‘presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place
where it happens to be’ (Benjamin, 1968: 214)” (Hutcheon, 2006, pp. 4–6).

Since the mid-1980s many scholars,20 including Zipes, have considered fairy
tales in greater regard, viewing fairy tales as sophisticated texts with distinct auras
(Zipes, 1985 & 2006). Although scholars still assert that fairy tales bear “traces of
orality[ and] folkloric tradition” they also appreciate that fairy tales are “shaped by
literary traditions with different social uses and users” (Bacchilega, 1997, p. 3). With
this understanding scholars could detail how tales establish a sense of authority through
their links to a “recognised” or “believed” past—rooting their messages in what appears
to be a singular place of cultural origins—while also creating persuasive texts that
reflect the various ideological values and sociocultural norms of the periods and
cultures in which the tales were produced.

In this way, the negotiation of past and present seemingly validates the tale’s
content by either confirming its present ideological beliefs through its connection to a
“proven” and “consistent” history, or by rejecting this history to show the superior
values of the adaptation. Either way, the tale’s didactic content is reaffirmed through
the naturalisation of its messages, presenting its ideologies as common sense.

Part of this naturalisation stems from fairy tales’ ability to make the unfamiliar,
familiar, through magic, wonderment and the suspension of disbelief. This process
becomes evident through Lüthi’s (1982) contemplation of fairy– and folk–tale
characters. As Lüthi (1982) notes:

And yet an actor in a folktale, whether a hero or an ordinary person, a man or a
woman, deals with these otherworld beings as though he perceived no difference
between them and him. With complete equanimity he accepts their gifts or casts
these gifts aside, he lets himself be helped by them or offers them a fight, and
then he goes on his way. He seems unaware of any gulf separating him from
these other beings. (p. 6)

20 Bacchilega, 2013 &1997; Beckett, 2008; Barchers, 1988; and Bottigheimer, 1986
The characters’ pure acceptance of creatures that would otherwise appear strange, positions the reader to suspend their disbelief and accept the tale’s wonderment.

It is through the naturalisation of the tale’s wonderment that the character’s behaviour is in turn rationalised. As the hero or heroine of these tales, their actions, whether rewarded or punished, sets the boundaries for what is or is not socially appropriate conduct. As the audience has already been positioned to accept what might otherwise be supernatural situations, the naturalisation of characters’ behaviour in these moments positions the audience to accept the boundaries for ideal roles and behaviours the tales outline.

The suspension of disbelief and naturalisation of characters’ behaviours is of particular importance to this thesis, as I believe that one can identify a tale’s ideological values and the sociocultural discourses it engages with by identifying and examining what content the tale (attempts to) pass(es) as natural during moments of wonderment. Specifically in terms of “Snow White,” I believe I can unpack how contemporary adaptations engage with or challenge dominant discourses and ideologies about female growth and ageing by identifying and unpacking depictions of female characters’ changing bodies, identities and roles in moments of the fantastic.

While this thesis limits its consideration of the tale’s ideological functions to an exploration of the texts in and of themselves, scholars such as Bruno Bettelheim (1975) have taken the socialising function of fairy tales further by identifying how fairy tales speak to a child’s budding ego. Taking a psychoanalytic approach, he argues that “[b]y dealing with universal human problems,” fairy tales serve a deeply psychological function as they relieve one’s “preconscious and unconscious pressures […] by giving] conscious credence and body to id pressures and [by] show[ing] ways to satisfy these that are in line with ego and superego requirements” (Bettelheim, 1975, p. 6).
From this perspective, one might argue that the depiction of developing girls and women in fairy tales instructs and informs how real females learn to behave within society. Yet, as the early fairy tales Bettelheim considered relied on one-dimensional and static characters, his scholarship “distort[s] the text and partially rewrit[es] it so as to be able to wrench these ancient characters into his latter-day developmental patterns” (Sale, 1978, p. 40). Further, Bettelheim’s approach frames audiences as passive consumers, ignoring how they may in fact reject the premises and social messages communicated by the tales.

Although Bettelheim’s (1975) claims may be over stretched, his consideration of how the tales address human development and social norms proved popular in fairy-tale studies. Scholars such as Cristina Bacchilega (1997) built from Bettelheim’s work to offer relatively open ways to explore fairy tales’ institutionalising functions. Arguing that fairy tales are “produced and consumed to accomplish a variety of social functions in multiple contexts and in more or less explicitly ideological ways” (Bacchilega, 1997, p. 3), she asserts that these tales “to some degree, rely on and reinforce social norms” and that “in modern times, the fairy tale has more often than not been ‘instrumentalised’ to support bourgeois and/or conservative interests” (p. 7). However, while this conclusion highlights fairy tales’ institutionalising potential, it is important not to assume that the tales were solely produced to shape social and cultural norms. If it were “one would have to speak about the genre as a conspiracy” (Zipes, 1985, p. 9)—consequently reducing fairy tales to a form of social propaganda.

I don’t intend to imply that Bacchilega (1997) singularly frames fairy tales as a means of civilising society, as she does not. What I want to highlight is how easily one can get caught up in the civilising nature of fairy tales and, as a result, overlook the ways fairy tales encourage counter-culture reform. As such, while these narratives
commonly represent an adult desire to dictate socially acceptable boundaries for
civilised behaviour (Bacchilega, 1997), social manipulation is only one component of
the genre (Zipes, 1985). Consequently, these texts have the ability to reinforce, re-
imagine or undermine an array of ideological values. Fairy tales’ diverse potential is of
particular importance to this project, as it suggests that fairy tales, while having
reproduced restrictive and one dimensional representations of females as static
characters or as prizes to be won, could in fact re-imagine these depictions and
undermine current perceptions of femaleness/femininity as it exists in a contemporary
Anglo-American context (as explored below).

Evidence of fairy tales’ ability to serve varying social functions becomes
apparent when considering how fairy tales have shifted between unacceptable and
acceptable forms of literature for mass consumption. As Zipes (1985) details in his
consideration of Medieval folk and fairy tales,

The fact that the people as carriers of the tales do not explicitly seek a total
revolution of social relations does not minimize the utopian aspect of the
imaginative portrayal of class conflict. Whatever the outcomes of the tale are—
and for the most part, they are happy ends and ‘exemplary’ in that they affirm a
more just feudal order with democratizing elements—the impulse and critique
of the ‘magic’ are rooted in a historically explicable desire to overcome
oppression and change society. (p. 8)

In using tales set in utopian worlds where peace and happiness can almost always be
achieved, these narratives had the ability to detail the struggles of everyday life, using
the characters’ success to embody a community’s desire for improved living conditions
and to question the dominant ideologies and social structures in the period.

However, just as fairy tales have challenged the status quo, they have been used
to reinforce the dominant values of the bourgeois class. As Zipes (1985) indicates,

[...] it was disdained as a literary form by the aristocratic and bourgeois classes
until it received courtly approval through Madame de Maintenon and Fenelon;
that is, until it could be codified and used to reinforce an accepted discursive
mode of social conventions advantageous to the interests of the intelligentsia
and ancient regime, which made a fashion out of exploiting the ideas and productivity of the bourgeoisie. (p. 3)

The standardisation of the material through censorship showed both a fear and understanding that if the material was not controlled it could undermine the values and lifestyles of the ruling class.

As a consequence, these narratives were reworked to reflect “appropriate” social mores. As Zipes (1985) notes,

[t]he first [published] writers of fairy tales had to demonstrate the social values of the genre before literary fairy tales could be printed—for adults and children alike. The morality and ethics of a male dominated Christian civil order had to become part and parcel of the literary fairy tale. (Zipes, 1985, p. 8)

The publication of texts allowed the stories to be solidified within the society—providing a stabilised, referable version of a given tale and the male dominated Christian order it attempted to inscribe.21 As such, the narratives became increasingly didactic, not simply speaking to an individual’s desire, but instructing individuals on what their desires should be and how they could see them fulfilled.22

Zipes (1985) asserted that the above history illustrates fairy tales’ dual potential to question or reaffirm dominant ideologies. However, scholars continue to debate this point, arguing that the censorship of fairy tales through publication and production channels inhibits fairy tales’ ability to question dominant social norms and systems of power. These debates, largely arising from feminist communities in the 1970s, took shape as some scholars moved away from a contemplation of fairy tales’ literary history and its narrative structure to explore the socio-psychological impact the tales had on

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21 This is not to suggest that people of all classes had access to printed fairy tales.
22 A similar argument has been made about the cultural industry more broadly with Adorno and Horkheimer (1947) asserting that “The whole world is made to pass through the filter of the cultural industry,” and that all “films and products of the entertainment industry which they [consumers] have seen have taught them what to expect[,]” with the outside world perceived as a “straightforward continuation” of the illusions they engage with (pp. 1226–7).
Chapter One: From Adaptation Theory

contemporary literature and society.

This branch of scholarship, which began “in earnest in 1970 and was propelled by the feminist movement’s second wave” (Haase, 2004, p. vii), questions whether fairy tales’ can facilitate the re-imagining of female figures and their roles, and in so doing disrupt and deconstruct a male dominated social order. This scholarship was sparked after Alison Lurie (1970) published an article in which she argued that fairy tales presented boys and girls with strong female characters that demonstrated the ideals of the feminist movement. She stated that to prevent children from future shock and to ready them for women’s liberation, parents needed to buy their children a collection of fairy tales.

Hotly protesting Lurie’s claims, Lieberman (1972) indicated that feminist fairy tales were rarely published or produced. Grouping literary and filmic fairy tales together, she asserted that the fairy tale genre as a whole was greatly shaped by Disney stereotypes—embodied by Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs and Sleeping Beauty—which could not be seen to perpetuate feminist values. Lieberman criticised literary and filmic fairy tales for their preservation of reductive female roles and their villainisation of older women. She called for a re-imagining of these tales and a deconstruction of texts that cast women as passive objects. Responding to Lieberman’s call, feminist fairy-tale scholarship throughout the 1970s and 1980s explored the impact fairy tales had on the perception of everyday women, with scholars such as Karen Rowe (1979) reaffirming Lieberman’s argument by asserting that fairy tales

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23 However as Haase notes “this does not mean that the fairy tale’s role in the sociocultural discourse about gender had not been recognized earlier” (p. vii). Rather, it simply indicates that discussions became more prominent during and after this period.

24 It was not uncommon in this period for fairy-tale scholars to conflate literary and filmic fairy tales as significant attention was not given to the relationship between form and content by these scholars. At best, fairy-tale films were seen as a subgenre of the literary fairy tale, but more commonly they were perceived as a part of the literary fairy tale genre.
made “marriage not simply one ideal, but the only estate toward which women should aspire” (p. 211), “thereby perpetuating a patriarchal status quo.” (p. 221).

Laying bare “the inscription of patriarchal values in the classic fairy tales,” (Haase, 2004, p. 14) feminist scholarship such as Bacchilega (1988), Sandra Gilbert & Susan Gubar (1984), Renate Steinchen (1984) and Mary Daly (1978) began to identify how the “patriarchal voice” took shape in these tales. While scholars differed in their perspective and their identification of patriarchy—Gilbert & Gubar (1984) for example identifying the magic mirror in the Grimms’ “Snow White” as the voice of patriarchy that dictates the queen’s and Snow White’s lives, and Daly (1978) identifying “the poison-pushing Queen: ‘She,’ that is, he, [as] the archetypal Drag Queen, the male stepmother, the other side of Prince Charming’s multiple personality” (p. 351) as the patriarchal figure that poisons both Snow White and her real mother with the metaphoric “Poison Apple”—they all considered how the patriarchal elements found in early tales bled into other literature, cultural expressions and the societies that read and consumed the material.25

Although some of these studies, such as Andrea Dworkin’s (1974) Woman Hating and Robert Moore’s (1975) “From Rags to Witches: Stereotypes, Distortion and Anti-humanism in Fairy tales,” are rather reductive, presenting fairy tales as inherently sexist and/or racist, many studies such as Kay Stone’s (1975) “Things Walt Disney Never Told Us,” Heather Lyon’s (1978) “Some Second Thoughts on Sexism in Fairy Tales” and Suzanne Barchers’ (1988) “Beyond Disney: Reading and Writing Traditional and Alternative Fairy Tales,” consider how tales can and have been used for varying purposes, at times depicting repressed female characters while at other times

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25 Do Rozario (2004) and Bacchilega (1997) also took up this line of argument in subsequent years.
representing them as strong and independent.\textsuperscript{26} These latter studies, “underlin[ing] the need for feminist scholars to take both the textual and sociocultural context into account when generalizing or theorizing on the basis of fairy tales” (Haase, 2004, p. 13), rooted their findings in the conventions of literary fairy tales, and the historical and cultural happenings that occurred at the time of production.

In addition to examining the tales’ sexist motifs and character roles, scholars also “documented the appropriation of the genre by male editors and collectors,\textsuperscript{27} and sharpened our understanding of the complex editorial and cultural processes involved in the representation of women” (Haase, 2004, p. 14).\textsuperscript{28} These works considered how literary fairy tales were adapted to reflect bourgeois values rather than the peasantry/folk culture in which the tales were claimed to derive. They stressed how the bourgeois sentiment found in Perrault’s, Madame de Maintenon & Fenelon’s, and the Grimms’ tales disconnected fairy tales from the proletarian class, who in “the 19th century could not think of keeping wives and children at home[, … needing them] to work long hours in the factories” (Zipes, 1979–80, p. 14). Finally, these scholars considered how editing practices undertook “a type of patriarchal socialization for young girls” that depicted ideal females as domesticated supporters of men, who proved their value by demonstrating dependency, good manners and sexual purity (p. 11).

While scholars in the 1970s and 1980s sought to reconsider fairy tales based on the patriarchal and sexist values and ideologies fairy tales were seen to propagate, poets, short story writers and novelists began to re-imagine these tales, using them to depict complex female characters and/or to explore/question social systems that would cast female characters in one-dimensional and passive roles. Authors such as Robert Coover

\textsuperscript{26} The importance of Disney, particularly in regards to the evolution of Snow White will be further detailed in Chapter 3
\textsuperscript{27} Zipes, 1985 & 1979–80
\textsuperscript{28} Bottergheimer, 1986 & 1987; Steinchen, 1984; and Zipes, 1983
(1973), Tanith Lee (1972 & 1983), Angela Carter (1970 & 1979), Anne Sexton (1971), Jane Yolen (1976) and Margaret Atwood (1983) sought to tell complex stories about women and/or represent dynamic female figures that were not purely good or evil but flawed, real women. These texts were “created out of a dissatisfaction with the dominant male discourse of traditional fairy tales” and the social values and institutions that “provided the frame work for sexist prescriptions” (Zipes, 1987, p. xi). As Zipes (1987) notes,

[…] the feminist fairy tale conceives a different view of the world and speaks in a voice that has been customarily silenced. It draws attention to illusions of the traditional fairy tales by demonstrating that they have been structured according to the subordination of women, and in speaking out for women the feminist fairy tale demands an open-ended discourse which calls for the readers to complete the liberating expectations of the narrative in terms of their own experiences and their social context. (p. xi)

Though these authors do not present the same feminist perspectives, creative styles, or textual focus, they shared a desire to do away with the presentation of women as passive objects within a masculine imaginary.

As will become evident in chapter three, the writing and thinking of the 1970s and 80s was carried forwards in the works of Delia Sherman (1995), and Polly Peterson (2000). Their work showed the continued relevance of feminist concerns in a period marked by postfeminism. There has also been attempts to re-imagine female figures as dynamic, strong and independent within different media as evidenced by films such as Maleficent (2014), Frozen (2013), Brave (2012), Stardust (2007), Pan’s Labyrinth (2006), Ella Enchanted (2004), Ever After (1998) and The Company of Wolves (1984); comic books such as Fairest (2012–present), Fables (2002–2015), No Rest for the Wicked (2003–2013) and Cinderella (2009–2011); and the television series, Beauty & the Beast (2012–present), Once Upon A Time (2011–present) and The 10th Kingdom (2000).
These adaptations highlight a wealth of texts in which the concerns of feminist communities can be and are addressed. However, although recent scholarship has given some attention to contemporary fairy tales in different media such as film, television and comic books, with Pauline Greenhill and Jill Terry Rudy (2014) publishing an anthology on fairy-tale television (discussed in chapter five) and Bacchilega (2013) and Greenhill & Sidney Eve Matrix (2010) publishing a book on fairy-tale adaptations/films (addressed in chapter four), as Donald Haase (2004) notes, “studies of fairy tales by and about women have concentrated largely, but not exclusively, on oral storytelling and literature” (p. 30). He asserts that scholars need to further explore the interplay between fairy tales in other significant media and gender-related content/work—a concern taken up by this thesis. While not all the adaptations explored in this thesis declare themselves as feminist or seek to singularly take on issues of feminism, their engagement with female characters’ growth and development does (present an ideal space to) deal, in varying degrees, with feminist concerns and issues.

The above feminist debates, creative writing and scholarship has evidenced that while fairy tales tend to “showcase[e] ‘women’ and mak[e] them disappear at the same time, the fairy tale thus transform[ing] us/them into man-made constructs of ‘woman’” (Bacchilega, 1997, p. 9), we need not “reject fairy tales as inherently sexist narratives” (p. 9). As feminist fairy-tale scholars have argued, fairy tales have the potential to either liberate women, or trap them within male dominated patriarchal systems, reflecting the social values and beliefs of the society that adapts them or to which they

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29 Jack Zipes, Pauline Greenhill & Kendra Magnus-Johnston, 2015; Sue Short, 2015; Greenhill & Rudy, 2014; Bacchilega, 2013; Kristian Moen, 2013; Zipes, 2011; Lury, 2010; and Greenhill & Matrix, 2010. With the exception of Greenhill & Rudy and Bacchilega, these works primarily consider fairy-tale films and do not address other media.

30 Bacchilega, 1997; Karen E. Rowe, 1979 & 1986; and Alison Lurie, 1970 & 1971

31 Laurence Talairach–Vielmas, 2009; Lutz Rohrich, 1986; and Marcia Lieberman, 1972
respond. By this logic, one might assume that a given fairy tale will either be “conservative” or “progressive” in its stance. However, building from this perspective, I would suggest that fairy tales’ flexibility allows them to accommodate a variety of (at times conflicting) discourses within one story. In taking this stance, my project will contribute to feminist fairy-tale scholarship by negating pronouncements about whether a fairy tale does or does not “successfully” challenge stereotypes about women, to alternatively explore the discourses and ideologies the tales engage with and/or seek to negotiate in a nuance way.

Conclusion

Drawing on adaptation theory, this project outlines how fairy tales are placed in an ongoing conversation with previous versions (as I will discuss in chapter three) while at the same time functioning as autonomous texts (as I go on to demonstrate in chapters four, five and six). In recognising fairy tales as adaptations that contain a core narrative, but which (re)shape and (re-)appropriate the tale in different media, fairy-tale adaptations, and their socially driven storylines provide the space to contemplate contemporary beliefs, understandings and concerns about gendered identities.

Though a significant amount has been written on the representation of women in fairy tales, my research adds to current discussions in feminist fairy-tale scholarship by demonstrating how the different media adaptations of “Snow White” defamiliarise the tale and the stories told about female characters. With an investigation of the interplay between form and content at the forefront of my analysis, I will account for the reciprocal relationship between film’s, television’s and comic books’ treatment of time and temporality, and dominant discourses surrounding women and ageing.
Where this chapter outlined the value of exploring fairy tales through the frame of adaptation theory, and detailed the history of fairy–tale texts and scholarship—specifically in regards to fairy tales’ changing sociocultural functions—chapter two will explore the dominant discourses and ideologies that shape a contemporary understanding of children, adolescents and adults. As I will not address the lives of real girls or women within this thesis, chapter two seeks to define how the child, the adolescent and the adult take shape as symbolic or representative figures. Exploring these age brackets as “culturally constructed identity categories” (Karlyn, 2011, p. 243), I will detail how these categories shape a Western contemporary understanding of growing and ageing females. Centrally, this chapter attempts to contextualise the social, cultural and political climate in which twentieth– and twenty–first–century “Snow White” adaptations take shape.
In this chapter I examine scholarship on children, childhood, women, growth and ageing. I describe the (at times competing) cultural and biological discourses attached to these different stages of life and the social stigmas connected to female ageing within popular culture. While the thesis does not explore the lives and perspectives of real children or women, this chapter will identify dominant cultural narratives about female growth and ageing to contextualise representations of female characters’ roles, identities and relationships in contemporary adaptations of “Snow White.” The chapter will explain the relevance of unpacking such social narratives in fairy-tale adaptations, and will indicate how this work adds to the research already conducted on women and children.

**Defining the Child**

Diachronically what defines children and childhood fluctuates, reflecting a complicated relationship between and amongst biological and cultural discourses. While biologically a child is often viewed as a prepubescent person—having not yet grown into their adult body (James, 2000)—the age of a prepubescent person can greatly vary. This biological category, discursively constructed, may thus be at odds with cultural perceptions of children and childhood. As Steven Brumh and Natasha Hurley (2004) note,

> What is the magic age of childhood? Those who discuss age-of-consent laws seem to consider anyone under the age (usually sixteen) to be a child: teenagers are ‘children’ (indistinguishable from toddlers, it seems) if they are involved in the making of pornography. Yet teens who rape or murder are tried as ‘adults,’ [...]. While no one would suggest that there is no such thing as a child, there may very well be no definition of ‘child’ that applies to all situations, as defining the child is itself often the source of debate in any legally contested form of sexuality. (p. xxv).
The inability to uniformly define what constitutes a “child,” highlights the fluidity of biological and cultural discourses. The definition of “child” thus presents a challenge to this study, particularly when attempting to indicate when characters in “Snow White” adaptations are, and cease to be, children.

Offering one way to clarify and navigate biological and cultural discourses, Hugh Cunningham’s (1995) work “distinguish[es] between children as human beings and childhood as a shifting set of ideas” (p. 1). However, as my thesis avoids an examination of real children, and because dominant perceptions of both children and childhood take shape through biological and cultural discourses, I will not mimic Cunningham’s usage. Alternatively, as Alan Prout (2000) suggests, when defining the child, I will work within and negotiate a medley of perceptions.

More generally within this thesis the child will be understood as a prepubescent, most commonly ranging from 3–12 years of age (Papalia, Olds & Feldman, 2006), and perceived as an innocent (primarily sexually innocent), emotional, simplistic, natural and pure figure, lacking a full understanding of an adult world. The cultural aspects of the child ascribe to traits that emerged in the eighteenth century (Heywood, 2001; Cunningham, 1995), and which were reinforced by nostalgic literary representations in the Romantic era (Watkins, 2005; Nikolajeva, 2000; Macleod, 1992) and “the sentimental nonsense surrounding the supposedly pure and innocent child of the Victorian era” (Heywood, 2001, p. 9). While the innocent child is not the only cultural representation of children, it is an ideal which other manifestations of the child are measured against.

Working within this definition, I will indicate when I am drawing on biological and/or cultural discourses by identifying constructed biological signifiers and sociocultural performances. In so doing, I hope to illustrate how contemporary
adaptations of “Snow White” represent and construct the image of the child, contemplating the connection between this stage in life and the characters’ developing identities as women. However, before conducting this research, I will now give a clearer sense of how children and childhood have been represented and defined.

Like the fairy–tale genre, narratives of the child tend to shift and change to reflect the institutionalised values of a given society. These narratives, not necessarily recognised as stories, appear to reflect real children by depicting stabilised images that embody a culture’s expectation of what a child is and how children should behave (Lury, 2010). As I will demonstrate, these tellings are less concerned with how real children exist as children, alternatively reflecting adult society’s fears, concerns and feelings of nostalgia.

Child narratives rely on audiences’ cultural understandings and/or memories of what a child is and how a child is defined within a contemporary context. In this way, they function adaptively, reflecting how “the act of comparison invited by an adaptation might also draw on memories, understandings, and associations with other versions of the original, in a variety of media” (Geraghty, 2008, p. 4). In drawing on and playing with audiences’ expectations, child narratives can reinforce, re-imagine, problematise and/or complicate widely held beliefs about children and childhood.

Yet, while one might reasonably argue that narratives about children have adaptive qualities, as I remarked when considering Robert Stam’s (2000) approach to adaptation, there is a danger that, if the term is used too broadly, anything and everything could be called an adaptation. Within this project, stories about children and childhood are encompassed in fairy–tale tellings. As such, these child narratives will not be considered as adaptations in their own right but as sociocultural and ideological discourses that have shifted and/or repeated over time.
Considering the historical origins of childhood in the West, Philippe Aries (1962) suggests that in the beginning of the Medieval period a concept of childhood did not exist and that children were seen as little adults. He proposes that the first concept of childhood—characterized by ‘coddling’—had made its appearance in the family circle in the company of little children. The second, on the contrary, sprang from a source outside the family: churchmen or gentlemen of the robe, few in number before the sixteenth century and a far greater number of moralists in the seventeenth century, eager to ensure disciplined, rational manners (1962, p. 129), concluding that by the eighteenth century “the child ha[d] taken a central place in the family” (p. 130).

Although Aries correctly identifies a gradual shift in society’s perception of children and childhood from the Medieval era up until the Age of Enlightenment, his pronouncement that childhood did not exist in the Medieval period has been disputed and marked as exaggerated by historians such as Colin Heywood (2001), who states, Aries famously asserted that, until the twelfth century, Medieval art did not attempt to portray childhood, indicating that there was ‘no place’ for it in this civilization. […] However, as Anthony Burton remarks, the concentration of religious themes means that many other things are missing too, notably ‘virtually all of secular life’. This makes it impossible to single out childhood as a significant absence. (p. 12)

In fact, as Cunningham (1995) indicates, “the evidence is overwhelming that in both [Ancient and Medieval] periods childhood was recognised as a separate stage of human existence,” and that children were deeply cared for and loved (p. 35).

Although childhood may have been recognised as a separate stage, Aries’ perception that up until the 1700s children were seen as little adults, is largely understandable, particularly when considering children’s connection to the labor force and the changing socio-cultural/socio-economic perceptions of childrearing in times of economic prosperity and strife in the West. In both the Medieval and Early Modern periods the lives of real children were primarily shaped by and dependent on the local
economy and food resources. This is particularly evident in the periods between the twelfth and seventeenth century.

For example between 1300–1348 when agrarian technology was stretched to its limits and land was scarce in both Eastern and Western Europe, many people either postponed marriage and children, or, due to poverty and malnutrition, abandoned “infants to foundling homes or orphanages or farm[ed] them out as domestic laborers” (Ferraro, 2013, p. 62). Infants and young children were seen as an economic drain, while older children were used as a source of income and revenue. Such treatment of children, in times of strife was also apparent in the 1600s when, due to an economic down turn, it was not possible to envision productive, nuclear households with fathers and mothers parenting their offspring. Rather, such adversity produced truncated households that cast children, at best, under the tutelage of institutions. In this context childhood was usually brief and most certainly a luxury reserved for the prosperous. (Ferraro, 2013, p. 63)

In contrast, when the economy was good and food was not in short supply, children were seen as an asset to the family and the economy. Evidence of this is seen after the Black Death in 1348, where when “land once again [became] plentiful, [and] wages rose, […] couples were encouraged to wed young to compensate for demographic losses” (i.e., through reproduction) (Ferraro, 2013, p. 62). Either way, Aries’ consideration of the child as a little adult, finds root in the use of children within the labor force and the treatment of children as either financial drains or assets. Further as “[t]he child was, at most a marginal figure in an adult world” (Heywood, 2001, p. 2) and under represented in art and culture throughout the Early Modern period, Aries’ belief that children and childhood did not assume a dominant place until the eighteenth century is largely true. Thus while childhood was recognised as a separate time in life and children were deeply loved, their centrality within society was not established until
“[t]he eighteenth century brought new changes to the system of production [...] which afforded children greater opportunity to remain with [their families …] and participate in household production” (Ferraro, 2013, p. 63).

In addition to the changes of production, the lives of children in the Enlightenment period were also impacted by developing anxieties over the role and existence of children as innocent figures that required protection. Evidence of this shift is seen in, and informed by, the writing of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. As Heywood (2001) notes,

The outstanding figure in the reconstruction of childhood during the eighteenth century must therefore be Jean-Jacques Rousseau [...] who most forcefully opposed the Christian tradition of original sin with the cult of original innocence in the child. [...] He countered that nature wants children to be children before being adults. [...] The very young were not to be burdened with distinguishing good from evil. As innocents, they could be left to respond to nature, and then they would do nothing but good. They might cause damage, but not with the intention of doing harm. (p. 24)

Rousseau’s re-imagining of the child significantly impacted society’s understanding and treatment of children as the need to protect children’s innocence increased society’s engagement with and focus on childhood.

It also affected the identities children were seen to assume, particularly in regards to their gendered and sexualised identities. Although children were treated differently based on their gender, assuming or being prepared for roles that conformed to “constructed rules about the norms of masculinity and femininity [...]” (Ferraro, 2013, p. 63), by identifying children as innocent, an innocence that was primarily perceived as a sexual innocence, “the mythology of Western childhood innocence [could not and still] cannot embrace children’s sexuality” (Hockey & James, 1993, p. 69). As a result, on one hand children were seen to reaffirm heteronormative gender roles while on the other hand they were denied a sexual identity or sexual feelings.

The concerns of the Enlightenment, which carried into the Romantic and
Victorian eras, resulted in the formation of social systems and social narratives that centred on the “needs” of the child, so that by the middle of the nineteenth century,

[...] childhood had become a powerful force in middle-class Europe and North America. [...] The importance of childhood [...] manifested itself in a variety of ways: in a belief in the importance of early education; in a concern for the salvation of the child’s soul; in a growing interest in the way children learned; and in a sense that children were messengers of god, and that childhood was therefore the best time of life. (Cunningham, 1995, p. 41)

This cultural and theoretical perception, while addressing the social anxieties of middle-class families by giving them practical solutions and approaches to childrearing, altered the educational and religious systems, as well as the labour laws and child protection laws that sought to care for and educate youths.

These beliefs also fed into the cult of youth, in which childhood, though seen as the best time in life, was thought to fundamentally shape how people develop into adults. As Cunningham (1995) indicates,

At the heart of this ideology lay [...] a conviction that the way childhood was spent was crucial in determining the kind of adult that the child would become, and an increasing awareness that childhood had rights and privileges of its own. (p. 41)

The importance placed on childhood, particularly the belief that “proper” childhoods produced ideal adults, resulted in its heavy policing throughout the nineteenth century, particularly during the Victorian era.

This policing primarily took shape as children’s innocence was protected, i.e., their sexuality was controlled. Children were increasingly denied a sexual identity as their sexuality was “subordinated and their ‘solitary habits’ interfered with” (Foucault, 1978, p. 41), with masturbation seen as a sign of a “weakened mind,” “destroyed body” and as “loathsome, disgusting, humiliating and destructive of all self-respect and decency” (Bailey, 2013, p. 201; also see Foucault, 1978). In this period, “[e]ducators and doctors combatted children’s onanism like an epidemic that needed to be eradicated”
(Foucault, 1978, p.42). Yet, as Beth Bailey (2013) points out, the policing of the child body highlights the absurdity of the belief in children’s sexual innocence, i.e., non-sexuality. It also demonstrates how nineteenth century discourses on childhood innocence denied children of the very heteronormativity that they were later expected to assume as adults. In this way, the child was separated from adulthood, and framed as other to the rational, developed and (hetero)sexual adult being.

This separation of childhood and adulthood altered the way society saw and engaged with children and influenced the stories told about and for children, particularly in regards to fairy tales. Tales produced in the Medieval era were intended for audiences of all ages, and were thus not specifically censored for children. However, as concerns over child welfare and development grew, those of the Enlightenment avidly sought to revise older versions of the tales that were seen as taboo or dangerous (Zipes, 1985). As Suzanne Keller (2011) indicates, “The transition from the originating form of the folk tale is marked by the revised notion of the modern, innocent child. This occasioned a switch towards increasingly anodyne tales geared towards imparting a structured world view” (p. 77). Published fairy tales thus became educational tools, as “[t]he old form of the folk tale [was] adapted to contain substantive elements of moral instruction” (p. 77).

The Enlightenment’s perception of childhood innocence, and the public consumption and censorship of children both within society and literature during the eighteenth and nineteenth century has been carried forwards into twentieth- and twenty-first-century media and culture. Contemplating contemporary stories about children and childhood, Brumh and Hurley explain how utopic descriptions of children and childhood speak to adult fantasies, fears and social systems in contemporary society:
Utopianism follows the child around like a family pet. The child exists as a site of almost limitless potential (its future not yet written and therefore unblemished). But because the utopian fantasy is the property of adults, not necessarily of children, it is accompanied by its doppelgänger, nostalgia. Nostalgia is the fantasy of a preferred past (past pleasures, past desires for the future). Caught between these two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born, the child becomes the bearer of heteronormativity, appearing to render ideology invisible by cloaking it in simple stories, euphemisms, and platitudes. (Brumh and Hurley, 2004, p. xiii)

As it is “the storyteller [(i.e., the adult)] that defines what can exist in [this] field of representation[, it is their] language [that] tries to normalize some behaviors at the expense of others” (p. x). These narratives thus serve to reinforce dominant ideological values by naturalising utopic constructions of human development and (physical and emotional) maturation through an adult perspective. This suggests that narratives of the child are less about how a child exists as a child but how these stories help adults rationalise, normalise and seemingly stabilise an otherwise unstable adult social system.

Central to this analysis is a consideration of how the child serves to reinforce and affirm the dominance of a heteronormative society. Brumh and Hurley (2004) state,

There is currently a dominant narrative about children: children are (and should stay) innocent of sexual desire and intentions. At the same time, however, children are also officially, tacitly, assumed to be heterosexual. Cute boy-girl romance reads as evidence for the mature sexuality that awaits them, and any homoerotic behavior reads as harmless play among friends or as a mistake that can later be corrected by marriage (p. ix).

For Brumh and Hurley childhood (innocence) thus becomes specifically gendered as it is entwined with the performance of a-sexuality or heterosexual identities in non-sexualised forms. Where children engage in homoerotic behavior, their queerness is not seen to oppose heteronormativity, as these narratives alternatively assume that children will “outgrow” their queerness and become “normal” heterosexual adults.

Assuming a similar line of argument, Kathryn Bond Stockton (2009) asserts that, despite our culture’s assuming every child’s straightness, the child can only be ‘not-yet-straight,’ since it, too, is not allowed to be sexual. This child who ‘will
be’ straight is merely approaching while crucially delaying (in its own asynchronous fix) the official destination of straight sexuality, and therefore showing itself as estranged from what it would approach. (p. 7)

From this line of argument, Stockton highlights how the child is separated from its adult counterpart, who in contrast is sexed. In this way, she reaffirms Bailey’s (2013) belief that “[s]ex, in the modern Western world, defines the boundary between childhood and adulthood” (p. 191).

Stockton’s work also demonstrates how the denial of a child’s sexuality and its assumed “not-yet-straightness” inhibits the emergence of the protogay child. As a result, “[t]he protogay child […] only appear[s] through an act of retrospection and after a death” (Stockton, 2009, p. 6), i.e., the death of the “not-yet-straight” child the protogay child is mistakenly assumed to embody. In this way, the protogay child emerges through an adult understanding and reconstruction of their past self, denying the protogay child recognition of its sexual consciousness until it transitions the boundary between childhood and adulthood—a notion further explored in chapter six, when I detail how the comic book *Fables* explores the characters’ developing identities and relationships as children and adults through the act of retrospection and the queering of the narrative trajectory.

As Stockton (2009) notes, “[f]or this queer child, whatever its conscious grasp of itself, has not been able to present itself according to the category ‘gay’ or ‘homosexual’—categories culturally deemed too adult, since they are sexual” (p. 6). In denying the child of this language, the child is also denied a means to express and contextualise its perception of self. Consequently, for Stockton, narratives of childhood, while haunted by queerness (queerness deriving either from the child’s division from adulthood as a “not-yet-straight” person or from the retrospective protogay child), denies the sideways growth children undergo by first denying their sexuality and then
by assuming their heteronormativity.

The stress placed on a child’s innocent and non-sexualised development also speaks to Western society’s fear of a “corrupted” child and the enduring belief that sexual abuse will in some way pervert the child, disrupt their maturation and produce a dysfunctional adult (Brumh & Hurley, 2004). As the policing of the child’s innocence is also the policing of adults’ behaviour, the “[c]rises of childhood usually turn out to be crises which are all too adult” (Holland, 2004, p. 16). As such, for scholars Brumh & Hurley, Patricia Holland and James Kincaid (1998), contemporary stories of childhood are as much about adults and adult society as they are about childhood and innocence.

Brumh and Hurley’s anthology goes a long way to map out how representations of childhood speak to adult anxieties. Regardless, their research only explores one narrative pattern. Considering childhood more generally, Jennifer Hockey and Allison James (1993) point out that in contemporary Western society there are four main characteristics of the child, “(1) the child is spatially and temporally set apart as different, as ‘other’; (2) the child is said to have a special nature, and to be associated with nature; (3) the child is innocent and therefore (4) vulnerability dependent” (p. 60). Thus while the child continues to be of central importance in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, the idealisation of the child and Western society’s focus on the child’s needs creates a “culturally legitimated ‘root metaphor’ for dependency” (Hockey and James, 2003, p. 136). This perception stresses “the child’s disabilities, rather than its different abilities” (p. 140), and reaffirms that “[i]n Western societies the adult body and intellect provide the dominant yardstick by which other bodies and minds are to be judged” (p. 140). As such, stories about the child primarily reflect on the child’s ability to properly grow up, and conform to adult society.

An example of this can be seen in Karen Lury’s consideration of children in late
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twentieth– and early twenty–first–century films about trauma. When considering the liminal nature of the child, Lury (2010) states, “the child and childhood, and indeed children themselves, occupy a situation in which they are ‘other’: other to the supposedly rational, civilised, ‘grown up’ human animal that is the adult” (p. 1). She argues that this othering enables filmmakers to explore moments of instability by providing a location for adults to flush out a conceptual understanding of their own worldly experience, particularly in moments of trauma.

Lury’s consideration of the child is particularly relevant to this thesis, as she details the relationship between the child and fairy tales. She outlines how the child’s engagement and participation in the fairy world acts as a means to explore adult society’s cultural values and expectations. As,

the fairytale is a far from sensible form of story-telling, situated historically somewhere between speech and writing, endlessly revised and retold, [...] it allows for a temporal dislocation, a validation of sensory experience and a promotion of the irrational to which the child has privileged access. (Lury, 2010, p. 125)

Unrestricted by the laws of the natural world, she asserts that fairy tales enable child characters to explore and come to terms with their changing relationships, bodies and roles as they grow up in the confines of fairy tales’ (a)temporal space. Lury suggests that it is through this journey that the child attempts to make sense of an adult world.

Like Lury, this project will consider how child characters emotionally grow and physically develop in contemporary fairy tales. However, where Lury contemplates the child in film and focuses on fairy tales where the child is and remains the central protagonist, my research considers the child in film, television and comic books, and explores narratives where female characters grow and transition out of childhood into adulthood. I will consider whether characters’ engagement with different stages of development alters the role and significance childhood plays in their physical,
emotional and social development as female characters, and will detail the relationship between different media and the enunciation of dominant and/or transgressive discourses on the child and childhood. My research will also not be confined to a discussion of childhood, and will at times centrally focus on narratives of old age and ageing.

Having detailed some of the dominant ideologies and narrative functions of the child, this conceptual work will frame my analysis of child characters in contemporary “Snow White” adaptations. However, as this project explores female characters’ transition from childhood to adulthood and adulthood to old age, the following section outlines dominant representations of female ageing within contemporary society. Engaging in and exploring ageing studies, I contemplate the difference between growth and ageing, explain how ageing is commonly presented as a process of decline, and consider why such narratives are relevant to contemporary “Snow White” adaptations.

Growth, Ageing and the Years Following Childhood

Jennifer Hockey & Allison James (1993) indicate that in contemporary Western culture adulthood serves as the pinnacle stage in a human’s life cycle. From this perception, human development is seen to occur in an arc, with childhood framed as a period of dependency, innocence and growth; adolescence as a transitionary stage that builds towards adulthood; and middle, old and deep old age as a process of decline with an eventual return to dependency (i.e., a second childhood) and/or death. Associated with this arc are the roles women are seen to play as daughter, lover, wife, mother, grandmother, widow, employee, employer, retiree and dependent. However, in a society where women are getting married later, or not at all; having or not having children; working, not working or returning to work at different points in their lives, the
important links between social roles and particular ages are becoming less relevant with “[t]he blurring of previous distinctions allow[ing] for a transitional status to develop [in adulthood that is …] less fixed” (Soden, 2012, p. 84).

Considering the different stages of female development after childhood, I will now detail how an understanding of adolescence, adulthood and old age took shape historically and has since shifted. Beginning with a brief exploration of adolescence, I will then consider how adolescence (a period of growth and development), adulthood (a period of stabilisation) and old age (a period of decline) are constructed through a cultural understanding of their differences. Finally, I will illustrate how the performance of age and the blurring of age categories have complicated the roles women are seen (expected) to fulfil as they grow and age in a Western contemporary society.

Timothy Shary (2002) suggests that the recognition of a distinct stage between childhood and adulthood took shape in the Early Modern period. Though the term adolescence was not commonly used, Shary asserts that this stage of development was characterised by sexual maturation and “more complex sociopsychological manifestation of cultural and internal conflict” (p. 20). However, it has also been argued that prior to the eighteenth century “little psychological significance was attached to” this stage, and that “[t]he reaching of adulthood was determined by the acquisition of independence, a point having no direct connection with physiological maturity” (Rutter, 1980, p. 5). Therefore, it is difficult to say with certainty what conception of adolescence took shape prior to the 1700s. What is evident, is that by the twentieth century adolescence was seen as a period of “increased [or increasing] maturity and (eventual) stabilization of identity,” that was connected with puberty and the teenage years (Driscoll, 2002, p. 5).
In a contemporary context, adolescence has most commonly been characterised as a transitional stage. It connotes the movement “between dependence and independence[,] … between ignorance and knowledge” (Driscoll, 2002, p. 52), and between immaturity and maturity. It is also associated with physical (sexual) development—the adolescent seen as “physiological[ly] differen[t] from what precedes [childhood] and follows it [adulthood]” (Driscoll, 2002, p. 49). The adolescent, having yet to obtain a stabilised adult identity, is associated with emotional instability and a lack of adult maturity. These connotations are seen to partly derive from “the adult world[’s] exaggerat[ion of] the more problematic features of adolescence, […] and] the negative perceptions of adolescence […] directly caused by their own behaviour” (Coleman, 2011, p. 3).

Considering the cultural, social and institutional conditions that further marked adolescence as an identifiable stage of development Rutter (1980) asserts,

> Adolescence is treated as a distinct stage of development because the coincidence of extended education and early sexual maturation have meant a prolonged phase of physical maturity associated with economic dependence; because many of the widely held psychological theories specify that adolescence should be different; because commercial interests demanded a youth culture; and because schools and colleges have ensured that large numbers of young people are kept together in an age-segregated group. (p. 7)

Rutter’s account links the recognition of this stage with distinct institutional, social and cultural shifts. Nonetheless, neither his remarks nor Catherine Driscoll’s (2002) contemplation of adolescence as a transitional stage account for the specific boundaries of adolescence. As John Coleman (2011) questions, is adolescence marked by puberty or does the performance of adolescent behaviour at earlier ages complicate this assessment? Reversely, when does adolescence end? With more young adults staying at home into their twenties, does their continued economic (and perhaps emotional) dependence classify them as adolescents?
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Like the child, the adolescent takes shape through various competing discourses. For the purposes of this thesis, the adolescent will be defined as a pubescent person, most commonly ranging from 13–19 years of age, and as a sexually developing figure, with increasing knowledge, social awareness and (sexual) maturity, who has yet to achieve a stabilised, independent adult identity and as such exists in a state of emotional instability and dependency. While the defined age range indicated above seemingly marks the adolescent as a teenager, as aspects of my definition are not necessarily age specific and can be disconnected from the teen years, I will not be using the term teenager. The term adolescence/adolescent thus enables me to broadly discuss the performance of this youthful identity even when characters’ are disconnected from the age specific and/or bodily signifiers of the adolescent. Finally, while I will consider how characters assume an adolescent identity, like the child, I will not be considering real adolescents.

With this in mind, I will now explore the dominant discourses around adulthood, old age, growth and ageing. In a mid to late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century Western society, where a culture of youthfulness persists, the celebration of the white and youthful female body—“the closer to puberty the better, as freshness and flawlessness are valued over sexual experience and knowledge”—is dominant in the mass media and popular culture (Whelehan, 2013, p. 90; also see Woodward, 2006). The privileging of youth relies on, negotiates and reinforces a division between the process of growth as progression and possibility, and ageing as decline and, eventually, death (King, 2013; also see Segal, 2013).

In her consideration of growth, Allison James (2000) notes that since the nineteenth century growth has been tied to the notion of “growing up,” with children and youths seen to reach adulthood by “growing out” of child bodies (also see
Prendergast, 2000). While this representation of growth is largely tied to physiological developments such as puberty, as Lassonde (2013) asserts, this “developmental paradigm has two components” (p. 220). The first is devoted to the documentation of physical growth while the second seeks “to comprehend children’s cognitive, social, moral, sexual, and emotional development” (p. 220). Following a similar line of thought, in their consideration of adolescence John Coleman & Leo Hendry (1999) identify growth as a period of physical, intellectual and social growth, which results from changing bodies, relationships and increasing autonomy.

With adulthood marked as the pinnacle moment of stability, and ageing associated with decline and old age, growth is specifically connected with the young. As, within “Western systems of thought metaphors of growth and value are closely allied” (Prendergast, 2000, p. 105; also see Hockey & James, 1993), the association of growth with youth helps to reaffirm youth as a favoured position in human development. Centrally, for the purposes of this thesis, growth can be defined as a valued process of physiological, cognitive and/or psychological/emotional development commonly associated with the young.

In relation to ageing, as Kathleen Karlyn (2011) notes,

[...] like gender and race, age is a culturally created identity category that defines us [...] and applies to the entire lifespan. However, just as ideology applies the concept of race only to the nonwhite, age belongs mainly to the old. (p. 243)

Building upon this observation, by applying the ideology of ageing to the old and growth to the young (i.e., the child and adolescent), the adult becomes a fluid figure as its symbolic shape and identity shifts in relationship and difference to the categorisation of the young and old. In one sense, this fluidity allows the adult female figure to obtain and maintain a dominant position—her youth offering the promise of reproduction, and her maturity, motherhood and stability.
However, the inevitable biological process of ageing prevents real people from maintaining this position as they transition into middle/old age. This biological reality directly affects the dominant discourses around female growth and ageing. As such, the “[i]mages of the young mother [is] at the boundaries of what is acceptable not least because motherhood and sexuality, while inevitably linked, are symbolically incompatible” but because post-motherhood is linked to menopause (i.e., the loss of fertility/youth, decreased sexuality and physical decline) (Whelehan, 2013, p. 81).

For women, who are seen to decrease in sexual value as they age (a notion explored below), the ideal state of adulthood is placed under threat as the ageing body struggles or fails to perform youth. This is particularly evident in post-feminist discourse (a dominant discourse in contemporary popular culture), which idealises youth and promotes what Alison Winch (2014), Joel Gwynne (2014), Elizabeth Rawitsch (2014), Imelda Whelehan (2013), Deborah Jermyn (2012), Diane Negra (2009), Sadie Wearing (2007) and Yvonne Tasker & Negra (2005) all refer to as the “girling” of the adult body.

This girling occurs when (middle-aged) women are encouraged and seek to closely align themselves with youth through the careful regulation and maintenance of their bodies. This obsession with youth and the maintenance of youth has led scholars to conclude that post-feminist culture largely overlooks and erases older women from view (Gwynne & Muller, 2013; Whelehan, 2013). However, at the same time that this youth oriented focus casts the aged woman into invisibility, narratives of age evasion and age-defying lifestyle choices (i.e., through the performance of youth, consumerism, costuming, make-up and surgery; see Fairclough-Issacs, 2014; Negra, 2009; Gill, 2007b; Tasker & Negra, 2005) perpetuate social narratives that demonise and belittle the older woman, casting her as other and opening the space for critical allegations of
“age passing” as well as discourses of “ageing well” (i.e., evading signs of ageing; see Whelehan & Gwynne, 2014; Fairclough-Issacs, 2014; and Negra, 2009). In this way, in post-feminist culture the older woman is both hidden from view and made hyper-visible through the anxieties of ageing postfeminism both thrives on and reinforces (explored further below).

As the chronological boundaries between youth and adulthood are blurred in one direction (Rawitsch, 2014), with females encouraged to appear younger than their actual age, the complex negotiation of different age categories in a Western (post-feminist) culture shapes female identities as they grow and age. This is particularly evident when considering how female ageing and old age has been defined, understood, used and othered. In Sara Arber and Jay Ginn’s (1995) consideration of ageing they propose that “an adequate sociological theory of age needs to distinguish [and consider the relationship] between at least three different meanings” of ageing, namely chronological age, physiological age and social age (p. 5). They classify chronological age (i.e., calendar age) as “essentially biological[;]” physiological age as a medical construct, “referring to the physical ageing of the body[;]” and social ageing as the “social attitudes and behaviours seen as appropriate for a particular chronological age” (p. 5).

What is noticeable about Arber and Ginn’s definitions is that they primarily centre on a chronometric understanding of time and ageing. Considering the felt experience of ageing, Lynne Segal suggests that, “as we age, changing year on year, we also retain in one manifestation or another, traces of all the selves we have been,” which consequently creates a complex layering of identity (p. 4). She suggests that this layered identity enables people to be all ages and no age, as mentally we move between childhood and old age, drawing on the various experiences and understandings we’ve
had at different periods in our lives. Segal’s reflections highlight one of the ways ageing can be understood as a lived experience rather than a chronometric happening.

Perceptions of ageing are also socially constructed around gender (Arber & Ginn, 1995; Jermyn, 2013), with the process of ageing for men and women significantly differing (Woodward, 1999). For women ageing is related to the biological process of menopause, the medicalisation of menopause, and historical and contemporary stigmas of the (post-)menopausal body as in a state of decline. As Jeannette King (2013) asserts,

While in the West today the menopause is experienced by women arguably still in their prime, historically it has been seen as a climactic event in a woman’s life, after which she in a sense ceases to be a woman, having lost the ability to bear children that defined her sex. Post-menopausal women can therefore be seen as standing on the brink of old age and degeneration. (p. 8)

This social perception of menopause and the ageing female body finds roots in late nineteenth century medical discourses, statistics and sociocultural perspectives. As, in 1850, the average age women experienced menopause was 45.7 and “the mean lifespan was said to be only 50 years as late as 1899” (pp. 8–9), women were seen in medical discourse and within society at large as “designed and destined for motherhood[, with] the end of a woman’s reproductive life[…] constituting] a radical loss of function and meaning” (p. 9).

Although some medical professionals in this period viewed menopause as an end to “the years of anxiety, ill health and exhaustion associated with childbirth and childrearing” (King, 2013, p. 10), and drew attention to the many women who lived past 50 into deep old age (75 and beyond), dominant discourses and ideologies in this period reinforced “prevailing fears of degeneration” (p. 11). (Post-)menopause was viewed as a period of regression in which a woman either experienced a second childhood, existing as a dependent and a-sexual figure, or became masculinised (King, 2013). Masculinised women were described as mentally stronger, angry, aggressive,
violent, and politically engaged; as developing “drooping breasts and wrinkles, […] beard[s] or moustache[s];” and as losing their nurturing feminine nature (p. 11). Tied to this figure was also the “potential for rampant sexuality” that was seen “as both ridiculous and monstrous” (p. 12).

The beliefs and stereotypes surrounding menopausal women in the nineteenth century continue to carry weight as, despite increasing lifespans, the symbolic date of ageing for women occurs around fifty, the age commonly associated with menopause in contemporary society (see Woodward, 1999 and King, 2013). Where the increase of an older population in the West might have provided greater political and socio-cultural representation by and for older people, evidence suggests that historical, social, cultural and biological perceptions still perceive female ageing as primarily problematic and disempowering (Jennings, 2012; also see Jermyn, 2014; Segal, 2013; and Gilleard and Higgs, 2000).

The restrictive physical and psychological profiles of menopausal women are seen to reflect Western culture’s aversion to ageing. This distaste is rooted in the “three broad myths of ageing in contemporary (Western) societies: (a) ageing as mental and physical decline; (b) ageing as synonymous with loss of sexual, economic and social power; and (c) a necessary attitude of resistance to ageing” (Ylänne, 2012, p. 8). However, more specifically for women the pathologisation of ageing is specifically linked to the loss of power associated with fading beauty and sexuality, as “the gaze of fashion reject[s] the naked older body as a possible site of beauty” (Blaikie, 1999, p. 138; also see Whelehan, 2013 and Segal, 2013).

Conceptually, what differs between late nineteenth–/early twentieth–century perceptions of ageing, and mid to late twentieth–/early twenty–first–century perceptions of ageing is the belief that the stigmatisation of the ageing female body can be socially
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and medically evaded if the body is properly managed. As such by the 1960s women can “age well,” i.e., negate signs and/or biological experiences of ageing, via Hormone Replacement Therapy and plastic surgery or by costuming their body through the use of makeup, clothing, and skin and hair products. In this context “ageing well” is not about accepting the ageing process but slowing or controlling how one ages through the performance of youth.

Hollywood, postfeminism and consumer culture have fed on and contributed to this perception/social narrative by celebrating older women who do not look their age and by placing ageing under constant erasure. Although women can be middle-aged on screen they are not allowed to look middle-aged (Whelehan, 2013). Consequently, the “appropriate” performance of age requires women to walk a fine line. If, in the pursuit of youth, masquerading older women fail “to achieve the desired effect,” they are met with scorn and mockery (King, 2013, p. xiii). However, if a woman doesn’t pursue youth at all, she is said to be ‘letting herself go’ (Jermyn, 2014; Whelehan, 2013; Segal, 2013; Calasanti, Sorensen & King, 2012; Greer, 1991).

The policing of female ageing within dominant Western discourse, (postfeminist) popular culture and Hollywood thus becomes a policing of performance, as older women must convincingly engage with and embody a youthfulness they no longer have. In requiring this performance, the older woman is not only placed in competition with younger women, but she is forced to denounce the value of her age. As Germaine Greer (1991) notes,

No fifty-year-old woman actually wants to compete with her daughters for attention, or that they should compete with her, but more and more in our society such competition is forced upon us. There is no accepted style for the older woman; no way of saying through dress and demeanour, ‘I am my age. Respect it. (p. 38)

In inhibiting avenues in which older women can perform and embody one’s age whilst
still gaining respect, the older woman is denied her personhood—unable to use her body to discursively establish and maintain her own identity and sense of self as an ageing woman.

Building from Judith Butler’s (1990) concept of performativity in which she asserts that “gender is a fabrication […] inscribed on the surface of bodies” (p. 136)—“an illusion discursively maintained for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory frame of reproductive heterosexuality” (p. 136)—age scholars have argued that, like gender, age can be and is performed,\(^{32}\) often to reaffirm heterosexual, patriarchal power structures in which older men can retain power, control and influence over young, sexually available women by dismissing, belittling and ignoring their older counterparts. The dominance of youth and the power it holds is reinforced through women’s refusal to perform middle/old age in favour of youthful middle/old age, and through the representation of girled or youthful older women in post-feminist popular culture texts. This performance/representation while muddling age categories and distancing women from ageing, creates a type of invisibility that further marginalises old age and reinforces already dominant social stigmas.

This public scorning of ageing and old age is not however simply a denial of a declining body or the “humiliating process of gradual sexual disqualification” and invisibility (Sontag, 1972, p. 20). Alternatively, the scorning of the older woman is tied to the double address of post-feminist culture, whereby postfeminism both accounts for and repudiates feminism by invoking ideas of ‘empowerment’ and ‘choice’, while simultaneously suggesting that because gender equality has been ‘achieved’ feminism is a spent force that is no longer needed (Gwynne & Muller, 2013; Farrimond, 2013; Negra, 2009; McRobbie, 2007; Gill, 2007b; Douglas & Michaels, 2004). Postfeminism

works within a pattern of contradictions, “in which notions of autonomy, choice and self-improvement sit side-by-side with surveillance, discipline and the vilification of those who make the ‘wrong’ ‘choice’” (Gill, 2007b, p. 163). As such, it is unsurprising that postfeminism simultaneously celebrates aspects of feminism while, as Negra (2009) asserts, caricaturising, distorting and often willfully misunderstanding feminism, depicting feminism as “rigid, serious, anti-sex and romance, difficult and extremist” (p. 2).

In post-feminist culture, postfeminism is connected with a young and new generation of women, while second-wave feminism is increasingly croned and associated with an older generation of women (Whelehan, 2013; McRobbie, 2004). As age friction is a regular feature of postfeminism (Negra, 2009), both the feminist and older woman are spurned, with “the old female professional [represented] as a bad woman, as anti-role model for the protagonist, and a figure of calculation, deceit, and insecurity” in post-feminist culture and texts (Negra, 2009, p. 75). As Wearing (2007) notes,

> postfeminist popular culture has invested a great deal in the figuration of feminism as ‘old’ and hence, in line with women’s bodies more generally, ripe for the ritualized public display of ‘makeover,’ where ‘the new’ and ‘youth’ are characterized as virtual synonyms. (pp. 280–1)

From this perspective the young (postfeminist) gains dominance by distancing themselves from feminism, by positing ‘old’ feminists as dated and by consequently “eras[ing] any focus on feminism and older women” (Whelehan, 2013, p. 91; also see Modleski, 1999).

Despite postfeminism’s association with ‘the new’ and young, pre-feminist ideals surrounding the pleasures of domesticity and/or traditional femininity are seemingly repackaged as post-feminist ‘freedoms’ (Gill, 2007b). With feminism “set up as policeman, disallowing women the pleasure of traditional femininity” (Gill, 2007b, p.
161–2), retreatism (the movement of affluent female professions out of the public sphere to the ‘perfect’ domesticity of the private sphere; see Negra, 2009 and Tasker & Negra, 2005 & 2007) and new-momism (a set of ideals, norms, and practices that appear to celebrate motherhood, but which in reality demand an unachievable standard of perfection that casts women as subservient to their children; see Karlyn, 2011 and Douglas & Michaels, 2004) are presented as ideal means to achieve self-fulfillment and place.

As female characters ‘choose’ the ‘freedoms’ of domesticity and parenting, feminism and the older woman are increasingly blamed for contemporary anxieties and women’s inability to ‘have it all.’ Thus while on one hand post-feminist culture treats feminist perspectives on ‘choice’ and ‘empowerment’ as commonsense, the ‘older’ feminist is simultaneously “constructed as harsh, punitive and inauthentic” and thus as unable to articulate women’s ‘true’ desires (Gill, 2007b, p. 161–2; also see Tasker & Negra 2005). This representation of the ‘older’ woman and feminist becomes a means to mitigate and shape the power and roles women can and do play in post-feminist culture and popular culture texts. It also serves to further other the older woman and cast her as the antithesis to post-feminist aims and values, presenting the values of an ‘older’ generation as faulty and harmful.

Keeping these dominant discourses surrounding adulthood and middle/old age in mind, this project will use the above content as a frame of reference when analysing representations of ageing women in contemporary “Snow White” adaptations. As “Snow White” is traditionally a tale about female sexual maturation and the threat posed to and by an ageing woman who fears her decreasing sexual capital, this tale provides the ideal base to demonstrate how contemporary adaptations engage with complex issues of ageing. However, while analysing the stories told about ageing
women, and the roles and identities they assume as they transition into middle/old age, I will not assume that the adaptations examined in my analysis chapters simply mimic or replicate the above discourses. Alternatively, the above detailing simply contextualises the dominant discourses and ideological frames that these adaptations are in dialogue with by the nature of their shared history and sociocultural setting.

**Conclusion: Contributions to Childhood, Ageing and Fairy–Tale Studies**

As an interdisciplinary field, ageing studies has explored a variety of topics, discourses, socio-cultural happenings and historical moments, not all of which have been discussed here. Specifically it has considered the representation of older women historically and in medical discourses. It has detailed the relationship between young and old women during the various feminist movements, and has considered the erasure and denigration of older women in Hollywood and consumer culture. In terms of literature and media studies, ageing has been explored in relationship to postfeminism, consumer culture, Hollywood, television, the music industry and ageism. This scholarship primarily considers the conspicuous absence of older individuals in film or television, the girling of older female characters in film, television and literature, and the representation of older celebrities and their performance of youth/ageing.

This project, in addition to examining the figure of the old woman, will expand on childhood and ageing studies by demonstrating how characters are seen to transition, grow, age or remain in flux throughout/during different periods of their lives. I will analyse the relationship between characters’ changing bodies and/or identities as children, adolescence, adults or ageing/old women and the identities and roles they assume within the adaptations. Accounting for the interplay between different media, “Snow White” and the stories told about girls and women in “Snow White,” this
research will also examine the dominant discourses and ideologies that frame the characters’ changing identities, bodies and relationships to each other as they transition into different age categories.

Fairy tales provide the ideal space to conduct this research. Not only because their ability to project utopic realities or mirror society’s beliefs, perspectives or attitudes means these tales are just as likely to communicate reductive narratives about females, as transformative ones, but because fairy tales, unconstrained by the rules and laws of the natural world, are not subject to measured/natural time, and as such, chronological and earthly processes of growth and ageing. As Donald Haase (2000) asserts,

The formulaic ‘once upon a time’ stereotypically associated with the fairy tale would seem to suggest that the genre is largely about time—about temporal displacement from the present to the mythical past or to an imaginative time not governed by the laws of everyday life. [...] If the fairy tale is in fact ‘timeless,’ that timelessness derives largely from its structural disinterest in time. (p. 362)

Fairy tales’ loose temporal engagement means that the laws of everyday life do not govern characters’ time bound and temporal experiences of growth and ageing. Characters can seemingly move back and forwards through age brackets (as seen in chapter five), age instantly (as explored in chapter four) or not age at all (as evidenced in chapters five and six). The narratives’ manipulation of/control over time, temporality, growth and ageing suggests that when female growth and ageing occurs, it becomes manifest to serve a specific function within the tales. As such, unconfined to measured and linear time, the fairy–tale offers a potentially productive space to examine the sociocultural and ideological function female growth and ageing serve in Western contemporary popular culture.

In turn, an analysis of female growth and ageing in “Snow White” will add to fairy–tale scholarship’s growing interest in the increasingly complex depiction of
human experiences, societal constructs and characters’ psychology in contemporary fairy tales. As noted in the previous chapter, historically fairy tales depicted one-dimensional, psychologically undeveloped characters. Consequently, while feminist fairy-tale scholars explored representations of young and old female characters, such contemplations largely focused on their generic narrative function and/or figurative roles. As tales, such as “Snow White,” are expanded and creatively re-imagined in contemporary film, television and comic books, the female characters’ psychological and social identities also have the potential for expansion.

Evidence of characters’ increased complexity in fairy tales has been seen in Lury’s contemplation of the child as detailed in this chapter. Lury’s work highlights contemporary fairy tales’ increasing ability to depict and engage with powerful and complicated representations of human society and experiences. Building from Lury’s research, and drawing on childhood and ageing studies, I hope to further develop fairy-tale scholarship by considering whether contemporary fairy tales’ engagement with growing and ageing female characters provides a location for complex stories about female identities, roles and relationships to take shape.

Adaptation studies will be central to this research. As indicated in chapter one, in adapting a tale its content is defamiliarised, with different media enabling different avenues to enunciate and explore the tale. In considering the filmic, televisual and comic adaptation of “Snow White,” I will centrally investigate the kinds of stories about female growth and ageing different media adaptations of “Snow White” facilitate, and will detail the issues of time and temporality, and growth and ageing that unfold in these adaptations.

Having outlined the scholarship and critical thinking that informs my research, the next chapter will explore the history of “Snow White.” The chapter will survey and
critically detail the narrative’s adaptation across literature, theatre, film, animation, television, comic books and video games, spanning from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century. Centrally, it will identify how motifs, symbols, themes and characters have been altered and solidified, and will seek to identify what is at the core of “Snow White.”
This chapter details the historical development of “Snow White” from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century. I survey the tale’s adaptation across literature, theatre, film, television, animation, comic books and video games. Although I do not address all “Snow White” adaptations, as discussed in the introduction to this thesis, I account for texts that scholars identify as significant; that were widely distributed; that circulated and remained prevalent over a number of years or centuries; and/or were a part of significant movements. I also include versions that demonstrate significant deviations in the tale, enabling me to reveal “Snow White’s” diverse adaptation, while narrowly identifying the components that connect all versions.

The chapter is divided into four sections: PreGrimm (1634–1807), Grimm (1808–1929), Disney (1930–1966) and PostDisney (1967–2013), with the Grimms’ and Disney’s versions acting as markers within the chapter due to their significant impact on the tale’s development. The chapter details the evolution of “Snow White” in chronological order. It identifies significant shifts in the tale as well as content that remains consistent between versions. As this chapter centrally seeks to identify the tale’s core (i.e., the story or premise that remains consistent between versions), specific attention is paid to story, plot, character and narrative. This will enable me to narrowly define the tale’s core based on what is constant across all tellings, and will provide the context for my analysis of contemporary “Snow White” adaptations in subsequent chapters.

33 A list of “Snow White” adaptations from the 17th – 21st century can be found in Appendix A.
34 An explanation of my research method for this chapter can be located in the thesis’ introduction.
PreGrimm: 1600–1807

This section begins by detailing “Snow White’s” formation as a tale type. I call attention to the academic debates surrounding “Snow White’s” history, highlight the difficulty of singularly sourcing the tale’s “origins” and argue that the tale takes shape through its collective versions. This leads to a consideration of two literary adaptations, Giambattista Basile’s (1634) short story “The Young Slave” and J.K.A. Musäus’ (1782) short story “Richilde” from his collection *Volksmärchen der Deutschen* (Folk Tales of the Germans), in which I begin to identify narrative tropes, motifs and characters commonly associated with “Snow White.”

Considering “Snow White’s” “origins” Iona & Peter Opie (1974) indicate that while the tale draws upon European folk traditions, “it is not necessarily an old story, and has probably come under literary influence” (p. 175). They, like many scholars,35 align with N. J. Girardot’s (1977) assertion that “Snow White” may “only [be] a Buchmärchen [(fairy-tale book)] (influenced by Basile, Perrault, Musäus, etc.) that was edited and stylized by the [Grimm] brothers” (p. 279). From this perspective scholars have often privileged literature as the tale’s primary source of “origins”—both conflating the Grimms’ stylisation of the tale with credit for creation, and downplaying the Grimms’ assertions that they collected oral tales from peasant and folk communities.

Contesting the viewpoint that “Snow White’s” history is singularly rooted in literary traditions, Steven Jones (1979) states,

This line of argument tries to deny folkloristic authenticity to collected versions of Snow White as much as arguments about the influence of literary sources and chapbooks on the Grimm informants and about the stylistic editing practiced by the Grimms would deny authenticity to the Grimm versions of Snow White. (p. 72)

Jones draws attention to the tale’s muddied relationship with oral and literary sources,

revealing how arguments about origins often discount the contributions of various works and reduce the tale’s complex manifestation. He concludes by convincingly arguing that the tale can be primarily understood through an exploration of its complex history and evolution, one that precedes, includes and extends beyond the Grimms’ writings.

Similarly, Jack Zipes reaffirms the value of studying fairy tales, and by extension “Snow White,” in their collected versions (as undertaken in this chapter). As Zipes (2006) notes,

We cannot say with historical precision when the literary fairy tale began its evolution, but we can trace motifs and elements of the literary fairy tale to numerous types of storytelling and stories of antiquity that contributed to the formation of a particular branch of telling and writing tales (p. 3).

Thus, while an account of fairy tales’ chronology is inhibited by a lack of historical documentation, the similarities between oral and written versions can give a sense of how these tales took shape.

Zipes (1988b) also moves a consideration of fairy tales away from debates of authenticity by outlining fairy tales’ fluid evolution. As detailed in chapter one, in the mid-seventeenth century tales were adapted in French salons from oral and/or literary tellings into new oral versions. They were subsequently written and expanded for presentation at the salons, and/or as they were recorded for publication (Zipes, 1988b, p. 15). Drawing attention to the circularity of production, and the inability to clearly identify how tales were collected, adapted, told and recorded, Zipes, like Jones, reinforces the futility of connecting these tales to a singular point of origin, and encourages a reading based on their sociohistorical evolution.

With this in mind, the remainder of this chapter seeks to identify what is at the core of “Snow White” by considering the diachronic adaptation of the tale. My
approach aligns with Jones’ belief that an exploration of “Snow White,” and fairy tales more generally, should take shape through “a survey of collected versions and typology” (p. 70). However, I do not, as he suggests, unpack early oral tales due to significant gaps in this history. Nonetheless, beginning my consideration with two tales produced in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, I divert from the tendency to connect the tale to a singular source by considering how various media adaptations and historical periods have impacted, refined and (re)defined the tale.

Starting with Basile’s (1634) Italian short story, “The Young Slave,” this early literary adaptation uses an omniscient third-person narrator. It begins with the impregnation of a young woman by a rose leaf and the birth of her child, Lisa. This child, while gifted by fairies with beauty, is also cursed. As such, at the age of seven she is accidentally poisoned by a comb and seemingly dies. Unable to part with Lisa, her mother keeps her in a crystal casket, where she continues to grow. However, soon Lisa’s mother falls ill and dies. Leaving her under her uncle’s care, the child remains locked away until one day her aunt comes across the girl and mistakes her for her husband’s lover. Pulling Lisa from the coffin she accidentally knocks the comb from Lisa’s hair and awakens her. Filled with jealousy, her aunt cuts off Lisa’s hair, turns her into a slave and treats her cruelly. Lisa is eventually saved by her uncle, who, overhearing the girl’s story as she readies to kill herself, liberates her from her wretched state, disowns his wife and gives Lisa a happily ever after (i.e. happily sees her married).

Basile’s telling possesses many features that mark it as a “Snow White” adaptation: the crystal casket; the seemingly dead child; the poisonous comb; jealousy; and female rivalry between young and older women. Nonetheless, as evidenced by my above description, Basile’s tale significantly differs from the plot structure and events more commonly associated with well known “Snow White” telling such as, the Grimms’
and Disney’s versions. While Opie & Opie might argue, that the variances and similarities between “The Young Slave” and subsequent texts simply point to European folk/fairy tales’ tendency to recycle content and elements, like Zipes I would assert that these common themes, motifs and symbols contribute to an understanding of the tale’s formation as an adaptive text.

The variance between Basile’s telling and subsequent versions is in fact unsurprising, and may result from the tale’s oral history. When considering the tale’s distribution, Alfred Nutt (1892) argued that “Snow White flourished in Gaelic culture in the 10th century, [and that it] was carried by Breton minstrels to Italy and by Danish Vikings to Germany[…]” (Jones, 1979, p. 69). The tale’s potential geographic movements helps to explain why Basile’s plot development (influenced by Breton minstrels and Italian storytellers/culture) differs from the versions later recorded in Germany, which would have been influenced by both Danish and German culture.

In addition to Basile’s “The Young Slave,” Musäus’ (1782) Volksmärchen der Deutschen (Folk Tales of the Germans) was “perhaps the most significant collection in the eighteenth century […], in part because it anticipated the Grimms’ collection” (Jones, 1995, p. 39). In this collection Musäus included a short story version of “Snow White” entitled “Richilde.” Although Jones (1995) has argued that Musäus does not closely adhere to, “the folk tradition […] and […] substantially alters the tale’s elements, […] introducing historical figures to play the leading roles” (p. 39), Musäus’ tale nonetheless implements many of the elements commonly associated with “Snow White,” such as the magic mirror, the dwarfs, the poison apple, the three attacks, female rivalry, jealousy and the marriage of an innocent female. Collectively these elements make Musäus’ telling identifiable as a “Snow White” adaptation.

This version combines omniscient third-person narration with second-person
narration, enabling the narrator to speak directly to the reader. The tale begins with the miraculous birth of the vain Countess Richilde. The narrator explains how Richilde’s father and mother struggled to have a child. Richilde’s father, a very religious man, suspected that God was punishing him and his wife because his wife was vain and not religious enough. Richilde’s mother, in an attempt to placate God, made penance but to no avail. Finally, after seeking help from Albertus Magnus, the couple managed to conceive Richilde.

Richilde is later orphaned. However, before her mother dies, she leaves Richilde a magic mirror that can answer any question. She warns Richilde that the mirror should be used as an advisor for pious purposes, and that if used improperly, it will stop answering her questions. However, as Richilde grows she becomes vain and fails to follow her mother’s advice. Instead she misuses the mirror to assess her beauty. The mirror affirms that she is the most beautiful woman in the land, and she delights in this knowledge.

She lavishes in male attention until she is told that she cannot lead men on and must take a husband. So she asks the mirror to identify the most beautiful man in the realm. The mirror shows her Count Gombald von Löwen, whom she declares she will marry. Unfortunately Count Löwen is already happily married to his cousin. Nonetheless, when he hears that Richilde wishes to wed him, he grows resentful of his wife and daughter. Wishing for his wife’s death, he divorces her on the grounds that she is his cousin. She is subsequently sent to a convent where she dies of sorrow. Their daughter Bianca is sent to one of his distant castles with a nurse, where she lives and is cared for by dwarfs, while Count Löwen weds Richilde. Their happy union however is soiled over the guilt he feels for his first wife’s death and by Richilde’s growing indifference towards him. He leaves Richilde to go on a religious pilgrimage and dies
on the journey.

Freed from her role as wife, Richilde begins to entertain the attention of suitors. During this time, she turns to the mirror to hear praise of her own beauty, but the mirror tells her that Bianca is more beautiful than she. Richilde plots to kill Bianca and succeeds in putting her in a death-like sleep on three different occasions using a poison apple, soap and a letter. The effects of the first two poisonings are not long lasting, while the final poisoning is more potent. Richilde, free of competition, returns to her vain life. However, one day a pious pilgrim named Gottfried comes and wakes Bianca with a religious relic blessed by the Pope. He takes her to his home and plans to wed her. Gottfried learns of Bianca’s stepmother, and promises to save her from Richilde.

Gottfried goes to Richilde and convinces her that he loves and wishes to marry her. Unable to use her mirror because it has rusted over from misuse, Richilde is unaware of her stepdaughter’s revival and does not suspect Gottfried. She agrees to marry him and travels to his home. Upon arrival, he tells Richilde that he wishes to walk down the aisle with 12 beautiful virgins, and that the most beautiful virgin was recently threatened by her own mother. He asks Richilde what the mother’s punishment should be, to which she replies that the woman should be made to wear hot steel shoes. Introducing Richilde to her now living stepdaughter, Gottfried and Bianca subsequently wed, while Richilde is forced to dance in hot steel shoes and serve penance in a tower.

Deriving from a German culture and context, the development and focus of Musäus’ tale significantly differs from Basile’s telling. For example, within “Richilde” the young girl is in conflict with her stepmother rather than her aunt. She also doesn’t live with this relative and is not treated as a slave. Unlike the aunt in “The Young Slave,” Richilde is not returned to her relatives and instead serves penance in isolation. Further, where the uncle’s wife in “The Young Slave” is driven by jealousy, for Richilde beauty,
power and vanity are the central motivating factors. Richilde also takes up a more prominent role in the story as the narrative begins with her birth and ends with her imprisonment. Finally, where Basile’s adaptation singularly uses omniscient third-person narration, Musäus’ adaptation directly engages with the reader by combining omniscient third-person narration with second-person narration.

What is consistent between these versions is the deadly competition created between female rivals. Both Richilde and Lisa’s aunt perceive the threat these developing girls pose to their social position, and both inevitably fail to overcome their young rival. Despite the older women’s use of social power or magic aids, the young female is saved by a male figure that in turn rejects and punishes the older woman. This punishment, though initiated by a male character, gains courtly approval in both tales and is thus socially sanctioned. Within this context, both female characters’ actions and futures are ruled by the demands of a patriarchal social order that sees them easily replaced and reliant on male attention, love, leadership and legal judgment.

These stories also focus on female characters’ physical growth and experiences of ageing. In “The Young Slave,” when Lisa is in the crystal casket her continued growth is specifically highlighted. However, when she is a slave, her physical development is seemingly repressed. She is described as having “lost all strength and healthful hue,” only becoming as “beautiful as a goddess” once she is freed from her aunt’s control and abuse (Basile, 1634, p. 173). Reading her developing beauty as metaphoric for her transition into adulthood, the pairing of her transformed body and her aunt’s punishment generates a dual narrative in which the older woman becomes the antithesis to a younger woman’s physical growth and transition into the marriage market, while the younger woman threatens to usurp and erase her older counterpart, providing her with a metaphoric death. The characters are placed in direct opposition,
with the existence of either woman impeding the other’s happiness. However, it is ultimately the older woman who assumes the role of villain and who must be punished for a happy ending to ensue.

In “Richilde” Bianca’s physical development is identified when it threatens Richilde’s life style. As a consequence it is only given fleeting attention. Alternatively, the story primarily focuses on Richilde’s growing and ageing body, using descriptions of Richilde’s changing appearance to link young adulthood with female beauty, and ageing with physical/sexual degradation. This is first apparent when the narrator states that Richilde grew out of childhood into the most beautiful woman in the county. The attention given to her growth and beauty intrinsically links the two and seemingly draws upon social narratives that connect growth to progression (as discussed in chapter two).

In contrast after the death of her husband, Richilde goes to her mirror to confirm that her beauty hasn’t faded over the last 15 years. When her mirror indicates that she is no longer the most beautiful woman, the tale connects her reduced beauty to the passing of time and thus ageing. The story’s narrator further outlines the connection between female ageing and women’s (social/physical) degradation by considering why men commonly regret their marriage choices after their once young and beautiful wives age. Although the narrator does not suggest that all ageing wives will be rejected by their husbands, he specifically asserts that it occurs when a woman ages on her father’s side (develops masculine features); is unable to bear children or more specifically male children; or when another woman comes along who catches their husband’s attention.

In contemplating the importance of how a woman ages, the narrator implies that there is a ‘good’ and ‘bad’ way for females to age and brings the notion of ‘ageing well’ to mind. He also links the desirability of women to their sexual identity and fertility,
suggesting that as a woman ages, her social capital reduces as she is no longer perceived to embody or cannot fulfil the sexualised expectations of her gendered identity in youth. Significantly, the narrator takes pity on these women and the superficial judgment of their value by implying that their reduced capital is rooted in their husband’s fickle nature and/or lack of devotion.

Continuing my exploration of the tale in the next section, I will contemplate the tale’s adaptation in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The Grimm Brothers and The Evolution of “Snow White”: 1808–1911

This section explores adaptations produced between 1808 and 1911. While largely exploring the Grimms’ influence on the tale, this section also highlights and/or references nine significant short stories written between 1808 and 1909. Though some works are adaptations, others explicitly market themselves as translations by referencing the Grimms in the title of their anthology, by identifying themselves as translators of the Grimms’ texts and/or by incorporating the phrase “Newly Translated” in the title. My aim in including translations is to demonstrate the significance of the Grimms’ work and to identify any deviations that may reveal these “translations” as adaptations.

In their book The Classic Fairy Tale, Opie & Opie (1974) assert that the Grimm brothers collected “Snow White” from their brother-in-law’s sisters, Jeannette and Amalie Hassenpflug. However Zipes (2013) asserts that “Jacob Grimm became aware of the tale as early as 1806 through a version given to him by his brother Ferdinand,” and that their versions were influenced by Musäus’ ‘Richilde’ and Albert Ludwig

36 Original copies of these tales were located at the Osborne Collection of Early Children’s Books in Toronto, as well as online from Open Library.
Grimm’s fairy-tale play, Snow White, published in Kindermärchen (Children’s Tales) in 1809 (pp. 551–2).37

The Grimms accrued and recorded fairy tales in a period where “scholars began studying and paying close attention to folk tales and fairy tales” (Zipes, 2006, p. 43), and where individuals (including the Grimms) “sought to establish national cultural identities by uncovering the putative ‘pure’ and natural tales of their so-called people, the folk and their imagined nation” (pp. 42–3). Though the Grimms asserted that there was “something essentially German about their tales” (Zipes, 2006, p. 82)—claiming that their narratives embodied “the authentic voice of the folk” (Tatar, 1992, p. 16)—their sources were European (Zipes, 1979–80) and, as such, initially made reference to broader European society. This is particularly evident when reading the Grimms’ 1808 version of “Snow White,” which is set in England. However, seeking to construct a national German identity through these tales, the brothers significantly revised the tales they collected and published (Zipes, 1988b & 1979–80). As a consequence, the tales’ broader European connections were downplayed, as evidenced by the ambiguous setting of their 1812 version of “Snow White.”

In addition to constructing “authentic” German tales, the brothers, “caught in a contradiction that characterized much of post-Enlightenment thinking about folktales” (Tatar, 1992, p. 17), “had a need to enshrine these tales as ‘natural’ stories untainted by the hand of man, yet at the same time […] felt compelled to stress their ‘civilizing’ qualities” (p. 17). Referring to their work as an “educational manual” for German society (p. 16), the Grimms edited the tales, most notably for children in 1819 (Zipes, 1988b). Their editing practices and educational (ideological) focus, particularly in tales rewritten for children, separates their work from the European tales they initially

37 I was unable to locate a reliable translation of this play.
sourced—tales that were not censored for a young audience, but intended for adults and children alike. As such, I would argue that the Grimms’ tales, reflecting their own ideological beliefs, do in fact embody the period, location and German culture in which their adapted tales were written.

The extent to which the Grimms adapted the tales they collected is evident in Haase’s (1988) and Bottigheimer’s (1987) contemplation of Wilhelm Grimm’s use of motifs. Both scholars argue that Wilhelm believed that he could reverse the motivations of a tale’s motifs, without altering the tale (Haase, 1988; Bottigheimer, 1987). For instance, Bottigheimer (1987) notes that in the Grimms’ 1810 Rumpelstiltskin the young girl, wishing to spin straw, can only produce gold. However, in the 1812 version she is required to spin straw into gold. Bottigheimer concludes that Wilhelm viewed the text as unaltered because both tales included straw, spinning and gold. However, as she notes, by changing motifs, Wilhelm also changes the tale’s primary conflict. Such alterations highlight the extent to which the Grimms adapted the text to reflect their own perspectives, preferences and values.

Prior to and following their 1812 publication of Kinder- und Hausmärchen (Children’s and Household Tales), the Grimms revised their collected works, specifically editing “Snow White” “throughout the […] six editions of Kinder- und Hausmärchen” (Zipes, 2013, p. 552) that followed their 1812 publication. Though producing various versions of the tale, the repeated publication of the story under the title “Snow White” helped to popularise the tale by giving it a clear and singular point of reference.38

Though the Grimms solidify the title in their 1812 publication, as the 1857 edition of the Kinder- und Hausmärchen was “the second most popular and widely

38 It is difficult to say when the title “Snow White” first came into use due to the historical gaps in the tale’s oral history.
circulated book […] second only to the bible” (Zipes, 1979–80, p. 15) it is likely that this version of “Snow White” is the most commonly remembered. In the 1857 edition, Snow White’s mother wishes her into being. After Snow White is born her mother dies and her father remarries a woman “who was beautiful but proud and haughty, and [who] couldn’t tolerate anyone else who might rival her beauty” (Zipes, 2013, p. 561). Upon consulting her mirror this queen discovers that Snow White, now seven, is more beautiful than she. The queen instructs the huntsman to kill the girl in the forest and to bring back her lungs and liver. However, after she begs for her life, the huntsman spares Snow White, assuming that she will be eaten by wild animals. He brings the queen the liver and lungs of a boar, which the queen has boiled in salt and eats. While the queen neither kills Snow White nor consumes her flesh, her intention to do so invokes ideas of infanticide and cannibalism.

Snow White wanders in the woods until she comes across the dwarfs’ neat and tidy house. There she eats and drinks a little food and wine from each of their plates and, after testing each of the beds, goes to sleep. The dwarfs discover the child and find her to be beautiful. After hearing her story they tell her that if she keeps house they will provide for her. Shortly after, the queen discovers that Snow White is still alive and plans to kill her. She makes three attempts using lace, a poison comb and a poison apple.

Before each attack, the dwarfs warn Snow White not to let anyone into the house. However, she doesn’t heed their warnings. The dwarfs save Snow White after the first two attacks, but are unable to revive her once she has eaten the apple. The dwarfs place her in a glass coffin labelled in gold. One day a prince comes and stays with the dwarfs. There he sees Snow White, and tries to buy her. The dwarfs refuse, but gift her to him when they realise that he loves her—mirroring a patriarchal
structure in which Snow White, as object, is transferred (gifted) from father (symbolically embodied by the dwarfs) to husband (i.e. the prince).

The prince orders his servants to carry the coffin home, but they stumble, jolting the apple from her throat and awakening her. Overjoyed, the prince declares his love and she agrees to marry him. The couple invite the queen to their wedding, who, unaware that Snow White is the bride, readily gets dressed up to attend the event. However, before she goes she refers to her mirror and discovers that Snow White is alive. Though full of fear, she is unable to calm herself until she sees the girl, so she decides to attend the wedding. When she does, the sight of Snow White instantly petrifies her. Heated iron shoes are then brought to the queen and she is made to dance in them until she dies.

The contrast between the plot structure in the Grimms’ 1857 version, and Basile’s and Musäus’ adaptations alone demonstrates the variances between adaptations of the tale. Yet, a deeper understanding of the process of adaptation the Grimms undertook is evident when comparing their 1808, 1810, 1812 and 1857 versions. For example, in the 1808 and 1810 renditions the prince does not find and save Snow White. Alternatively, when her father returns from war, a doctor who accompanies him resuscitates her. It is not until the 1812 version that “the young husband becomes the active hero” (Zipes, 1979–80, p. 14). Tatar (1992) also notes significant changes between the 1812 and 1857 versions. She indicates that while Snow White’s biological mother tries to kill her in the 1812 version, in the 1857 version her mother is replaced with a stepmother. These alterations reflect the changes Wilhelm made as he collected more versions of the story from the public (Zipes, 2013), and as he edited the tale for publication.

An understanding of what has changed between the Grimms’ versions helps to
further refine what is at the core of “Snow White” as it enables me to separate variables in the tellings from the content that is consistently found in each rendition. It also allows me to explore how the Grimms’ versions collectively contributed to the tale’s evolution. Thus, despite the different settings, characters and character roles in the Grimms’ versions, each adaptation shares a similar plot structure and uses a third-person omniscient narrator. Beginning with Snow White’s birth and the initial conflict between Snow White and the queen, the tale traces the queen’s first murder attempt and Snow White’s arrival at the dwarfs’ home, the queen’s three additional murder attempts with the use of lace, a poison comb and a poison apple, the dwarfs’ initial success and then failure to revive Snow White, and Snow White’s eventual resuscitation. These versions conclude with Snow White’s marriage and the queen’s death. Finally, each rendition similarly focused on themes of female rivalry, stressed the importance and capital of beauty, and used an angel/devil stereotype to frame passivity as an ideal female characteristic.

The brothers’ literary adaptations, particularly their 1857 rendition, became part of Western cultural memory and fundamentally (re-)defined “Snow White” as an identifiable tale type. The impact of the Grimms’ “Snow White” can be seen in translations produced by James & Joseph Robins (1827); Addey and Co (1863); Mrs. H.B. Paull and Mr. L.A. Wheatley (1868 & 1889); Lucy and Walter Crane (1882); Raphael Tuck & Sons (1907); and Mrs Edgar Lucas (1909). While as translations these short stories, published across Europe (England, Ireland and France) and North America (America and Canada), may simply reinforce the dominance of the Grimms’ adaptation, as I will demonstrate, rather than functioning as translations, these tales act

39 Each of these works were sourced from the Osborne Collection of Early Children’s Books. All of these adaptations use a third-person omniscient narrator and engage a child and adult audience.
as adaptations. As such, they exhibit both the impact the Grimms had on “Snow White” tales published across the West, and illustrate how the tale continued to transform and in turn solidify within this period.

These texts’ position as literary adaptations is evidenced in their variance from preceding works. While following the Grimms’ plot structure, they alter elements such as the story’s title, character names, motivations, symbols and depictions of violence. For example, though in the Grimms’ 1812 text “it is Snow White’s biological mother, not her stepmother, who orders a huntsman to kill the girl and bring back her lungs and liver as proof of the deed” (Tatar, 1992, p. 231), in the Robins’ (1827) version “Snow-Drop,” Snow-Drop’s mother dies and it is her step-mother who orders her murder. Published before the Grimms’ final 1857 version, the Robins change the main antagonist and as such Snow White’s relationship with her parental figures.

Additionally, the violence in the tale is toned down as the Robins eliminate the queen’s consumption of Snow White’s lungs and liver, and the queen’s iron shoe punishment. Published in both London and Dublin during a period of social unrest, the tensions created by English rule may be one reason that the violence was removed. Considering the condition of Ireland in the lead up to the potato famine James H. Johnson (1990) indicates,

[I]n the early decades of the nineteenth century the Irish rural population was becoming progressively poorer as increasing population pressed upon limited resources and the potato was adopted as a food crop by more and more people by force of circumstances. (p. 265)

The potato crop was unreliable, the Irish were starving and much of the country blamed England for their restricted resources (Johnson, 1990). As the primary distributor of the book, it would not have been in England’s best interest to circulate literature that promoted violence against a royal figurehead.

Although it is impossible to say for certain why the violence was removed from
the Robins’ narrative, as the Robins’ short story would have been read by children and adults alike, this censorship may reflect concerns surrounding this rising conflict. This being said, it is just as likely that this tale, written in the romantic era—a period heavily influenced by the Enlightenment’s “innocent child” (as detailed in chapter two)—was simply adapted to reflect the ideological beliefs and perspectives regarding childhood innocence in this period. Either way, in casting the queen as a stepmother and toning down the tale’s violence, the Robins’ tale deviates from the Grimms’ version, revealing itself as an adaptation.

Also published in London, the Cranes’ 1882 text re-imagines character roles and adds additional details and character dialogue, spending a significant amount of time outlining the queen’s growing jealousy and resentment. Notably, the Cranes’ version mirrors the Grimms’ use of violence and follows a similar plot structure. However, it departs in its symbolic use of organs when the Cranes’ queen asks for Snow White’s heart, and mistakenly eats a boar’s heart in its place. As the queen is obsessed with her physical appearance and is jealous of Snow White’s beauty (i.e., her sexually desirable body), her request for and consumption of an organ associated with kindness, love, life and youth becomes symbolic of her desire to regain and internalise life, youth and by extension, beauty. This symbolic change significantly impacts the tale with future filmic adaptations such as Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (Disney, 1937) and Snow White and the Huntsman (Sanders, 2012) incorporating the symbol.

Written in the Victorian era, the Cranes’ adaptation also differs from the Robins’ by depicting the queen as a more active perpetrator who is at odds with Victorian values. For example, in the Robins’ version, the queen gives Snow White the poison comb, but

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40 19th century fairy tales were primarily intended for children and adults alike (see Zipes, 2000 and Newton, 2015). Additionally, even when tales were specifically marketed for children, adults would have engaged with these works when reading them to young children (Newton, 2015).
Chapter Three: From Grimm to Post-Disney

she does not directly put the comb in Snow White’s hair. Alternatively, it is Snow White who unwittingly fulfils the queen’s violent intentions by putting the comb in her own hair. In this way, the Robins’ queen instigates violence but she does not fully carry out the attack. In contrast the Cranes’ queen directly puts the comb into Snow White’s hair and as such directly and fully carries out the violent act.

The assertiveness of the Cranes’ queen stands at odds with the values and perspectives of motherhood in the Victorian era, casting her as a monster. Considering female roles in the Victorian period Martha Vicinus (1972) clarifies,

> Before marriage a young girl was brought up to be perfectly innocent and sexually ignorant. The predominant ideology of the age insisted that she have little sexual feeling at all, although family affection and the desire for motherhood were considered innate. Morally she was left untested, and kept under the watchful eye of her mother in her father’s home […] Once married, the perfect lady did not work; she had servants. […] Her social and intellectual growth was confined to the family and close friends. Her status was totally dependent upon the economic position of her father and then her husband. In her most perfect form, the lady combined total sexual innocence, conspicuous consumption and the worship of the family hearth. (p. ix)

The queen betrays these values by showing no motherly affection, by displaying a deep obsession with her physical desirability and by actively destroying her family.

In contrast the Cranes’ Snow White is a docile and dependent figure. While she works and lives beyond her father’s home, the dwarfs’ home serves as a replacement for the family home and the work she performs (cooking, cleaning, sewing and knitting) is conducted in the confines of this environment. Though the queen embodies a threat to the “perfect lady,” Snow White maintains her innocence and dependence on men, first relying on the dwarfs’ care and then the protection of her husband. This dependency solidifies her status as the ideal woman and reaffirms the character’s association with dependency as seen in Basile’s, Musäus’, the Grimms’, and the Robins’ adaptations.

Where the Cranes’ literary adaptation reaffirms Snow White’s passive role, Mrs. H.B. Paull and Mr. L.A. Wheatley’s 1868 & 1889 versions, published in London and
New York, reaffirm the queen’s fear of Snow White. This becomes evident through the narrator’s description of the queen and Snow White’s relationship. Although the queen is still described as jealous and envious of Snow White, Snow White’s growing beauty is framed as threatening, mimicking the Robins’ 1827 and Addey and Co.’s 1853 representations. The narrator remarks,

Years went by, and as Snow-White grew up she became day after day more beautiful till she reached the age of seven[…] [P]eople began to talk about her and say that she would be more lovely even than the queen herself[… So] the proud woman [the queen] went to her magic looking-glass and asked:

‘Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Am I most beautiful of all?’

But the Mirror answered:

‘Queen, thou art lovely still to me,
But Snow-White will be
A thousand times more beautiful than thee.

Then the queen was terrified […] (Paull & Wheatley, 1868/1889, p. 194)

While the Robins and Addey and Co. describe the queen as “frightened” and Paull & Wheatley describe her as “terrified” these texts constitute Snow White’s growing beauty as a threat to the queen’s own social position and as such, her power. In this way, these adaptations mirror Musäus’ direct sociopolitical exploration of female beauty and his tale’s assertion that women’s power fades as they age and are replaced by younger, sexually desirable women. Consequently, where preceding and subsequent adaptations mask this danger behind ideas of vanity and jealousy, the Robins’, Addey and Co.’s and Paull & Wheatley’s representations collectively highlight a varying avenue for the tale’s adaptation.

Paull & Wheatley’s version also helps to solidify the queen’s connection to witchcraft. Paull & Wheatley are not the first to connect the queen with the dark arts, with the Grimms’ 1857 adaptation specifically stating that the queen used witchcraft to make the poison comb. However, in emulating the Grimms’ description, the text

\[^{41}\text{Tuck & Sons, 1907; Lucas, 1909; Crane & Crane, 1882; Grimms, 1808, 1810, 1812 and 1857; Basile, 1643}\]
reaffirms her connection to the dark arts, and further entrenches a narrative of devil woman as crone. The strengthened ties between the queen and witchcraft help to reaffirm this as an element of the tale with later filmic, theatrical, televisial and comic adaptations such as Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (Ames, 1912, Theatre), Snow White (Ames & Dawley, 1916, Film), Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (Disney, 1937, Film), Snow White: A Tale of Terror (Cohn, 1997, Made-For-TV Film), Mirror Mirror (Singh, 2012, Film), Snow White and the Huntsman (Sanders, 2012, Film), Once Upon a Time (ABC, 2011-Present, Television) and Fables (Willingham, 2002–2015, Comic Book) all linking the queen to witchcraft.

Paull & Wheatley’s version concretise many aspects of the tale through their repetition of content found in nineteenth-century “Snow White” literary adaptations. Yet, they also differ from adaptations in this period by paying closer attention to Snow White’s physical growth. Where Paull & Wheatley (1868/1889) directly state, “But what was her [the queen’s] astonishment and vexation when she recognised in the young bride Snow-White herself, now grown a charming young woman, and richly dressed in royal robes?” (p. 201), the Cranes’ (1882), Addey and Co.’s (1853), the Robins’ (1827) and the Grimms’ (1808, 1812 and 1857) versions provide no description of growth after Snow White reaches the age of seven. Each tale asserts that she was in the coffin for a long time or for many years. However, there is no indication that she physically grew during this time, the texts either asserting that she remained the same or that she did not decay and appeared to be sleeping.

Paull & Wheatley’s description of Snow White’s growth does not introduce a new aspect to the tale, as Basile’s “The Young Slave” previously described Snow White’s continued growth after her “death.” However it does reinforce a strand of “Snow White” in which the character experiences continued growth, a feature that will
be of particular interest as I explore how Snow White’s developing and desirable body in contemporary adaptations is increasingly described, performed and associated with adolescence and young adulthood.

The variances between these versions reveal these “translations” as adaptations, while their similarities further refined and defined “Snow White” in this period. As all the adaptations explored across the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century thus far reiterate a story about rivalling young and ageing beauties, the specific contributions of these nineteenth century texts must be attributed to the popularisation of the Grimms’ plot structure and the further establishment of the tale as a specific tale type—with Antti Aarne (1910) and later Aarne and Stith Thompson (1961) using the Grimms’ work “as the basis for a preliminary catalogue for folktales” (Jones, 1995, pp. 6–7) and for the classification of “Snow White” as a tale type in their classification system, *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography*.

However, as the above literary adaptations are labeled as translations it is unsurprising that they more or less adhere to and as such further disseminate the Grimms’ structure, characters, character roles, symbols and/or motifs. As these short stories only embody one type of textual adaptation, it would be misleading to label these tales as singularly representative of nineteenth-century “Snow White” literary adaptations. If one alternatively contemplates literary adaptations that do not directly engage with the Grimms’ text, the versatility of the tale in this period becomes apparent.

For example in Thomas Frederick Crane’s (1885) Italian short story “The Crystal Casket,” 

42 Crane’s version is accredited as a translation of G. Pitrè’s *La Scatola di Cristallo raccolta da.*
Additionally, in Gonzenbach’s (1870) version, Maria, the Snow White figure, lives with robbers and is resurrected when the prince’s mother removes a poison ring from her finger. In Pitrè’s (1875) tale a prince resuscitates Maria by removing a needle from her hair, and in Crane’s (1885) adaptation the prince, originally insisting on marrying the “dead” girl, must be convinced to marry her after his mother and the family’s chambermaids unwittingly revive her—drawing direct links to necrophilia. Motifs, events and character roles are also changed between versions as evident in Joseph Jacobs (1892) Scottish tale, “Gold-Tree and Silver-Tree,” in which the mirror is replaced by a talking fish, the prince takes two wives, the King retains an active role and the prince’s second wife resurrects and saves the Snow White figure on two occasions.

The variance between these adaptations highlights the tale’s versatility, and demonstrates how it took shape beyond the Grimms’ texts. As these versions differ in plot structure, motifs, symbols and character roles, their differences help to separate what is commonly found in the tale from the components that have been adapted and re-imagined between versions. In refining these tales down to their base similarities, what links “Snow White” adaptations in the nineteenth century is their shared focus on the female characters’ struggle for power, beauty and place within society as they grow and age. These tales also reaffirm the archetypes and diametric opposition of the good and bad woman, linking the youthful Snow White to purity and innocence and the ageing queen to vanity, selfishness, violence, aggression and death.

43 All of these adaptations use a third-person omniscient narrator and address a child and adult audience.
44 Translations of Gonzenbach’s (1870) and Pitrè’s (1875) adaptations were given to me by Jack Zipes prior to the publication of his 2013 book. Crane’s (1885) and Jacobs’ (1892) short stories were viewed at the Osborne Collection of Early Children’s Books in Toronto.
The Mark of Disney: Theatric, Filmic, Animated, and Comic Adaptations From 1912–1966

This section, though entitled “The Mark of Disney” does not begin with Disney. It does, however, show how Disney’s production of “Snow White” shaped Western perceptions of the tale. Beginning with Winthrop Ames’ (1912) theatre production, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, and Ames and James Dawley’s (1916) film, *Snow White*, I outline the adaptations’ generic engagement with romance in this period. I then provide a brief outline of “Snow White’s” shift into animation, contemplating the “Betty Boop in Snow White” cartoon (Fleischer, 1933), before considering Disney’s 1937 production, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (Cottrell, Hand, Jackson, Morey, Pearce and Sharpsteen). I subsequently explore the popularity of Disney’s film and the controversy surrounding its representation of women. I conclude by detailing adaptations that were influenced by, responded to, or diverged from Disney’s adaptation, tracing the narrative’s evolution into the mid-twentieth century.

In 1912, under the pseudonym Jessie Graham White, Winthrop Ames produced and wrote the play *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. This production, starring Marguerite Clark as Snow White, was performed at the Little Theatre and the Maxine Elliott’s Theatre in New York. The production was performed 72 times, and was later adapted into a silent film (Ames and Dawley, 1916). Both the theatric and filmic adaptations targeted a child and adult audience and reduced much of the violence found in early tales.

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45 The theatre script was retrieved January 15, 2013 from https://archive.org/stream/snowwhitesevendw00whit#page/n9/mode/2up and the silent film was retrieved January 15, 2013 from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mq2vCB8GnVU
46 Performance information can be found on the Internet Broadway Database (IBDB). Retrieved February 25, 2013 from http://www.ibdb.com/Production/View/7510
47 Marguerite Clark played Snow White in both the Broadway production and in the film adaptation.
These theatric and filmic adaptations gave the tale a material depth as the visual and aural modes of communication further defined how the queen and Snow White looked, moved, physically/emotionally reacted to other characters/events and/or sounded. The productions also brought about significant structural changes with both productions incorporating musical numbers and requiring longer storylines, complex scripts and more characters than the short story adaptations previously considered.

Despite the adaptations’ similar expansion of the tale, the formal differences between these media resulted in divergent representations of the tale’s setting, events, significant happenings and characters. For instance, where the camera filmed different locations, including the outdoors, the theatre production was stage bound, centrally relying on set design to create/represent different locations. The adaptations thus unfolded in variant environments, with the camera facilitating a detailed expansion of the tale’s geography within a “real” world context.

Reversely, where the theatre enabled spectators to see and engage (though in a limited sense) with Snow White as a physically present character (both in body and voice), the film presented a recorded version of Snow White, which as a silent film meant that her voice and movement was not heard. Additionally, the spectator’s engagement and awareness of her being was in part informed by the viewership of the camera. In this way, the materiality of her being took shape through the editing of scenes and events, which standardised her performance, enabling each screening to present spectators with the identical performance and as such, identical Snow White. Thus, although both productions give additional depth to the tale, the possibilities, constraints and expectations of these media created different avenues for the tale’s adaptation.

As live action productions, the casting and costuming of characters informed the
depiction of Snow White’s age. While the narrator in the nineteenth-century literary texts identifies Snow White’s age as seven, in both the Broadway play and the film Snow White is visually and verbally coded as around 12 years old. Although neither production specifies her age in exact terms, in the Broadway production her playmates are verbally described as 12, and in both productions she is referred to as a child by different characters. Played by Clark, who at 4’10” and about 90 pounds was considered to be one of the waifs and child-women that dominated American films in 1910 (IMDb, 2014), her star status and costuming—in knee-length dresses with no shoes—helped to literally and figuratively project an image of a young girl.

Additionally, her status as a child in the film is affirmed through the queen’s (Dorothy Cummings) contrasting appearance. At 5’7” Cummings easily towers over Clark, emphasising Clark’s small size (IMDb, 2014b). Cummings’ contrasting adult status is visually exaggerated through her regal costuming, wearing floor length dresses and a long heavy cloak that covers her body and draws a clear division between the two characters’ ages.

In these productions Snow White’s age assumes an additional layer of complexity as her age and youthfulness are performed. Where Snow White’s child identity is constructed through a one-dimensional description of her character in early literary adaptations, in both the play and the film, she assumes a physical materiality as her youth and innocence is concretised through her body. However, the materiality of youth and the performance of youth become muddled as the 12 year-old Snow White is played by then 29 (the play) and 33 (the film) year old Clark. This disconnect is further compounded within the film as the “child” Clark plays opposite an “ageing” Dorothy Cummings (the queen) who was in fact 11 years younger than Clark. The disconnect

48 Within the play the queen was played by Elaine Inescourt, who, at 5’8”, would have also towered over Clark and visually reaffirmed Clark’s youth within the production.
created between chronological age and performed age highlights a significant
development for the tale, as its movement into live action raises questions about how
the performance of age takes shape and is related to the characters’ identities and social
roles, a concern taken up again in the fourth and fifth chapter of this thesis.

The productions also made substantial changes to “Snow White’s” plot. Where
earlier adaptations introduced the prince at the end of the tale, in both the theatre and
film productions Snow White’s love interest appears at the beginning of the narrative.
This rearrangement of events alters the characters’ motivations. For example, in
preceding adaptations the queen’s aggression is directly rooted in Snow White’s
developing beauty. In contrast, in these adaptations the prince’s love for Snow White
solidifies the queen’s decision to kill her. Although the queen does not long for the
prince herself, the queen is envious of the prince’s admiration for Snow White’s beauty.
The value the queen places on the prince’s judgment repositions him in the tale as the
measure by which female beauty and value is determined.

Additionally, where the queen solely posed as a threat to Snow White’s life in
early literary adaptations, by intervening in Snow White and the Prince’s romance, the
queen transgresses against “true love” and marriage. The adaptations’ engagement with
romance alters the tale’s conflict so that the queen’s violence is also enacted on the
prince, her community and on the social values that would seem to elevate a
heterosexual coupling as both “natural” and as a pinnacle moment in Snow White’s life.
Reflecting the centrality of heterosexual romance in mainstream film more generally,
this alteration significantly impacts and shifts the tale, as future filmic adaptations such
as, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (Disney, 1937), Mirror Mirror (Singh, 2012) and
Snow White and the Huntsman (Sanders, 2012) all introduce the prince at the start of
the tale, and construct romance as one of the, if not the, central motivating factor(s) and
conflict(s) within their texts.

In terms of this project, the adaptations’ romantic focus also raises interesting issues about female sexual maturation, desirability and age. In both productions, it is agreed that Snow White can marry the prince in a year’s time from their first meeting. Assuming that Snow White is around 12 years old, this would see her marriage consummated at 13. Snow White’s entrance into domestic life does not reflect late nineteenth century or early twentieth century marriage norms, with the median age 22 in 1890 and 20.5 in 1947 (Espenshade, 1985). While at odds with twentieth–century marriage practices, as both productions were set in the medieval period, Snow White’s young marriage may have been rationalised, no matter how inaccurately, as representative of medieval traditions.

Nonetheless, it would seem that since both productions shift Snow White’s age from 7 to 12, her child status in preceding literary adaptations was in someway problematic for the productions increased engagement with romance. With the strengthening of child protection laws in the nineteenth and twentieth century (as discussed in chapter two; also see Fass, 2013; Heywood, 2001; Cunningham, 1995; Macleod, 1992) these tensions are compounded in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century where in a Western society a child of 13 would not be legally able to enter into marriage or a sexual union. Consequently, and as this thesis explores, as romance becomes a dominant feature in the tale and ideas shift about appropriate representations of childhood and female sexuality both on and off the screen, Snow White’s age and developing body becomes a increasingly pressing issue for adaptations to address, and for this thesis to explore.

Following these adaptations, in 1933 director Max Fleischer released “Betty
Boop in Snow White,” an animated cartoon clearly influenced by life and culture in 1930s’ America. This adaptation highlights how the tale was modernised through animation, and can be adapted to reflect the perceptions and cultures of different communities. Fleischer’s adaptation firmly situates the tale in the alternative culture of the jazz age, by incorporating a musical number from famous Harlem jazz singer and bandleader, Cab Calloway, and by fashioning Betty in “the ‘boyish’ bob, the spit curls, the round face, the wide, mascaraed eyes [that] was very popular in the late 1920s and the 1930s” (Fleischer, 2005, p. 56).

These cultural signifiers link this adaptation to “the likes of Duke Ellington, Count Basie, and Benny Goodman, who carried the excitement, freedom, and diversity of the big city jazz age into the 1930s and 1940s” (Erenber, 1998, p. xvii). For this era “the city remained the realm of modern hopes and freedom, and New York city stood as the capital of those aspirations[, with] a group of swing intellectuals initially support[ing] swing as the herald of a new national culture” (Erenber, 1998, p. xvii). The Betty Boop cartoon arises from this culture, expressing the hopes, and increased personal freedoms (including sexual freedoms) that arose from this community.

Though set in the medieval era, the cartoon’s incorporation of swing culture facilitates the exploration of city values and changing perspectives on female roles and sexual identities within “Snow White.” One can identify this change during and after the cartoon’s main musical number. This number, sung by one of her male companions, begins with the lyrics,

Well folks, I’m goin’ down to St. James Infirmary
See my little baby there
She’s stretched out on a long, white table
Well she looks so good, so cold, so fair.

These lyrics, directed at Betty, seemingly establish this male companion as a potential

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49 Retrieved October 15, 2013 from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q1u0YYQgwF0
lover and as such her prince. However, where in preceding adaptations the prince assumes the role of hero by awakening Snow White, and the status of lover through marriage, in “Betty Boop in Snow White,” the prince does not rescue Betty from the queen and Betty does not display a romantic interest in him. As a consequence, the cartoon does away with a matrimonial ending and alternatively concludes with Betty innocently dancing in a circle with two male companions. In presenting the prince as a romantic option for Betty that she does not pursue or accept, her independence at the end of the cartoon constructs Betty (as Snow White) as a woman in control of her own body, choices and sexual identity.

Though demonstrating a level of self-possession, Betty’s clothing, a very short dress that reveals a garter on the upper part of her thigh, and the attention she receives from the two castle guards who explicitly fawn over her, sexualises her character and affirms her value in terms of her sexual desirability. Although in early literary, theatric and filmic adaptations Snow White is similarly valued for her beauty, she is not described in carnal terms, alternatively embodying the innocent identity of a child. In contrast, in this cartoon, which was targeted towards a liberal adult audience, Betty, as Snow White, is a hyper-sexualised figure with a fully developed adult body.

In addition to altering Snow White’s character, many of the elements associated with the tale—such as the queen’s three attacks on Snow White and Snow White’s housekeeping—are removed from the cartoon. Though the cartoon does adapt some of the features from earlier tellings, such as the queen’s looking glass and her developing anger, these motifs and narrative features are re-imagined and given a surreal quality through the use of animation. For example, at the beginning of the cartoon the queen’s mirror becomes a living creature that, upon seeing Betty, declares her as the most

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50 One of these companions is the prince figure.
beautiful in the land and plants her with a kiss. While the mirror is a common motif within earlier tellings, it is uncommon for it to directly interact with Snow White, let alone kiss her. However, the animation facilitates and naturalises the anthropomorphism of the mirror, drawing attention to the sexualised nature of the mirror’s judgment by making the implicit politics of female beauty in early versions explicit within this adaptation.

The cartoon identifies itself as an adaptation by referencing the “Snow White” title, by incorporating the magic mirror, and by including similar characters such as the queen, Snow White, the dwarfs and the prince. However, as my above detailing reveals, the cartoon also greatly differs from preceding versions. These variances not only illustrate how drastically a tale can be adapted but, as will become evident in my exploration of Disney’s *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, how greatly it can diverge from other adaptations produced in its own period.

Four years after the Betty Boop adaptation, Disney (1937) released *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. As the first ever full-length feature animated film and Disney’s first independent release, this adaptation, which was targeted toward a child and adult audience, marked the start of Disney’s corporate success. The film’s opening credits state that the film was “adapted from Grimms’ fairy tales,” and it incorporates many of the narrative features found in earlier versions such as the magic mirror, the dwarfs and the wicked stepmother. However, it also deviates from nineteenth century literary adaptations as the film cuts the queen’s three attacks—solely harming Snow White with a poison apple—as the dwarfs cause the queen’s death and as Snow White is awakened with a kiss.

Further, Disney’s adaptation deviates from the Grimms’ versions by focusing on Snow White’s struggle to obtain true love. Numerous scenes are dedicated to Snow
White’s romantic pursuit, evidenced by the opening musical number “Some Day My Prince Will Come;” Snow White’s consumption of the apple to obtain her prince;\textsuperscript{51} Snow White’s revival with a kiss;\textsuperscript{52} and the couple’s renewed love at the end of the film. In drawing upon the romance genre, Disney more closely aligns with Ames’ 1912 theatre production, and Ames and Dawley’s 1916 film. It also reflects the dominance of romance in Hollywood films produced between 1930-39, with 26 romantic films listed amongst the top 50 box office earners in this period (IMDb, 2015).\textsuperscript{53}

Like Fleischer, Disney modernises the tale through the physical representation of its characters, transforming Snow White into “a 1920s/’30s starlet with a flapper’s haircut, rosebud mouth, and high-pitched warbles” (Do Rozario, 2004, p. 38). However, where Fleischer connects his adaptation to the multicultural, sexually explicit and lively conditions associated with the jazz age and city life, Disney’s depicted setting and the characters’ vocal castings evade these associations. Disney’s “modern” woman lives beyond the city in a pastoral setting where she remains innocent and pure, “happy to pitch in with the working class dwarves in times of high unemployment and poverty [i.e., during the depression] until she is found once again by her prince” (Do Rozario, 2004, p. 38).

Disney’s “new” woman reaffirms Snow White’s childlike status, innocents, and “proper” upper class identity. This is particularly evident in the casting of Adriana Caselotti who was chosen to be the voice of Snow White based on her childlike voice and operatic training (Howser, 1986). Thus while Disney visually depicts a 1920/30

\textsuperscript{51} Disguised as an old woman, the queen gives Snow White the poison apple with the assurance that with one bite all her dreams will come true. Under this presumption, Snow White wishes for a life with the prince.

\textsuperscript{52} Snow White was not revived with a kiss in earlier versions. It is thought that Disney borrowed this element from Sleeping Beauty (Tatar, 1992).

starlet, Caselotti’s casting, her musical association with an upper class art form, the adaptation’s pastoral setting and its romantic focus in fact reaffirms conservative values and positions spectators “to long nostalgically for neatly ordered patriarchal realms” (Zipes, 1994, p. 95).

In spite of the film’s success and continued popularity, evidenced through re-releases, theme parks, stage productions and merchandise (Do Rozario, 2004), the film has been critiqued by feminist scholars and communities for its “bastardisation” of the Grimms’ tale, and for its perpetuation of the angel/devil woman stereotype (as indicated in chapter one). Specifically suggesting that Disney destroyed the Grimms’ tale, which once “came from the masses,” by putting his own views and beliefs over the masses (Sayers, 1973, p. 117), Frances Clarke Sayers (1973) concludes that, “[h]e misplaces the sweetness and misplaces the violence, and the result is like soap opera, not really related to the great truths of life” (p. 124). However, Sayers’ assertions rely on the notion that the Grimms faithfully and truthfully recorded a clear and ordered folk tale. As the Grimms’ tale itself was an adaptation that “passed through many transmitters, who in turn filtered them through their own social and moral consciousness, their stories—which are only in a very limited sense ‘original’ folktales—are layered repositories of diverse sociohistorical and moral realities” in and of themselves (Haase, 1988, p. 193).

As such, not only is it impossible to determine what the “masses” created but it is impossible to say what “greater truth” the tale represents, with these “truths” changing from adaptation to adaptation. Sayers does correctly dispute the close association Disney claimed his work had with the Grimms’ “Snow White.” Nonetheless, her claims also overlook the inevitable change the tale undergoes as it manifests itself in different media and as it takes shape within different socio-political, socio-historical
and cultural settings. Consequently, Sayers’ criticisms, which strongly rely on arguments of fidelity, only serve to belittle the impact Disney has had on the tale’s evolution and to erase the tale’s complex history.

In addition to critiquing Disney as an “unfaithful” adaptation, the film has also been criticised for its sexist representation of women. As Kay Stone (1975) notes in her article “Things Walt Disney never told us,”

But if the Grimm heroines are, for the most part, uninspiring, those of Walt Disney seem barely alive. In fact, two of them hardly manage to stay awake. Disney produced three films based on Märchen [fairy tales] (‘Sleeping Beauty’ and ‘Snow White’ from the Grimms and ‘Cinderella’ from Perrault). All three had passive, pretty heroines, and all three had female villains, thus strongly reinforcing the already popular stereotype of the innocent beauty victimized by the wicked villainess (p. 44).

Stone blames Disney “for amplifying the stereotype of good versus bad women” and for reducing heroines to pretty, passive objects (p. 44).

Not alone in her criticism of Disney’s heroines, Tatar similarly argues that Disney privileges a masculine imaginary that sees his female characters fail to develop independent or dynamic identities as they assume positions as carers or rewards for men. As Tatar (1992) asserts,

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. When she comes upon the cottage, her first instinct is to clean up the house and surprise them and then ‘maybe they’ll let me stay’ (p. 234).

Where in earlier adaptations the dwarfs are naturally clean, their ability to keep house suggests that the work is not necessarily gender coded. In this way, Snow White’s housework could simply be read as a trade of labour for protection. However, as Tatar (1992) points out, in depicting the dwarfs as naturally messy and Snow White as neat, Disney does away with this possibility, gender coding the work and assessing Snow White “on her singular physical attractiveness” and “on her genius for housework” (p.
In this way, like Stone, Tatar argues that Disney promotes stereotypical images of female roles and values, further confining female characters to passive positions.

The conservative and restrictive representations of women in Disney’s adaptation stands at odds with the sexually charged Betty Boop cartoon. However, as Jill Conway (1971/72) asserts,

In fact the stereotype of femininity which became dominant in the popular culture of the thirties differed little from the stereotype of the Victorian lady except that the twentieth–century American woman had physical appetites which dictated that she could only know fulfillment by experiencing maternity and joyfully adapting to the exclusively feminine world of suburbia. (p. 164)

Although there was of course “intense social activisms of women reformers during these years” (p. 166), Conway asserts that “[…] new ways of behaving [did] not necessarily evoke a new view of the female temperament” (p. 166). Disney’s “Snow White” reflects this entrenched vision of female domesticity and aligns with a more general perspective of female roles in 1930s America.

Though Disney has been heavily criticised for his representations as detailed above, much of this criticism was voiced years after the film’s original release and occurred as Disney’s “Snow White,” dislocated from its historical and cultural period, ceased to reflect the social consensus in periods that actively (sought to) reform(ed) social perceptions on femininity. The attention Disney’s adaptation received within its own period and across subsequent years as it was celebrated and criticised by scholars and critics, highlights the popularity and impact of his version.

The mass viewership and shared cultural memory of this version has deeply impacted the tale’s development, with future adaptations directly referencing, commenting on or engaging with Disney’s telling. A clear example of this can be seen
in Merrie Melodies’ (1943) short cartoon, “Coal Black and De Debben Dwarfs.”\textsuperscript{54} Released six years after Disney’s “Snow White,” this racialised cartoon, targeting a child audience, was produced in wartime America and incorporates many features of Disney’s adaptation. For example, the prince is introduced at the start of the cartoon, the dwarfs kill the queen and Snow White is resurrected with “true love’s kiss.” The adaptation also does away with the queen’s three attacks—singularly harming Snow White with the poison apple—and visually connects the two works by distinctly illustrating one dwarf to look like Disney’s Dopey—though all the dwarfs are African American.

Clearly invoking a cultural memory of Disney’s version, the cartoon attempts to humorously play with audience expectations by providing a postmodern interpretation of the tale. For example, where Disney’s prince wakes Snow White with a kiss, the prince in “Coal Black and De Debben Dwarfs” is incapable of waking her.\textsuperscript{55} In a humorous twist, it is Dopey’s kiss that revives her. In this way, the adaptation’s intertextual references just as readily pay tribute to Disney’s version as they parody its romance and “happily ever after,” drawing attention to the constructed nature of Disney’s ending.

The adaptation is also influenced by Betty Boop. For example, the music, the characters’ clothing and their slang mirror the jazz age. Further, like Betty, Coal Black is also hyper-sexualised and has a developed adult body. She is dressed in revealing clothing and is an object of desire for all male characters. Despite targeting a child audience, Coal Black’s sexuality in the cartoon is more explicit than in the Betty Boop

\textsuperscript{55} During the episode Coal Black is also referred to as Snow White. The two names are used interchangeably.
adaptation, with Coal Black escaping from Murder Inc. (read the huntsman) by covering the Murder Inc. employees with kisses. Shortly after she also kisses all of the dwarfs, who faint while she looks on provocatively (her hands on her waist and her large chest pushed outwards), highlighting her charged sexuality and control over men.  

Where Betty remains in control of her sexuality, Coal Black’s attachments and revival remain reliant on male figures. Even her sexual response and acceptance of Dopey results from his ability to resurrect her with a “hot” embrace. Coal Black, singularly represented by her carnal sexuality, does not reflect the sexual independence seen in the Betty Boop adaptation or the innocence and purity attributed to Snow White in Disney’s and the Grimms’ versions. Alternatively, Coal Black’s sexuality is directly linked to the racialised nature of the cartoon. With all of the characters motivated by their sexual desires and carnal behaviour, the text’s racist framing positions its spectators to read African Americans as undisciplined and erotically charged.

The cartoon also diverges from the Betty Boop and Disney versions by setting the tale in wartime America. For example, rather than going to the dwarfs’ house, Snow White goes to camp (evidently the dwarfs have registered for war). The cartoon also makes reference to killing “Japs” for free, to “refoogies” (refugees), and ends with the prince asking Dopey, “man what you got that makes Snow White think you’re so hot,” to which Dopey replies, “well, that is a military secret.” The cartoon promotes an African American involvement in the military by suggesting that African American men will gain a sexual advantage over the average (i.e., nonmilitary) African

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56 Several of the Merrie Melodies cartoons, including “Coal Black and De Debben Dwarfs” have since undergone censorship. They have been removed from American television and are no longer available for purchase from the Warner Brothers, due to their racist and sexist representations.
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American. 57 Centrally, the cartoon pokes fun at the utopic nature of Disney’s version, promotes an American wartime sentiment, further entrenches racist attitudes and, through its postmodern recycling of images (i.e., the Dopey illustration), points to an increasingly image saturated culture.

Although Merrie Melodies satirically addresses Disney’s “Snow White,” many adaptations have sought to align themselves with Disney, demonstrating how, like the Grimms, Disney centrally shaped the reading, memory and interpretation of the tale in this period. For example, Dell Comic’s 1950’s Walt Disney’s Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs children’s comic book directly labels itself as a Disney adaptation. 58 The comic also replicates the movie’s illustration of characters, and follows a similar narrative development.

However, this adaptation, unfolding on the page across various panels, cuts the film’s musical elements and dance sequences, replacing them with additional scenes and content. Though this change might reflect the challenges of replicating aural music and seamless movement in comics, it also provides an alternative way to expand, reimagine and further solidify the tale’s romantic plotline. For example, while in Disney’s film the couple meet during a musical number, in the comic, the prince meets Snow White while she is talking to her imaginary friend, “Prince Buckethead.” During this extended scene the prince, pretending to be “Prince Buckethead,” speaks to Snow White. When this startles her, he introduces himself and explains that he was on a quest to find her. The scene concludes with the couple recreating a Romeo and Juliet like scene as the prince declares his passion for Snow White as she stands above on a

57 In promoting an African American involvement in the war through a promise of sexual betterment, the cartoon yet again stereotypically reduces the African American identity to a carnal sexuality.

58 Scanned copies of the comic retrieved February 13, 2013 from http://www.michaelspornanimation.com/splog/?p=3296
balcony. Although the comic re-imagines the Disney version by adding several scenes that explore the prince’s love for Snow White, the adaptation does not alter the premise of the romantic storyline, and alludes to the romance in Disney’s version by visually aligning with Disney’s illustrations. Consequently, this adaptation draws to mind, builds on and further solidifies romance as an important element of the tale in this period.

The romance-centred versions detailed above are significant as they develop the prince as a central figure within a “true love” narrative and, as a consequence, alter the catalyst for the women’s conflict. The adaptations’ engagement with romance also exaggerates the queen’s hostile nature, with her violence threatening to destroy the neat social order that Snow White and the prince’s heterosexual love represents. As such, she is placed at odds with both Snow White and wider societal expectations in these tellings.

Like preceding versions the adaptations connect her villainy and moral degradation to her identity as an aged woman, directly linking the queen to the figure of the crone. However, the visual elements of these adaptations give additional depth to the queen’s transition into and embodiment of old age. The 1912, 1916, 1933 and 1937 adaptations visually depict the queen’s transition into old age through the aid of magic. In contrast, the 1943 version parodies the queen’s magical disguise by depicting her as poorly dressed up as a witch/aged woman. Finally, in the 1950 version the narrator states that the queen was disguised as an “old peddler woman”—though the comic’s recycling of Disney illustrations (specifically the queen’s appearance) nonetheless recalls the queen’s magical transformation in the 1937 film.

Whether through magic or costuming, the queen’s aged appearance is disconnected from her person through the knowledge that she is simply disguised.
However, as she dies before transforming back into her former self in the 1937, 1943 and 1950 versions, the final image of the queen as crone in these adaptations roots her character in this identity. In all of these versions her croned appearance is visually coded as monstrous, with her hands claw like (1937 & 1950); and her face wrinkled, spotted with warts and dominated by a large and hooked nose (1912, 1916, 1933, 1937, 1943 and 1950). Her figure, garbed in peddler’s clothing, also connects her to the poverty of a lower class (1912, 1916, 1933, 1937, 1943 and 1950). As an old woman she is thus othered as a witch, as ugly and impoverished. Finally, as her character’s moral degradation becomes intrinsically linked to her physical transformation, the adaptations’ visual representations feed into a social narrative that rejects the older female body as a sight of beauty, progression and moral/social value.

The tales in this section maintain many of the narrative features seen in earlier versions—such as the magic mirror, the potentially dangerous forest, the poison apple and/or the seven dwarfs. Yet, alongside changes to the tale’s romantic focus, the 1912 and 1916 versions reduce the queen’s three attacks to two attacks with a poison comb and apple; the 1937, 1943 and 1950 versions reduce the attacks to one attack with a poison apple; and the 1933 version cuts all three attacks and replaces them with a chase scene. The reduction of the queen’s attacks, though at times related to the brevity of some of the adaptations (such as, “Coal Black and De Debben Dwarfs” and “Betty Boop in Snow White”), occurs in all of these versions as the queen’s scenes are replaced by musical numbers, and/or additional scenes with the dwarfs and the prince.

Each of these adaptations also varies in their narration. In the 1912 and 1933 versions the narration is implicit. Reversely, the 1916 and 1950 versions have an explicit, omniscient third-person narrator (taking shape in on screen text (1916) or in panel captions (1950)), and the 1937 and 1943 versions begin with an explicit,
omniscient third-person narrator and move to implicit narration (Disney’s version opening with a close up of the first two pages of a Snow White story book in which the text-based narrator describes the characters and their conflict, and Merrie Melodies version illustrating the narrator as a mammy telling a young child a story). Where an explicit, omniscient third-person narrator is used, the adaptation draws attention to its folk and literary history. In contrast, the implicit narration largely masks the “storytelling” function found in early fairy tales, directly immersing the spectator in the adaptation’s events and content. The variations between these adaptations points to the versatility of “Snow White’s” narration and its engagement with audiences (a notion further unpacked and explored in chapters 4, 5 & 6).

What remains consistent between these versions and preceding adaptations is a growing tension between two women as an older female recognises her younger counterpart as a threat. Additionally, all of the texts detail and juxtapose the punishment of the older woman and the elevation of her younger counterpart.

As I will explore within the final section of this chapter, “Snow White” continued to evolve in the later twentieth and early twenty-first century as tales accepted, rejected, referenced or re-imagined preceding versions and/or cultural memories of the tale. As such, I will conclude by considering adaptations that took shape after Disney’s interpretation, specifically exploring adaptations that promote a feminist agenda.


This section begins by exploring feminist “Snow White” retellings, considering the work of authors: Donald Barthelme (American), Anne Sexton (American) and Angela
Carter (British). I contemplate how these texts, which were targeted at adult audiences, reshaped the tale and influenced retellings throughout the twentieth and twenty-first century. This section also details texts that perpetuated or aligned themselves with versions from the Grimm and Disney sections of this chapter, contemplating their similarities and differences with early tellings and the feminist adaptations detailed here. Centrally, I explore the tale’s contemporary adaptation into novels, short stories, poetry, video games, television and theatre, and outline where and how different versions of the tale adapted and/or intersected.

The feminist rewritings of “Snow White” in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century undertook the deconstructive process Lieberman called for in her 1972 article (detailed in chapter one). Though not all the adaptations were directly influenced by Lurie and Lieberman’s debate—Barthelme’s (1967) adaptation occurring before the publication of Lurie’s (1970) article—the Women’s Liberation Movements in the 1960s and 1970s influenced all of these adaptations. These “Snow White” tellings differ in their narrative perceptions, representations of character roles, stylistic conventions, plot developments and their representations of feminism. Their “solution” to female repression varies and quite often remains unresolved—highlighting how fairy tales can evade neat conclusions to address complex issues. What unites these works is a shared desire to re-imagine and question reductive female roles and relationships.

The different approaches taken by these adaptations can be identified when comparing Barthelme’s (1967) novel Snow White, Carter’s (1979) short story “The Snow Child” and Sexton’s (1971) poem “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.” Beginning with a consideration of Barthelme’s novel, his adaptation—making use of multiple first person narrators—depicts the dwarfs as the “authoritative” force that inscribes masculine ideals and values onto Snow White’s female body. Each chapter,
dedicated to a different character, details the character’s relationship to Snow White, explains their own troubles and/or outlines Snow White’s perspective, thoughts and feelings. By presenting multiple narrators, Barthelme illustrates Snow White’s fraught relationship with the dwarfs and a larger masculine society, deconstructing the tale’s happy ending.

His novel specifically explores how Snow White is reduced to an object of desire, and how her own narrative (the narrative of “Snow White”) restricts her ability to develop her own sense of self. One way he accomplishes this is by detailing how language constrains Snow White. Snow White exclaims, “Oh I wish there were some words in this world that were not the words I always hear” (Barthelme, 1967, p. 12). Her effort to find her own words throughout the novel highlights the English language as a foreign form, a masculine form, that cannot represent her perspective or her experiences.

When considering Barthelme’s novel Bacchilega (1988) argues that Barthelme dismembers “the voice and authority of the traditional omniscient narrator” (p. 11) and, seeking to “produce disrupting anti-fairy tale effects” (p. 12), questions and exposes “the gap between woman as artistic object in a male-inscribed text and woman as subject of her own imagination” (p. 13). In this way, Barthelme’s novel functions as a postmodern revisionist fairy tale, reflecting Bacchilega’s (1997) assertion that, postmodern revision is often two-fold, seeking to expose and make visible, the fairy tale’s complicity with “exhausted” narrative and gender ideologies, and, by working from the fairy tales’ multiple versions, seeks to expose, bring out, what the institutionalization of such tales for children has forgotten or left unexploited (p. 50)

His novel demonstrates how sociocultural norms and tools contain and constrain female perspectives/experiences. Barthelme tries to break this silence and as Bacchilega (1988) asserts,
[...] seems to delight in showing us what the mirror (because of its allegiance to *bienséance* [propriety] and *vraisemblance* [verisimilitude]) refuses to: from the very beginning of Barthelme’s novel, its readers are exposed to Snow White’s ‘tall dark beauty containing a great many beauty spots,’ those very human spots which the mirror fails to reflect/acknowledge since they would be blemishes on her snow-white skin (p. 13).

Barthelme’s work deconstructs the image of Snow White, and the patriarchal elements seen in many preceding adaptations.

Carter’s (1979) short story, “The Snow Child,” similarly seeks to deconstruct the image of woman as understood in a masculine imaginary. However, unlike Barthelme, Carter does not give Snow White a voice, nor does she directly present a clear and defined feminist argument. Where Barthelme seeks to undermine the authority of the narrator by incorporating multiple first-person narrators, Carter reinstates the traditional omniscient third-person narrator, whose detailing creates one-dimensional characters that are provided with little space for development.

Drawing on elements of the Grimms’ 1822 version (Zipes, 2013), Carter relates how the Count, rather than Snow White’s mother, wished the child into being. In Carter’s version the Count’s desire for the child becomes the source of the Countess’ jealousy—situating male desire at the epicentre of female conflict. Though the young girl is a rival for the Countess and an object of desire for the Count, the child remains void of an identity. Thus when the Count rapes the child after her death, the narrator’s factual description of the event and the queen’s indifference, highlights the child’s position as a constructed (rather than a feeling flesh and blood) being. Both female figures are treated as replaceable objects, whose fates are controlled by the will of the Count. The ending of Carter’s tale positions the audience to contemplate the Count’s treatment and creation of the two women by revealing them as the constructed products

59 The child is not raped by the Count in the Grimms’ version. Alternatively she is left in the forest where the dwarfs find her.
of masculine desire.

Sexton’s (1971) poem “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” also questions how the tale constructs and represents female identities and roles. Her poem merges past tellings of the tale, such as the Grimms’, with a contemporary third-person narrator who makes reference to 1970s popular culture. For example, while the poem includes common narrative features such as the three attacks from the queen, and the queen’s final death by hot iron shoes, the narrator also refers to Snow White as being “full of life as soda pop” (p. 7), indicates that Snow White’s eyes were “as wide as Orphan Annie” (p. 8), and reveals that the queen’s iron shoes were presented to her “in the manner of red-hot roller skates” (p. 9). In addition to modernising the tale, the poem’s inclusion of popular culture references enables Sexton to connect past representations of women to the twentieth century, highlighting women’s continued repression and stereotyping in this period.

Sexton (1971) begins her poem with the concept of the virgin. Encouraging her reader to interpret the virgin and Snow White as social constructs, her poem explores the perpetuation and preservation of the angel/devil woman in popular culture. Sexton uses the angel/devil stereotype to demonstrate how a masculine imaginary privileges youth and beauty, revealing, how like the queen, Snow White is doomed to become the devil woman as she ages. This transformation is evidenced when the narrator states, “Meanwhile Snow White held court, / rolling her china-blue doll eyes open and shut / and sometimes referring to her mirror / as women do” (p. 9). In detailing Snow White’s newly established power as well as the attention she pays to her appearance, the poem links Snow White to the queen and her corruption, revealing the women as one and the same.

The connection Sexton draws between the women reveals that it is not Snow
White’s “innate” goodness that makes the angel woman so pure and desirable but her beauty and sexual desirability in youth. The two characters’ shared fate betrays the injustice of these roles, and encourages a rethinking of the characters’ in terms of their changing bodies, experiences of growth and ageing, and the ideological significance of their inclusion/exclusion from society.

Barthelme, Carter and Sexton all deviate from one another in terms of style, format (i.e., novel, short story and poem), narration and conceptual approach. However, these texts all seek to deconstruct the representation of women as objects. They explore how such representations restrict and constrain the development of strong female characters and similarly argue that these representations simply reveal “woman” as an imaginative being, inscribed on by masculine desires and perceptions. While only looking at three versions from this period, these adaptations represent the deconstructive process many feminist retellings in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s attempted to undertake (see Haase, 2004 & 1988; Bacchilega, 1988; Zipes, 1987 for further discussion and examples). These tellings influenced and shaped feminist adaptations into the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century, signalling a shift in the tale’s focus as it was used for feminist sociopolitical purposes.

Evidence of this shift can be seen in contemporary adaptations such as Delia Sherman’s (American; 1995) poem “Snow White to the Prince” and Polly Peterson’s (American; 2000) poem “The Prince to Snow White.”60 Sherman’s poem, explores the politics of female growth and ageing, and contemplates how ideals of female beauty isolate mother from daughter. While she aligns her work with nineteenth century

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tellings in terms of plot, where these early adaptations cast Snow White as voiceless,

Snow White’s first person narration in Sherman’s poem gives her increased agency. For example, when contemplating the queen’s attack Snow White states,

Do you think I did not know her,
Ragged and gnarled and stooped like a wind-bent tree,
Her basket full of combs and pins and laces?
Of course I took her poisoned gifts. I wanted
To feel her hands combing out my hair,
To let her lace me up, to take an apple
From her hand, a smile from her lips,
As when I was a child. (lines 50–7)

In voicing her own experience and understanding of the queen’s attack, she complicates her relationship with the queen, as the welcomed violence highlights her desperate desire for motherly affection and re-imagines their division as one of loss.

Rather than accrediting their division to simplistic notions of female vanity, Snow White’s exploration of their changing relationship in the poem explicitly roots their conflict in a sociocultural order that sees the older woman replaced by a younger counterpart. This becomes evident when Snow White states

I was fourteen, a flower newly blown,
My mother’s faithful shadow and her joy.
I remember combing her hair one day […]
I looked up from my handiwork and saw
Our faces, hers and mine, caught in the mirror’s eye.[…]
She frowned a little, lifted hand to throat. […]
I saw what she had seen: her hair white-threaded,
Her face and throat fine-lined, her eyes softened
Like a mirror that clouds and cracks with age;
While I was newly silvered, sharp and clear.[…]
Forty may be fair; fourteen is fairer still.
She smiled at my reflection, cold as glass,
And then dismissed me thankless. (lines 17–40)

Connecting their conflict to age specific signifiers, Sherman (1995) makes the links between beauty and youth, and vulnerability and ageing explicit. In concretising the characters’ ages at 14 and 40, Sherman notably increases Snow White’s age, defines what 40 looks like—the queen greying and wrinkled—and assigns female ageing to a
specific time in life, creating a symbolic “sell by” date. In this way, Sherman draws the politics and capital of female beauty directly to the surface, identifying societal ideals of youth and beauty, and ageing and decay as a cultural construct that prevents female bonding and isolates women from each other.

Responding to Sherman’s (1995) poem, Peterson (2000) considers how the prince shapes Snow White’s relationship to her mother. In investigating the prince’s role and romantic function, Peterson draws together the nineteenth century tellings Sherman explores with the romantic storylines found in the 1912, 1916 and 1937 adaptations. The linking of these versions enables Peterson to re-consider the women’s relationship in connection to the romantic elements commonly associated with the tale since the early twentieth century. Where Sherman’s poem highlights the inevitability and misfortune of the women’s division, Peterson’s prince, functioning as both the narrator and the gage by which female beauty is measured, highlights how his symbolic control over the women shapes their relationship.

The prince “reassures” Snow White that she will be reunited with her mother, but only when their own daughter, who he identifies as more beautiful than Snow White, usurps her. In this way, the prince’s desires and ideals of beauty dictate the social position and relationships the women can have with each other and in society. Aligning with Sexton (1971), Peterson (2000) identifies Snow White and the queen as one and the same, and links their fates by identifying how the inevitable process of ageing and a masculine privileging of youth threatens the female characters’ power and erases their already limited autonomy.

Like Sherman (1995), Peterson (2000) ascribes ageing to a specific age, stating “the mirror told your mother, / at forty, / what she already knew, / not in her heart, / but in her spleen. [...] She was the fading flower —” (lines 8–20). Not even halfway
through a woman’s life cycle, both poems cast women’s lives after 40 as a process of decline. While, as detailed in chapter two, the post-menopausal body is depicted as a declining body in popular culture, because post-menopausal women are usually in and around 50, both poems prematurely age the queen. In so doing, the poems draw attention to the early ageing women undergo in contemporary popular culture and society.

However, where Sherman (1995) ascribes this injustice to a faulty social system more generally, Peterson’s (2000) text specifically connects this representation to a male dominated social order and a popular culture romanticisation of romance. She emphasises the prince’s manipulation and control over Snow White’s “destiny” through the guise of romance when he asserts,

\[
\text{Did you think that I found you by chance, Maiden?}
\text{Did you believe}
\text{I was drawn to your crystal casket,}
\text{like a hummingbird to its nectar,}
\text{by the allure of ruby lips,}
\text{the gaze of azure eyes? (lines 1–7)}
\]

Peterson’s prince, positioning himself as the symbolic figure of power to which the women are bound, suggests that his relationship with Snow White was not a product of chance or true love, but of his making. In drawing attention to the fallacy of romantic thinking, the prince implies that Snow White was ignorant of the forces (i.e., masculine forces) that shaped her life and relationship to her mother. The poem implies that this ignorance has constrained the female characters and prevented the development of their power and autonomy, with both characters—unable to recognise each other as victims of the same symbolic order—misplacing their antagonism.

These poems, written in a period marked by post-feminist culture and its obsession with youth, age evasion and sexual “empowerment,” draw on feminist
rewritings from the 1970s to make explicit, the at times implicit connections between youth, beauty and power, and ageing, decay and death. In exploring the psychological and emotional impact of female ageing, both poems label contemporary ideals of beauty and/or romance as an inhibitor to the maintenance and development of strong female bonds. Seeking to engage an adult (feminist) audience, these adaptations identify Western’s society’s post-feminist obsession with youth and beauty as the source of female antagonism. The poems’ re-examination of “Snow White” gives additional depth to one-dimensional and static characters, and reflects an increased interest in the representation of female fairy-tale characters as psychologically complex figures.

Though many feminist revisionary works were created from the mid 1960s into the twenty-first century, the popularity of the Disney and Grimm versions persisted and continued to influence contemporary adaptations. As such, in 2001 Disney’s *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was adapted into a video game for the Game Boy Color. The game, targeting a child audience, follows Disney’s plot development, showing images from the movie as the game progresses. It also has Snow White collecting different items like music notes, flowers and butterflies. After the successful collection of specified objects, the player plays a mini game such as “repeat the melody,” “catch the flying plates,” “find the matching cards” or “align the picture.” Although there are dangers in the game in the form of bats or logs, as the princess, the player must avoid the conflict. It is only as a dwarf that the player can break objects or kill enemies in their path. Consequently, the game emphasises female passivity by forcing the player to take on a meek role while playing as the princess, and an active/aggressive role when playing as the dwarfs. The game ends with the queen “falling away,” Snow White being
woken by a kiss from the prince, and a “match the object” game.61

There have also been several television and theatre productions that use Disney’s iconic images such as Snow White’s dress and haircut, references to Prince Charming, and the individuated personalities of the dwarfs. Television productions such as The Charmings (America; 1987) and The 10th Kingdom (Britain, Germany and America; 2000), and theatre productions such as Beach Blanket Babylon (San Francisco; 1974) and Snow White (Toronto; 2012), humorously thrust characters from the fairy world into contemporary society or transport present day characters into the archaic fairy tale realms. These productions, which could only be called adaptations in the loosest sense, tell new stories about Snow White, rather than adapting and incorporating features of the tale’s plot. Nonetheless, these productions, targeted towards family audiences, demonstrate a continued interest in the tale and its characters. While they poke fun at the old-fashioned nature of the tale, and more specifically Disney’s adaptation, they often do not question the values found in Disney’s tale and in many ways reinforce gender divides by casting ideal female characters as dutiful mothers and wives.

In a broad sense, though many early versions of the tale presented implicit social messages, twentieth and twenty-first-century adaptations became increasingly self-conscious, actively questioning the representation and constructed social order in earlier versions. Thus where nineteenth century adaptations help to construct a recognisable plotline, and the early twentieth century introduced a romantic storyline, this period redirects the tale by complicating the characters’ psychological profiles, their sociopolitical environments and by encouraging increased reflexivity.

61 Game play videos Retrieved June 20, 2014 from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgPRqlwMeA and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4XCwEmKgdTY
**Conclusion**

This chapter in no way covers all of the adaptations that have been produced since the seventeenth century. It does however detail various versions of the tale—highlighting significant narrative shifts and exploring the tale’s adaptation across different periods, cultures and societies.

These adaptations share many narrative features, motifs and characters such as the magic mirror; the request for Snow White’s heart, lungs and/or liver; the queen’s three attacks; the poison apple; the prince; the huntsman; and the seven dwarfs. Yet, these elements are not consistently depicted in all versions. As such, while they can be connected to the tale, they are not at the core of the narrative. The adaptations also vary in their representation of childhood, female maturation and ageing—leaving Snow White’s and the queen’s age ambiguous; depicting Snow White as an adult female and the queen as a crone; or specifically marking Snow White’s physical (sexual) maturation at the age of 7, 12, 13 or 14 and the queen’s ageing at 40. Finally these tales are inconsistent in their representation of character roles. Although many adaptations depict the queen as a villain, Snow White as an angel and the prince as the hero, these roles are at times reversed or complicated. What remains consistent between versions and at the core of “Snow White” is the antagonism between two women, as a younger and an older woman assume oppositional roles as they grow and age.

My subsequent chapters will analyse the representation of this antagonism within early twenty-first-century Anglo-American “Snow White” adaptations, specifically unpacking how the tale’s core plays out within a Western contemporary context and investigating how it finds continued resonance in post-feminist culture and discourses. The detailed history provided in this chapter, enables me to identify these adaptations based on their shared core. It will also help me to isolate aspects of the tale
that can be attributed to its history, from changes to the storyline that may be related to
the interplay between “Snow White” and its adaptation in different media. As such, in
the remainder of this thesis, I will examine the bilateral relationship between the tale’s
enunciation in different media and the stories about growth and ageing these
adaptations tell.
Chapter Four
Female Growth and Ageing on Screen in Film Adaptations of “Snow White”

In this chapter, I demonstrate how female growth and ageing are represented in film adaptations of “Snow White,” using Tarsem Singh’s (2012) Mirror Mirror and Rupert Sanders’ (2012) Snow White and the Huntsman (hereafter The Huntsman) as case studies. Specifically, I detail how the films’ engagement with genre, star brandings, and representations of time, temporality and ageing work in conjunction with the tale’s core when addressing/representing female ageing onscreen and within a contemporary Western context.

As discussed in chapter one, in adaptation studies scholarship on film primarily contemplates the adaptation of literature into film. As Christine Geraghty (2008) notes, this comparative practice has led to claims about an adaptation’s “success” or “value,” and judgments about the capability of different media. In considering the adaptation of “Snow White’s” core, rather than a specific and singular work, this chapter evades a comparison study between two media (i.e., literature and film) or between so-called “original” and adapted content. It does not pass judgment on the success of these “Snow White” adaptations in relation to preceding works or to each other. Alternatively, building from Linda Hutcheon’s (2006) and Geraghty’s (2008) exploration of adaptations as autonomous works, I unpack the different avenues for adaptation Mirror Mirror and The Huntsman facilitate.

considered the role fairy tales play in the production of early films,\textsuperscript{62} the incorporation of fairy–tale motifs, symbols and tropes in contemporary films (whether the films announce themselves as fairy tales or not),\textsuperscript{63} fairy–tales in nationalist cinema,\textsuperscript{64} and the incorporation of post-feminist ideology into contemporary fairy–tale films.\textsuperscript{65}

Yet, despite this research, as Greenhill & Jill Terry Ruby (2014) and Zipes (2015) note, by and large fairy–tale scholars and folklorists have given little attention to fairy tales in film, with Zipes (2015) asserting,

Although there has been an awakening among scholars in the field of folklore, fairy–tale studies, and cinema studies, who have produced numerous significant essays and a few books about fairy–tale films, this development is still limited to a small group of critics (pp. xi–xii).

While Zipes calls for further research into fairy–tale films, his own work demonstrates scholars’ fraught relationship with the filmic medium. Describing Hollywood fairy–tale productions as hackneyed clichés (Zipes, 2010 & 2015), his description epitomises the dominant perception in fairy–tale studies that mass–mediated fairy tales are products with reduced subversive potential and depth (see Zipes, 1988, 2010 & 2015; Haase, 2008). Such reductive interpretations largely explain the limited scholarship in this area.

As I believe these criticisms encourage a dismissal of popular culture and undermine the potentially insightful research that could be done on commercial fairy–tale adaptations whether they are subversive or not, I will illustrate how contemporary, mass–mediated “Snow White” films provide a rich and productive space to explore complex themes, stereotypes and ideological understandings of female growth and ageing. Centrally, this chapter contributes to the growing research on fairy–tale films by moving beyond value judgments about a fairy tale’s subversive potential to detail the

\textsuperscript{62} Zipes, 2011; Moen, 2013
\textsuperscript{63} Greenhill & Matrix, 2010; Lury, 2010; Bacchilega, 2013; Short, 2015
\textsuperscript{64} Bacchilega, 2013; Zipes, Greenhill & Magnus-Johnston, 2015
\textsuperscript{65} Greenhill & Matrix, 2010
possible readings these films facilitate; to critically investigate the process by which stereotypes and reductive representations of women are perpetuated, evaded or complicated; and to unpack the tensions and complex socio-cultural norms at work in a given text.

Following an outline of *Mirror Mirror*’s and *The Huntsman*’s plot, my analysis is split into three sections. First, I detail the generic conventions each film draws upon. I explain how this engagement contributes to a reading of the queen’s ageing body and to the tone and mood of events/happenings in each film. The second section, illustrates the relationship between the actresses’ star brands and the characters’ roles as growing and ageing women, unpacking the characters’ identities in terms of “Snow White;” in relation to dominant perceptions of ageing in Hollywood; and in connection to the vilification and erasure of the older woman that has increasingly played out in post-feminist discourse and popular culture since the 1990s. The final section demonstrates how issues of time, temporality and ageing play out onscreen. I assert that the films’ stories, editing, dialogue, subject positioning and use of CGI/digital ageing collectively disconnect female ageing from a measured, time-bound process, arguing that the aged woman functions as a spectre, haunting the queen and mirroring the paradoxical hyper-visibility and invisibility of the aged woman in post-feminist popular culture.

This chapter primarily focuses on the queen, detailing how narratives of female ageing unfold in each film. This focus reflects the significant time and attention given to representations of female ageing in both films as well as the complex ways that narratives of female ageing take shape through the queen’s lived experiences, her reflections on ageing and the visual coding of her body. Further, as both films actively engage with post-feminist norms and values, these texts provide the opportunity to explore how discourses of ageing at times take shape in relation to post-feminist
discourse, a discourse that is perceived to have little to say about ageing (Whelehan, 2013).

**Film Overviews**

*Mirror Mirror* is a fantasy hybrid, drawing on aspects of romance, adventure and comedy. Rated PG (NA) and U (UK), the film explores the conflict between the innocent and beautiful Snow White (Lily Collins) and the wicked yet loveable queen (Julia Roberts) after Snow White learns that the queen has bankrupted the realm by living a life of luxury. The film, making use of a double plotline, begins by exploring the women’s conflict as Snow White attempts to usurp the queen and as the queen tries to kill Snow White. The second plotline centres on Snow White and the queen’s rivalry for Prince Alcott’s (Armie Hammer) affection. The film concludes with the death of the queen, and Snow White and Prince Alcott’s marriage.

As a fairy–tale adaptation the film creates a sense of wonder through its depiction of magic and fairy–tale elements—turning characters into bugs and monsters; transforming the kingdom’s landscape from summer to winter and winter to summer; and placing men under love spells. *Mirror Mirror* also reaffirms its fairy–tale status by visually aligning with Disney’s contemporary live-action fairy–tale production *Enchanted* (2007)—with both films beginning with an animation that explains the characters’ origins and incorporating small aspects of animation in the live action. This animation, alongside *Mirror Mirror*’s use of bright colours, elaborate sets and ornate costumes, adds to the romance and artifice of the film.

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66 Cast lists for both films’ can be found in Appendix B.  
67 An example of this is seen when a glint of animated light flashes off the characters’ teeth when they smile.
In catering to a child audience, the film masks the violence and/or emotional upset that might otherwise be associated with the tale. For example, while *Mirror Mirror* incorporates fight scenes, by providing longer takes and showing no death or blood on screen the film slows down and reduces the intensity of action scenes. Further, by rendering the combat fantastical through the use of acrobatics and slapstick humour, the film affirms the artificial and staged nature of its violence. Of the two deaths that do occur, the death of Snow White’s mother is animated—the cartoon figure disappearing peacefully under dark water—and the queen’s death occurs off screen, symbolically represented by the cracking of her mirror. In this way, the film softens the traumatic aspects of these happenings by distancing the characters’ deaths and the scenes’ violence from real world outcomes and experiences.

Finally, *Mirror Mirror* establishes a lighthearted tone by aligning with aspects of the screw-ball comedy. The film makes use of body humour (with characters discovered semi-nude) and gross out humour (as bird’s poo is smeared on the queen’s face). The film also parodies violence as characters are boxed in the head or kicked from behind in an exaggerated manner that leaves them unharmed and marks the exchange as humorous. This engagement with comedy distances the film from darker elements found in preceding versions (as discussed in chapter 3).

Though, like *Mirror Mirror, the Huntsman* is a fantasy hybrid, it deviates from *Mirror Mirror*’s tone by incorporating aspects of the action-adventure genre and targeting a teen audience. Rated PG13 (NA) and 12 (UK), the film explores the conflict between Snow White (Kristen Stewart) and the queen (Charlize Theron) after the queen discovers that Snow White’s heart will make her immortal and forever youthful. Escaping from the queen’s prison and pursued by the queen’s men, Snow White is
Chapter Four: Film Adaptations

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aided by the huntsman (Chris Hemsworth), the dwarfs,\(^{68}\) and her childhood friend William (Sam Claflin). Together they seek to deliver her to the safety of duke Hammond’s (Vincent Regan) castle. On the journey she witnesses the plight of her people and ravaged state of the land. The film draws to a conclusion after Snow White unwittingly eats the queen’s apple and upon awakening leads an army to war against the queen. The final scenes depict the queen’s death and Snow White’s coronation.

*The Huntsman*’s narrative trajectory recalls the action-adventure genre as it reflects Peter Krämer’s (1998b) consideration of the action-adventure film. He states,

> the story typically revolves around a series of physically threatening tests and trials for the protagonists, in which they quite frequently get hurt, even seriously injured, often losing control over the situation for extended periods of time, before they finally manage to triumph over their adversaries by beating or killing them. (p. 601)

In addition to the apparent narrative overlaps, the film also incorporates common attributes of the action-adventure genre such as excessive stunts, action/battle scenes, depictions of violence, spectacular explosions and rapid editing. In mirroring the action-adventure genre, *The Huntsman* sets higher stakes for the characters. Where preceding “Snow White” adaptations primarily confine the tale’s conflict to a struggle between the two women, the film’s battle scenes and the spectacular nature of the warfare draws in a larger story world. With the fate of civilised society rather than simply Snow White at risk, the film extends the tale’s central conflict beyond the private sphere into the public.

Finally, where *Mirror Mirror* engages with the fantastical, *The Huntsman* is rooted in the supernatural. The queen is the central supernatural figure with her character stopping hearts, transforming into other characters or crows, forming a magical dark army and sucking youth from young and beautiful women. Her ability to

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\(^{68}\) Ian McShane, Bob Hoskins, Ray Winstone, Nick Frost, Eddie Marsan, Toby Jones, Johnny Harris, Brian Gleeson
regenerate casts her as otherworldly, with her powers disrupting and muddling linear expectations of ageing. Unlike *Mirror Mirror*, which makes playful use of magic, the queen’s supernatural and violent nature, and the film’s quick editing and depiction of blood, violence and death onscreen sets a dark tone.

**Genre and Female Ageing**

Writing from a literary and folkloric background Zipes (2011) identifies the fairy–tale film as a subgenre of the literary fairy tale. However, while *Mirror Mirror* and *The Huntsman* both adapt “Snow White,” as fantasy hybrids their variant engagement with fantasy (*Mirror Mirror* & *The Huntsman*), comedy (*Mirror Mirror*) and action-adventure (*The Huntsman*) genres separates them in terms of tone and style. Reflecting Hutcheon’s (2006) assertion that a change in genre can create wholly different interpretations of a story/tale, fairy–tale films can be read independently of a literary tradition as their alignment with film genres creates different spaces for tales to unfold.

Considering fairy–tale films Katherine Fowkes (2010) asserts that fairy tales are a strand of the fantasy tradition. According to Fowkes (2010) “one of the hallmarks of the [fantasy] genre” is the way it fundamentally breaks with a sense of reality (p. 2). Fairy tales, with their temporal dislocation, incorporation of mythical creatures and/or magic, and their tendency towards wish fulfilment (as discussed in chapter one and two), provide the narrative strands, characters and motifs to support the ontological rupture characterised by fantasy. However, while these narrative components account for fairy tales’ association with fantasy, an understanding of how fantastical elements are represented through film aesthetics—such as costume, makeup, décor, CGI and landscape—can clarify how the fairy–tale films explored in this chapter further draw on fantasy when pronouncing, constructing and reaffirming not only their otherworldliness
but the nature of their difference. With this in mind, I will demonstrate how each film constructs a fantasy-based story world that centres on artifice, temporal disengagement and/or a break from the “real.”

In *Mirror Mirror* hyperbolic costumes and makeup (i.e., brightly coloured oversized dresses (Figure 4.1 & 4.2); costumes that mimic animal forms (Figure 4.3 & 4.4) or inanimate objects such as chess pieces (Figure 4.5); brightly dyed and elaborate wigs (Figure 4.1 & 4.2); and florescent makeup (Figure 4.1)) draws immediate attention to the film as artifice and marks it strikingly as camp. This open, at times ironic, playfulness and theatrical style contributes to the film’s family friendly tone by inviting the spectator’s shock and amusement, and promising an ostentatious retelling full of spectacle, humour and wonder.

*Figure 4.1 Extras’ hyperbolic costumes, Mirror Mirror.*
Figure 4.2 Extras’ hyperbolic costumes 2, *Mirror Mirror*.

Figure 4.3 The baron dressed as tortoise, *Mirror Mirror*. 
Figure 4.4 Extra dressed as stag, *Mirror Mirror*.

Figure 4.5 Extras dressed as chess pieces, *Mirror Mirror*.

However, the costumes serve an additional role as they muddle the film’s engagement with time and place. When interviewed about the making of the costumes, costume designer Eiko Ishioka stated,

Tarsem and I decided the basic concept is hybrid classic so I can use a hint of the source from 16th century to 19th century and plus Eiko’s “Art Nouveau” and Tarsem freedom vision. So all cooked together is a special stew. (Ishioka, *Mirror Mirror* DVD extras, 2012)

Ishioka’s descriptions are reflected in costumes that incorporate elaborate collars, frills, clothing styles and wigs that were popular throughout the 16th to 19th century (see
Perrot, 1994; Delpierre, 1997; Cumming, Cunnington & Cunnington, 2010; Picken, 2013).

These costumes contribute to the film’s ahistorical quality, particularly when cuts and styles from the 16\textsuperscript{th} to 19\textsuperscript{th} century—robe à la française (Mid to late 18\textsuperscript{th} century),\textsuperscript{69} robe à la polonaise (late 18\textsuperscript{th} century),\textsuperscript{70} robe à l’anglaise (Mid and Late 18\textsuperscript{th} century),\textsuperscript{71} the trunk hose (16\textsuperscript{th} & 17\textsuperscript{th} century),\textsuperscript{72} and habit à la française (Early to late 18\textsuperscript{th} century & early 19\textsuperscript{th} century)\textsuperscript{73}—are paired with vibrant and diverse colour pallets, and elaborate geometric and floral print fabrics reminiscent of 1960s textiles (Figure 4.1 & 4.2). The characters’ extravagant and playful costumes while paralleling and mimicking aspects of the “real” world, displays a self-conscious disinterest with the “real” that seemingly liberates characters from the socio-cultural expectations of any given society, time or place (a notion I complicate and further explore below).

Like \textit{Mirror Mirror}, \textit{The Huntsman} further aligns with fantasy by both referencing and breaking from real world expectations. Using CGI to incorporate fantastical creatures such as trolls, dwarfs and fairies, the film goes a step further to make the story world both familiar and strange by anthropomorphising and augmenting the natural world. For example, in the forest Sanctuary (the home of the fairies) flowers are revealed as a cluster of butterflies (Figure 4.6), mushrooms have eyes (Figure 4.7),

\textsuperscript{69} This dress has characteristically enlarged and heightened hips. The sleeves come to the elbow, ending in gathered flounces, and the front edges of the over-dress are decorated “with puffs or with pleated bands stitched on in straight or wavy lines, or intertwined. The petticoat was frilled” (Delpierre, 1997, p. 16).

\textsuperscript{70} Characterised by extravagant folds and pleads at the back of the dress, this outfit has a shortened petticoat which stops at the ankles (Delpierre, 1997).

\textsuperscript{71} This dress is characterised by its bell shape skirt, a panel of “pleats stitched flat at the top and waist and flowing freely in the skirt[,]” and sleeves that fit tightly to the forearm (Delpierre, 1997, pp.16 & 21). This dress was based on the English’s more relaxed style of clothing.

\textsuperscript{72} These breeches balloon around the thighs coming tightly into the knee (Cumming, Cunnington & Cunnington, 2010)

\textsuperscript{73} This outfit consists of a three piece waist coat, breeches and stockings (Delpierre, 1997)
and plants respond and move in a seemingly conscious manner—rising slowly up the screen in response to Snow White’s movement through the forest (Figure 4.8).
Figure 4.6 Butterfly sequence, *The Huntsman*.

Figure 4.7 Mushrooms with eyes, *The Huntsman*. 
The Huntsman’s wondrous and surreal story world also takes on darker tones when in the dark forest. In this space, tree branches move and/or appear to be snakes (Figure 4.9); dark hooded figures rise from the earth (Figure 4.10); and vampiric-like creatures burst forth from trees (Figure 4.11). While these occurrences establish the dark forest as a threatening space, the spectator’s impaired sensory experience during this sequence further defines the space as otherworldly. This occurs as acoustic sounds are slowed down and echoed, temporal perceptions are distorted—with the scene’s sequencing at times slowed or quickened—and as the camera moves in and out of focus. In inhibiting the ability to make sense of the space the film provides a reminder of its distance from the real and from a measurable understanding of time and place.
The scene’s colour palates and lighting are muted, primarily using grays and blacks (Figures 4.9–4.11). Not only does this reinforce the dark forest’s menacing nature, but this colouring, set in striking contrast with the light and vibrant colour tones of the forest Sanctuary (Figures 4.6–4.8), situates the two locations in opposition. This division, further reinforced by establishing shots that use lush forests and blackened land to distinguish each environment (Figure 4.12), creates a story world centred on dichotomies such as light and dark magic; life and death; good and evil; and morality and immorality. These contrasting environments and their varying engagement with fantasy symbolically create expectations for a story world detached from the (moral) ambiguity of the “real” world.
Figure 4.9 Branches appear as snakes, *The Huntsman*.

Figure 4.10 Hooded creatures rise from the earth, *The Huntsman*. 
Figure 4.11 Vampiric creature bursts from tree, *The Huntsman*.

Figure 4.12 The storyworld’s divided geography, *The Huntsman*.

The contrasting tones and aesthetics of each film, while in part stemming from their variant engagement with fantasy, is reinforced through their alignment with comedy or action-adventure, with characters’ identities and roles taking shape in relation to these genres. For example, in reflecting aspects of the screwball comedy, in *Mirror Mirror* the queen is framed as eccentric and positioned as a source of comic relief. Although she is villainous, evident by her repeated attempts to kill Snow White, Roberts’ performance undermines the serious and deadly intentions behind the queen’s request and actions.
For instance, when her servant, fulfilling the role of the huntsman, (mis)informs the queen that he has killed Snow White, her excitement and happy exuberance stands at odds with the serious, cold hearted and indifferent villainy of the queen in preceding versions. Since, as Geoff King (2002) asserts, comedy arises from the “departure of a particular kind—of particular kinds—from what are considered to be the ‘normal’ routines of life of the social group in question” (p. 5), Roberts’ divergence from the evil queen in preceding versions incites humour through the use “of similarity with difference” (King, 2002, p. 16). Her comedic attributes enable the film to reimagine the queen beyond her one-dimensional and static role as a villain in earlier works. Yet, as I will demonstrate, this comedic role does not distance *Mirror Mirror*’s queen from the motivations and fears that often attend her character (as detailed in chapter three). Alternatively, her humorous behaviour and eccentricities draw further attention to her fear of ageing and of being replaced by a younger woman.

According to Roger Sale (1978), in early versions of the tale the queen’s obsession with beauty and desire for power were neither sources of pleasure nor linked to sexual feelings. Alternatively youth, beauty and sexual attractiveness provided a means for the queen to maintain her social position and power. In *Mirror Mirror* the queen’s power and social (economic) stability similarly relies on her ability to attract a wealthy suitor. However, *Mirror Mirror* diverges from preceding texts as the queen’s obsession with youth and beauty becomes a means to fulfil her sexual desires. As a consequence the film incites humour as *Mirror Mirror*’s queen is coded as a hypersexual cougar.

Using Roberts’ age as the film’s primary source of humour, the film relies on stereotypical and regressive representations of female ageing and the older female body, reaffirming the notion “that audiences are only receptive to older women stars when
they play their age for laughs” (Jermyn, 2014, p. 41). While, as noted above, the film’s fantastical framing distances the story from a specific and identifiable time and place, as I will demonstrate, in more specifically attaching the queen’s fear of ageing to her sexual desires, her sexuality associates her with the potentially rampant sexuality of the (post-)menopausal woman (as detailed in chapter two), engaging with ideologically laden and stereotypical representations of female ageing in contemporary Western (post-feminist) popular culture and discourse.

The film initially pokes fun at female ageing during a conversation between the queen and her mirror. When first introduced, her mirror states, “I am after all merely a reflection of you, well, not an exact reflection, [(whispering)] I have no wrinkles,” the queen gasps and replies “They’re not wrinkles, just crinkles.” The mirror’s hushed voice, and the queen’s exaggerated shock and attempt to deny ageing by renaming her wrinkles reaffirm a post-feminist framing of signs of ageing as taboo. However, as Roberts does not show the “tell tale signs” of ageing, her skin wrinkle and crinkle free, the playful exchange and the queen’s discomfort facilitates both a straightforward and camp reading, one in which female ageing is a point of criticism and mockery before ageing has even left its marks, and one where the stereotypically fearful female is mocked for her apprehension about ageing before having actually aged (explored further in section 3).

The film furthers these antipathetic sentiments by aligning ageing with illness. Undergoing a beautification process referred to as “the treatment,” the scene’s use of medical signifiers, such as Baker Margret’s nineteenth–century nurse’s outfit, frame the treatment as a “corrective” medical procedure. Described as “extreme,” the treatment is clearly unpleasant, with the queen expressing discomfort as bee stings are used to enlarge her lips, snakes are used to tighten her stomach and birds’ poo is used to cleanse
her skin. The attention given to her bodily changes highlights how “medical”
procedures and body ‘maintenance’ are used to reverse physical signs of ageing and
artificially replicate “markers of youth.” For example, after a bee stings the queen’s
lips, her lips swell (Figure 4.13 & 4.14). Paired with the sound of a balloon being blown
up, the visual and aural framing emphasise her transformation and visually separates the
physical attributes of ageing women (thinner lips) from younger women (fuller lips) by
providing close-up shots of her transitioning form.
Figure 4.13 The queen’s lower lip fully swollen/enlarged, *Mirror Mirror*. 
With cosmetic surgery not only “accepted, but also embraced as an essential part of the fight against ageing” in Western post-feminist contemporary society (Fairclough-Isaacs, 2014, p. 144), the scene’s excess and camp sentiments provides a parody of the cosmetic industry, ridiculing and mocking its societal embrace by casting it as extreme while at the same time drawing attention to the relatively minor improvement the queen achieves (Figure 4.13 & 4.14). Yet, rather then providing a space to reexamine Western society’s obsession with (perpetual) youth, the scene in fact mimics dominant narratives that cast cosmetic surgery and the older woman as equally abject.

There exist two dominant and contradictory narratives surrounding the age related beauty industry. On the one hand women are “routinely praised for ‘fighting the battle’ with age by embracing the surgical technologies available to them” (Fairclough-Isaacs, 2014, p. 144). However, at the same time, “[f]emale stars are […] vilified as extreme versions of abject plasticity” (p. 144). With the identification of women who have undergone cosmetic surgery or been airbrushed now becoming a sport, such women are identified and rendered as abject for refusing to “act their age” (Whelehan, 2013).
The scene’s mockery of the cosmetic industry reflects this scrutiny and judgment by inviting the audience to bear witness to the queen’s artificial transformation, by rendering her and the process as abject through the use of “gross out” humour, and by subsequently drawing attention to the prince’s perception/reception of her as an older (i.e., sexually unattractive) woman. In this way, the film, drawing upon a post-feminist rhetoric of ‘proper’ and ‘improper’ body maintenance, opens the space for critical allegations of “age passing” (see chapter two). The queen is thus doubly scorned as her ageing body is framed as undesirable, while her attempts to retain youth are presented as ridiculous (if not impossible). In this way, the scene reflects the mockery and scorn seen in Hollywood, and post-feminist popular culture more generally when older women fail to (properly) masquerade as younger than they really are.

The queen’s failed masquerade is particularly apparent as she attempts to “sweep this kid [the prince] off his feet.” In pursuing a man who she identifies as significantly younger than herself, she positions herself as a cougar, “a term [used] to describe an older woman who seeks out and dates younger men” and who is “preoccupied with their image, sexually predatory and afraid of ageing” (Jermyn, 2014, pp. 10–11). However, as the prince is unreceptive to her advances, his perception and the film’s framing of her further aligns her with the monstrous and abject sexuality of the (post-)menopausal woman.

A prime example is when the queen attempts to seduce the prince over lunch. Leaning forwards and extending her hand across the table, the queen begins to propose marriage to the prince (Figure 4.15). Reflecting the way gender is performed through the body (see Butler, 1988, 1990 & 2004), the queen’s physical agency and direct address masculinises her character while simultaneously feminising the prince. The
prince’s feminisation is evidenced as he is forced into the princess role (See Propp, 1968)—becoming the sought-for person and potential reward for the queen—and as he is positioned as the recipient of the queen’s attention and advances, with the stereotypical gender roles of a heterosexual marriage proposal reversed.

Figure 4.15 The queen leans forwards to propose, Mirror Mirror.

In doubly feminising the prince and assuming a dominant position, the queen draws attention to the performative nature of gender. Since gender “is created through sustained social performances, […] the performative aspect of gender is concealed” as the body consistently conforms to gender coded cultural signifiers (Butler, 1988, p. 528). When the queen’s performance breaks from heterosexual “norms” and expectations, her gendered performance becomes apparent and is labeled as transgressive. Reflecting Judith Butler’s (1988) assertion that “[p]erforming one’s gender wrong initiates a set of punishments both obvious and indirect” (p. 528), the queen’s gendered performance is met with disdain, particularly as the prince remarks, “I don’t think we’re really the same age.”

His assertion draws attention to her failed performance of youthful femininity, her misplaced sexual attention and reduced sexual value as an older female. The prince’s rejection paired with her forward behaviour sees her regressively coded as the archetypal predatory and masculinised (post-)menopausal woman described by
Jeannette King (2013; see chapter 2) and in this way engages with stereotypical perceptions of female ageing in contemporary Western popular culture and post-feminist discourse. This framing invites the spectator to find amusement in her stereotypical performance and delusional behaviour. In this way the film’s engagement with comedy sees the queen reimagined as her humorous eccentricities draw attention away from her villainy. Nonetheless, as her behaviour still centres on her fear of ageing and as the film’s humour focuses on her reduced capital as an older woman, the queen’s motivations and fears continue to find resonance with the preceding versions detailed in chapter three and with the youth obsessed post-feminist culture detailed in chapter two.

Like the queen in Mirror Mirror, in The Huntsman the queen is a transgressive figure. However, here the queen and her experience of ageing are not played for laughs. Alternatively, she assumes a threatening, supernatural identity, reflecting the tendency of action-adventure films to confront the protagonist with “human, natural, or supernatural powers that[,] hav[ing] improperly assumed control over the world” the protagonist must overcome (Sobchack qtd. in Neale, 2004, p. 9). As I will demonstrate, the film roots her improper assumption and use of power with her aversion to ageing. In so doing, Snow White, as the protagonist, must not only overcome an adversary, but must confront and rid the story world of the monstrous woman who, by refusing to age, disrupts the laws of the natural world.

The Huntsman puts female ageing at the forefront of the film as the queen repeatedly asserts that as a woman ages, she loses power and is doomed to be replaced. Her assertions engage with Western society’s pathologisation of ageing (as discussed in chapter 2; also see Whelehan, 2013), with the queen attributing her failed or weakened

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74 I will return to this argument in section two where I consider a possible camp reading of this scene.
magic to her ageing state. The film also exaggerates the fragility of her aged body by holding it in contrast with the strength and health of her youthful form. For example, as seen in figure 4.16, the queen’s naked back, golden and unblemished with muscle and fat covering her ribs and spine, points to the health of her body. In contrast as she ages her skin grays and her body becomes frail and weakened, with her spine and ribs protruding from her emaciated form (Figure 4.17).

Where her youthful body is well lit in a bright and open space, and surrounded by milk, which further brightens the room (Figure 4.16), her aged body is depicted in a darkened room (Figure 4.17), with the light centralised on her back and the window before her. Although there are candles in the room, they fail to light the space, giving the darkness a physical presence, which begins to press in on her (particularly from the right side of the frame). The darkness symbolically points to her growing nearness to death, and, in so doing, exaggerates a narrative of ageing as decay and decline. Further, in figure 4.16, despite her nakedness, the queen continues to wear a crown. Her crown serves as a reminder of her social position and power as a ruling queen. In contrast, in figure 4.17 the crown is noticeably absent, symbolising her weakened state. In this way age is not only connected to physical decay but to declining power.

*Figure 4.16* The queen’s youthful body, *The Huntsman.*
The queen’s fear of ageing becomes monstrous as she sucks the life out of young beautiful girls and women to retain/regain her youth and power. For example when the queen is first depicted rejuvenating onscreen she stands holding a girl by the neck, consuming her life force through her open mouth (Figure 4.18). With her jaw hyperextended the queen looks abnormal and supernatural. Her ability to lift the girl with one hand also highlights her strength, power and distance from humanly norms. She is thus visually aligned with the figure of the witch, mirroring movies such as *Hocus Pocus* (1993) and *Stardust* (2007) where witches regain their youth by sucking the life force from young people.
In addition to feeding on young women, her character also brings death to the natural environment and spoils the kingdom. This is evident through the contrasting appearance of the kingdom and landscape before and during her rule (Figures 4.19–4.25). Prior to the queen’s introduction and the king’s death, fertile lands surround the kingdom (Figure 4.19)—evidenced by the abundance of growing and healthy wheat and the surrounding vegetation. The local village is heavily populated with cheerful and well-dressed people, their homes and streets are clean and well cared for, and the women’s baskets and men’s carts are full, highlighting the village’s economic prosperity (Figure 4.20). The castle is also a vibrant space, with its courtyard featuring a blooming apple tree (Figure 4.21). All three locations are well-lit, colourful and welcoming spaces.
In contrast, under the queen’s rule, the kingdom begins to decay, symbolically represented by a fallen apple and small flowers that rapidly die and rot before becoming...
blackened, as seen in figure 4.22. Paired with this sequence, the scene’s narrative voice-over directly links this decay to the queen stating, “so poisonous was the rein of Ravenna [the queen] that nature turned on itself, people turned on each other, the land died and with it hope.” Reflecting this statement the film further emphasises the devastation of the queen’s rule by providing contrasting shots of the surrounding land, village and castle courtyard (Figures 4.23–4.25).

As seen in figures 4.23 and 4.25 the surrounding land and castle courtyard have blackened and decayed. The lighting in both locations is dark and overcast, further emphasising the queen’s repressive power. The village is also in disrepair with the brightly painted houses chipped and grayed, the road muddy and the people poorly clothed and hostile (Figure 2.24). The village’s population is significantly reduced and there is no sign of trade or commerce. Like the rest of the kingdom, the lighting in this location is overcast and dark, creating an ominous contrast with its former state.
Figure 4.22 Nature’s death after queen takes over kingdom, *The Huntsman.*
The queen’s supernatural abilities mark her as a threat to the natural world, civilised society and a passive, nurturing and domestic femininity. It also further defines
the nature of the queen’s villainy. Though, as detailed in chapter three, the queen is often described as a witch in preceding versions, in giving her character the power to rejuvenate by consuming other characters’ life force and the ability to poison the land and kingdom, the queen becomes a larger than life figure, disrupting the natural order by manipulating life and death. The older woman is cast as parasitic, reflecting a post-feminist framing of the older woman as a bad woman, anti-role model, and a figure of calculated deceit (see Negra, 2009). In aligning with the action-adventure genre, which works in dichotomies of good against evil, the film rationalises its abject depiction of the older woman and her eventual demise by further entrenching the queen in a villainous role.

Situated in different story worlds, one inclined towards comedy and artifice, and the other towards violence and the struggle of good against evil, each film’s engagement with different genres creates drastically different tones and story worlds. The films’ environments enable variant representations of the queen and her character to take shape. Nonetheless, both films reinforce and reiterate dominant narratives that derogatorily depict the ageing and aged older woman. Building from this contextualisation, I will outline how ideas of stardom and perceptions of ageing in Hollywood feed into a reading of both the older woman and her younger counterpart in the films and in relation to “Snow White.”

Stardom and Ageing in “Snow White”

As Brian McFarland (1996) asserts (and as discussed in chapter one), the conditions of the film industry during production play an important role “in shaping any film adaptation or not” (p. 21). Included in these conditions is the effect of star personas on the production, reading and reception of a film (McFarland, 1996).
Hollywood stardom, as a cultural and commercial phenomenon, occurs as an actor assumes a ‘picture personality’ that his/her films are sold and marketed around (McDonald, 2013). While star performances “are deemed to rely on actors simply being themselves” (Geraghty, 2008, p. 5), Christine Geraghty (2008) argues that in adaptations the gap between characters (as depicted/described in (a) preceding version(s)) and actor “allows for a performance to be seen” and the actor’s skill to be exhibited (p. 5). However, as I will demonstrate, when adapting tales such as “Snow White,” where the characters are largely one-dimensional and the sheer number of versions inhibits a clear and singular reference point for the actors to draw upon, star performance and a star’s life-cycle enact ways of sense making. To demonstrate I will begin by briefly considering how the actresses’ star personas have taken shape before exploring how their brands feed into and further code the characters’ roles and identities as growing and ageing females.

Likening stars to brands, Paul McDonald (2013) asserts that a star branding is “a symbolic vehicle used to create a set of impressions deployed in selling a particular film experience” (p. 41). As the star is not the figure lurking behind the text but the identity produced through a collection of media texts, the star is not the product but a means to conceptualise and sell the product (in this case, the films; McDonald, 2013).

Considering the Roberts brand McDonald (2013) asserts that it “was formed around successive enactments of feisty sweetness, playing characters who are kind, amiable, friendly, considerate, pleasant and delightful, while equally determined, strong-willed, brave, energetic and (politely) aggressive” (p. 254), while Susanne Kord and Elisabeth Krimmer (2005) describes her roles as “a hodgepodge of vulnerability and innocence on the one hand and omnipotence fantasies on the other” (p. 18). She is most commonly associated with the romantic comedy (despite having acted across
various genres), with *Pretty Woman* (1990), “Roberts’s earliest—and ultimately most successful—commercial hit,” largely defining her brand (McDonald, 2013, p. 256).

In *Mirror Mirror* the Roberts brand serves as a marketing tool (Figure 4.26 & 4.27). She appears on the DVD cover alongside Collins, with the prominent caption “Julia Roberts” reaffirming her centrality and importance to the film (Figure 4.27; I analyse the film cover further below). The film trailer also principally featured Roberts (IMDb, 2015b), dedicating significantly more time to her scenes and lines. Though in the actual film Roberts’ character receives less screen time than Collins, the marketing contextualises the film in relation to Roberts’ brand identity with promotional images that draw attention to Roberts’ departure from her traditional role, establishing her character as “One Bad Apple” in the film (Figure 4.26).

![Figure 4.26 Mirror Mirror promotion image, IMDb.](image)

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75 Roberts is featured for 38 minutes and 45 seconds, and Collins is featured for 59 minutes and 25 seconds
With Collins’ brand largely undeveloped and unestablished, having only starred in three films in supporting or secondary roles prior to the release of *Mirror Mirror*, the importance of Roberts in terms of the film’s economic and commercial success is apparent. Yet, as I will demonstrate in the second half of this section, Roberts’ star branding and both actresses’ star life-cycles serve an important narrative function as the “Snow White” tale and the film’s branding functions as a metanarrative for the experience of older female stars in Hollywood.

In contrast to *Mirror Mirror*, *The Huntsman* incorporates two female leads with established star brands. Although the actresses differ in their on-screen personas they have been similarly cast in roles about psychologically, emotionally and physically traumatised women and in films that address death, rape, emotional traumas and socially conscious subject matter. In terms of persona and branding, Theron’s corresponds with her own rise to stardom and traumatic childhood. Growing up in South Africa, at fifteen Theron witnessed “her mother shoot and kill her alcoholic father when he threatened to kill them both” (Silva & Rousseau, 2013, p. 78). After a stint of
modelling, Theron took a temporary break from the industry and moved to New York to pursue a career as a ballerina. However when faced with a knee injury that ended her career, she moved to LA to pursue a job in the film industry. As Kumarini Silva & Danielle Rousseau (2013) note, “having never finished high school, with $400 and a tattered suitcase[...] she stayed at an hourly rental hotel overlooking the Hollywood sign until a chance encounter at a bank introduced her to an agent” (p. 78).

This dark Cinderella story is mirrored by her various films, with Theron often playing a beautiful but traumatised female who takes charge of her situation by directly confronting either her traumatic past and/or present. Even in her breakout performance as Aileen Wuornos (Monster, 2003) when her beauty was hidden (through the use of costume, makeup and an altered physicality), “[t]he reviews focus[ed] almost exclusively on the esthetic transformation undergone by Charlize Theron” (Cavanagh, 2013, p. 245). As her altered appearance became “a popular culture fixation” (p. 241), and comparisons were drawn between Theron’s and Wuornos life, her role in Monster reinforced her brand identity, with future films continuing to draw specific attention to the interplay between her characters’ beauty and troubled situations.

In terms of genres, Theron is associated with dramas that have dystopic environments/elements/themes, such as The Astronaut’s Wife (1999), Head in the Clouds (2004), Monster (2003), North Country (2005), Aeon Flux (2005), In the Valley of Elah (2007), Sleepwalking (2008), The Road (2009) and Mad Max: Fury Road (2015). The violence and often grim settings are set at odds against her beauty and the whiteness of her complexion. Her appearance thus serves to heighten the social

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corruption in her films and often visually stands at odds with the degraded environment that symbolises her films’ dystopic themes.

Stewart’s brand centres around her plainness, slightly hostile demeanour, awkward and halted style of line delivery, and tomboyish attributes. Having entered Hollywood as a child star, Stewart’s break through performance as an adult occurred in 2008, playing Bella Swan in *Twilight*—a character known for her plainness, low self-esteem and anti-social behaviour. In the *Twilight* saga (2008–2012) Stewart’s character grapples “with the constraints and pleasures of her inevitable womanhood, including the passion and heartbreak of heterosexual love relations” (Jones, 2011, p. 440). Her character struggles with a fear of ageing and is consumed with desire for a lover, who has been described as controlling and domineering (see Silver, 2010).

Stewart’s onscreen branding has primarily portrayed her as an emotionally struggling outsider. While her most notable role has been in the *Twilight* series, which draws on romance and fantasy genres, like Theron, throughout her career she has been primarily cast in dramas that deal with difficult social issues such as rape, prostitution, criminals/victims of war, substance abuse, dysfunctional families, illness and female ageing in Hollywood. However, where Theron’s films largely engage with dystopic environments/aspects of society/societies, Stewart’s films draw specific attention to muddied and complex social systems and relationships.

The casting of Theron in *The Huntsman* establishes expectations for the adaptation’s dystopic tone. Thus it is unsurprising that the queen’s castle is in a state of decay, with the natural world seemingly dead and the people starving and disfigured.

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The desolate nature of her realm is further reinforced through the use of black and gray colour tones and muddied/dirty landscapes. Theron’s queen is beautiful, and emotionally and mentally unstable, and Stewart’s Snow White is unconventionally plain, dirty, slightly aloof, physical and tomboyish. Evidently, rather than displaying their skills as actresses, their stardom adapts, reimagines and/or further defines the characteristics of both the queen and Snow White.

The impact of star branding on the characterisation of the queen and Snow White is particularly evident when considering Theron’s physical appearance in the film. When casting Theron Sanders (2012) remarked,

> When we met Charlize, instantly, you know, obviously we knew most of her work and and were very excited that she was interested in the project and when we met her we went to a Dior shoot where she came out kinda six foot four in heels with this big goal Lanvin dress on and we were all like, you know let’s do this. (Sci-Fi Talk TV, 2012)

Sanders’ statement suggests that Theron’s appearance during the shoot enabled him to envision her in the role, and that it was a motivating factor in her casting. It is thus unsurprising that the film at times mimics the stylisation of the Dior adverts.

For example as seen in figures 4.28–4.30 the adverts have a very limited colour palate, using black, gold and silver as the predominant colours. Theron’s dresses incorporate metallic beading and plates that at times appear silver and at other times reflect the gold tones of the surrounding space. Similarly, the queen wears extravagant dresses that incorporate metallic beading and plates (Figure 4.31); her scenes incorporate gold, black and silver tones; and when looking in the mirror her reflection takes on a golden hue (Figure 4.32). Further, in many of the adverts gold liquid or flowing gold fabrics surround Theron. This imagery is repeated in the Huntsman as the mirror-man emerges from the queen’s mirror as liquid gold (Figure 4.33). The parallels between the film and the Dior adverts bring Theron’s connection to the beauty industry
to mind, shaping the queen in relation to Theron’s brand and situating the character within a contemporary paradigm of beauty and fashion.

*Figure 4.28 J’adore Dior 2011 advert, Dior.*

*Figure 4.29 J’adore Dior 2012 advert, Dior.*
Figure 4.30 J’adore Dior 2014 advert, Dior.

Figure 4.31 The queen’s silver-plated dress, The Huntsman.

Figure 4.32 The queen’s golden reflection, The Huntsman.
Figure 4.33 The mirror-man’s emergence from the mirror, *The Huntsman*.

Though the actresses’ star brandings help to contextualise how the “Snow White” tale and characters are adapted and the films’ tones established, an examination of the stars’ life-cycles provides an avenue to explore representations of female ageing in these films. According to Kathleen Woodward (1999) and King (2013) the symbolic marker of female ageing is fifty. Yet, in the youth obsessed culture of Hollywood, “Hollywood’s rare band of female leads reach a glass ceiling during their early 30s” (McDonald, 2013, p. 274). Where their male colleagues continue to be cast, often in romantic relationships with younger women, the older female actresses get increasingly secondary roles until they disappear (McDonald, 2013).

For women, age is both under constant erasure and relentless scrutiny in Hollywood and post-feminist culture/discourse (see Whelehan, 2013; and Negra & Homes, 2011). As Woodward (2006) notes,

> In our mass-mediated society, age and gender structure each other in a complex set of reverberating feedback loops, conspiring to render the older female body paradoxically both hypervisible and invisible. It would seem that the wish of our visual culture is to erase the older female body from view. The logic of the disappearing female body would seem to be this: first we see it, then we don’t. (p. 163)

This paradoxical (in)visibility plays out in both “Snow White” adaptations as Roberts’ and Theron’s star life-cycles, arcing into decline, mirror the queens’ struggles with
Beginning with an exploration of Roberts’ star life-cycle, I will now explore how Roberts’ performance in *Mirror Mirror* is linked to her identity as an ageing star.

Roberts first obtained star status in 1990 with her role as Vivian in *Pretty Woman*. Though her brand faced some short-term dips, from 1990–2009 “Julia Roberts was indisputably the period’s most valuable female screen asset” (McDonald, 2013, p. 254). However, in 2000 at the age of 32 Roberts entered “the ‘mature’ phase in the star life-cycle,” whereupon, “according to the commercial and symbolic logics of Hollywood stardom, her time at the top would end sooner rather than later” (McDonald, 2013, p. 274).


While there are multiple reasons for her waning brand, such as her scandalous affair and marriage to Daniel Moder in 2002, her two-year hiatus after the birth of their twins in 2004 and, more generally, the diminishing box office sales for star films in the decade following 2000 (see McDonald (2013) for further discussion), as McDonald...

When considering representations of the female grotesque Kerry Mallan (2000) notes,

The female body as grotesque spectacle is a mark of excess: too much make-up, outrageous clothes, loud laughter, and behaviour which flaunts the limits of physicality, sobriety and sexuality. By transgressing the norms of femininity, the female grotesque refuses the limits imposed on her body and embraces the ambivalent possibilities such transgressions offer. (p. 26)

Roberts, who is known for her mouth and smile that are just a little too big and her laugh that is just a little too loud, already flirts with excess. However, as the film draws upon a camp sentiment, a style of performance that “cherishes the grotesque, manifesting ‘a love for the exaggerated, the “off,”’ which is expressed partly, Sontag argues, in camp taste’s sentimental relationship to the past” (Morey, 2011, p. 113), Roberts’ character moves beyond the sobriety of femininity.

Her embodiment of the female grotesque is entrenched in her performance of a hyper and transgressive sexuality. As evidenced in my description of the queen’s proposal in section one, her active pursuit of the prince and forward behaviour upsets gender relationships as she is masculinised. Her carnal sexuality is further emphasised throughout the film as she unconsciously voices her desire for the partially nude prince in two scenes. Her behaviour becomes a source of humour and mockery as the prince seeks to shield his body from her eyesight. The rejection of Roberts’ character as a
mutually attractive figure, while marking her sexuality as transgressive, denies her body as a sight of beauty and sexual attractiveness, and in this way reflects the early “ageing” female actresses are seen to undergo in Hollywood.

Where the above analysis provides a straightforward reading of Roberts’ character, because the film’s camp sentiments are rooted in self-conscious performance, the masculisation of Roberts’ character in both instances facilitates a dual reading of the scenes, one in which Roberts as the older woman (both in terms of her star life-cycle and character role) is cast as “other” and one in which Roberts as brand, and flesh and blood woman is distanced from the monstrous identity of the ageing evil queen. Roberts’ self-conscious performance as she diverges from her brand identity could thus be interpreted as a reminder that she is “playing” the queen and that her star performance has not relied on her simply being herself.

As outside of a Hollywood context Roberts is still relatively young, having not yet reached the symbolic age of 50, her distance from the character she personifies initially appears to soften the film’s critique and mockery of female ageing, with the film poking fun at a stereotype rather than a real or visually identifiable ageing/aged woman. Yet, in establishing this distance between Roberts and the figure she enacts the film denies a visual space for the older female. In this way, the older woman is doubly scorned as a straightforward reading sees her mocked and criticised, and a camp reading casts her into invisibility, reflecting the hyper-visibility and invisibility of the aged women in post-feminist culture more generally.

The film further participates in dominant discourses of Hollywood ageing and a post-feminist idealisation of youth as the “Snow White” tale accommodates a narrative about the symbolic passing of the torch from an ageing female star to her young replacement. As discussed at the start of this section, at the film’s release Collins had
only begun to establish her career, while Roberts’ was in a state of decline. The film,
marketed around the Roberts brand, initially seemed to cast Roberts as the lead and
central character. This was reinforced through the queen’s opening monologue, where
she asserts that the story is about her and not Snow White.

However as the film progresses with Collins receiving more screen time,
assuming the role as the central love interest and heroine, and triumphing over the
queen, Roberts is increasingly cast as secondary. Clues to Roberts’ position within the
film are also evidenced in the film’s packaging (Figure 4.27). For example, though
Roberts is featured on the DVD cover, she is physically positioned behind Collins and
appears to be looking at Collins from the corner of her eye. Roberts’ gaze and
positioning directs attention away from herself and alternatively casts Collins as the
focal point of the DVD cover, anticipating Collins’ position as the central protagonist in
the film.

The film also reorganises the actresses’ roles and dominance by casting Collins
in the feisty but sweet role that Roberts traditionally occupied. In so doing, Roberts
gives way to the younger actress. The film facilitates Collins’ appropriation of the
Roberts brand by emphasising her character’s freshness and nearness to puberty (i.e.,
her nearness to innocence). This is visually accomplished as Collins’ character
transitions from a child’s dress (Figure 4.34) to the more adult fighter outfit (Figure
4.35). When first introduced to Snow White in live action she wears a satin, pink bodice
and yellow skirt that is covered in decorative flowers and vines of blue and green. Her
hair, which is down, has been pulled off her face, and clipped at the back. The outfit
and her hair fashions her as undeveloped, using the bodice to flatten her chest, the pink
fabric and flower embroidery to highlight her immaturity (i.e., her sexual innocence)
and her partially drawn back hair to emphasise her child-like youth.
Her transition out of childhood takes shape through a costume change. Dawning the fighter outfit, the costume emphasises her sexual identity by incorporating a blue, black and skin coloured bodice that reveals her figure. This outfit, void of flowers, emphasises her growing sophistication by alternatively decorating the bodice with skin coloured thistle leaves. While ultimately the sexual maturity of the fighter outfit separates her from her child role, as this change is accomplished via a makeover montage rather than the slow and chronological passing of time, her character’s newfound maturity is not significantly distanced from her youthful identity at the beginning of the film. In this way, her character retains her innocence while also exploring her feisty independence as she learns to fight and strives to regain her kingdom.

Figure 4.34 Snow White’s child’s dress, Mirror Mirror.
Snow White’s nearness to puberty is also emphasised through her developing sexuality as she falls in love with the prince and has her first kiss. In emphasising that Snow White has not been previously kissed, the film reaffirms her virginal status as a young woman and accentuates the idealisation of youthful femininity that so commonly features in post-feminist popular culture texts. The character’s developing sexuality and virginity can be seen to parallel Collins’ own career trajectory, as her newness to Hollywood frames her as virginal within industry terms (i.e., a relatively blank canvas (in terms of brand identity) and a new screen asset). This framing puts her and her character in opposition to Roberts, whose declining star status and older character role—the queen having already married 5 times—significantly distances her from puberty, and its associated virginity and youth. In addition to drawing on and enabling a narrative of age friction that, as Negra (2009) notes, characterises so many post-feminist texts, Collins’ and her character’s freshness enables her to adopt the hodgepodge of vulnerability and innocence portrayed by Roberts in her early years. In this way, the “Snow White” tale and the characters themselves can be read as a metanarrative for the
life-cycle of female stars in Hollywood and post-feminist culture more generally, as an older actress is replaced by a younger model.

The adaptation might have presented a space to criticise Hollywood’s treatment of ageing female stars. However, the film’s self-conscious engagement with the Roberts brand and its straightforward and camp representations of “Snow White” offers a totalising account of the socio-cultural phenomena of ageing as decline, as secondary and othered to the youthful, future full and fertile (i.e., virginal) female body and young actress, and in this way speaks to and reinforces the already dominant privileging of youth in post-feminist culture and rhetoric.

Like *Mirror Mirror*, *The Huntsman* represents the queen as the female grotesque. Her character, like Roberts’, transgresses against the norms of a passive femininity, marking her as other while attaching her strangeness directly to her ageing status. However, where *Mirror Mirror*’s queen’s transgressive behaviour is tied to her hyper heterosexuality, in *The Huntsman* the queen’s grotesque behaviour is linked to her consumptive acts and violent conduct. In addition to feeding on other women, the queen is depicted eating the hearts from dead birds (Figure 4.36). Using claw-like instruments on her fingers, the queen pierces the bird’s heart, removing it from its chest and eating it. The claw-like instruments are symbolic of her monstrous nature, pointing to the abnormality of her character, while the gruesome image of the dead birds frame the queen’s consumption as repulsive, casting her as other. This sequence is connected to her fear of ageing as it is later revealed that Snow White’s heart (an innocent heart) will bring her youth and immortality. In eating birds’ hearts, a similar notion is brought to mind, suggesting that this consumptive act is linked to her constant pursuit of youth and beauty.
Like many of Theron’s characters, the queen is psychologically damaged, with her identity as a grotesque woman rooted in her psychological fear of ageing. This fear mirrors Sadie Wearing’s (2007) assertion that in Western culture ageing for women has been understood as trauma. The links between ageing and trauma in the film become apparent when the queen ages on screen (Figure 4.37). In this sequence, the queen, sensing that her brother is in trouble, attempts to use her magic to save his life. As she does so, she begins to wither in pain. Rolling onto her back, widening her eyes and gasping in anguish, she begins to age on screen through the use of digital ageing and a prosthetic. Unable to sustain the connection between herself and her brother, she allows him to die in order to preserve herself. Looking spent as she lies shocked on the floor, her brother’s death and the painful nature of her transformation perpetuates and engages
with contemporary narratives of female ageing as trauma by interconnecting these physical and emotional traumas with her now aged state.
Within the film, Theron’s character continuously moves between youth and old age. With Theron’s own career trajectory at age 37 showing signs of decline with an increasing number of secondary or subsidiary roles in films such as *In the Valley of Elah* (2007), *Battle in Seattle* (2007), *Sleepwalking* (2008), *The Burning Plain* (2008), *Hancock* (2008), *The Road* (2009), *Astro Boy* (2009), *Prometheus* (2012) and *A Million Ways to Die in the West* (2014), her character parallels her career trajectory, as the queen is haunted by the weakness and death that accompanies the figure of the ageing woman. In constantly moving Theron between youth and old age, her character is both young and old. This depiction has resonance with Theron’s star life-cycle as having not
yet reached 40 but having already reached Hollywood’s glass ceiling she is, paradoxically, physically young but in Hollywood terms an older actress.

Although Theron’s embodiment of the queen as a decaying, ageing woman mirrors her star trajectory and in this way reflects Roberts’ similar treatment in Hollywood, as Stewart already has an established brand, the film does not replicate the symbolic passing of the torch seen in Mirror Mirror. Alternatively, The Huntsman, reflecting the action-adventures genre’s tendency to work in dichotomies, places the actresses’ star personas and characters in opposition.

The young but natural Stewart is put at odds with Theron’s beauty. In casting actresses whose brand identities centre around their appearances as either beautiful or plain women, the contrast between their image, paired with the queen’s supernatural beauty in the film serves to heighten the constructed nature of the queen’s image. Further, as Snow White is connected with nature and renewal in the film, with the dwarfs describing her as “life itself,” Snow White’s purity exaggerates the abnormality of the queen’s youthful masquerade and further entrenches her in a transgressive identity (further explored in the next section). In this way, the “pureness” of Stewart’s appearance paired with the “goodness” of her character elevates her over her older co-star. This elevation mimics the scorn and judgment of women in Hollywood and Western post-feminist media more generally who fail to “age well” by either successfully and “naturally” masking their ageing status or by slipping into invisibility to allow younger women to take their place (see Whelehan & Gwynne, 2014; Fairclough-Issacs, 2014; Rawitsch, 2014; Whelehan, 2013; Negra, 2009; Gill, 2007b). In this way, both Mirror Mirror and The Huntsman perpetuate narratives that idealise youth through the ridicule of ageing females, through generational conflicts and through the casting of older female stars in these roles.
In my next section, I will consider how female growth and ageing plays out onscreen, unpacking how the films’ use of time and representation of temporality works in conjunction with representations of female ageing.

**Female Ageing Onscreen**

Reflecting fairy tales’ temporal disinterest, both adaptations deny the time bound and temporal experiences of chronometric ageing. The films accomplish this by using CGI, digital ageing and editing to rapidly age the queen, and dialogue and framing to present the aged woman as a spectral, cinematic and socio-cultural construct. As I will demonstrate, by entrenching the aged woman in narratives of invisibility and death, her haunting facilitates a nuanced exploration of the generational tensions between female characters in *Mirror Mirror, The Huntsman* and “Snow White” more generally.

To begin I will first consider how the aged woman emerges and is established as a spectre before outlining the symbolic role this figure plays in both films. In *Mirror Mirror* the aged woman is first brought to mind when the magic mirror insinuates that the queen has wrinkles (as detailed in section one). As a close-up of Roberts’ face reveals the mirror’s remarks as unfounded, the image of the aged woman does not make a visible appearance. Alternatively, she is established as a looming fear. In this way, like a spectre she is simultaneously invisible and visible, presenting as an object of thought and a potential reality.

Similarly, shortly after the queen’s first appearance and marriage to the king in *The Huntsman*, attention is drawn to the aged woman despite her visual absence. The queen states,

I was ruined by a king like you once. I replaced his queen, an old woman. And in time I too would have been replaced. Men use women. They ruin us and when they are finished with us they toss us to the dogs like scraps. When a woman stays young and beautiful forever the world is hers.
The queen’s contemplation of female ageing and degradation brings attention to the aged woman, and establishes the fate of this figure as instrumental to the queen’s life and worldview. Her speech frames the aged woman as a constant and resounding presence, and liberates the figure from time and place, situating her across three temporal planes—that of the past, through the body of the old woman the queen replaced; that of the present, through the queen’s present tense account; and that of the future, through the queen’s consideration of their potential for a shared fate.

Like many ghost narratives, a haunting is, as Bliss Cua Lim (2001) asserts, not merely instances of the past reasserting itself in a stable present, as is usually assumed; on the contrary, the ghostly return of traumatic events precisely troubles the boundaries of past, present, and future, and cannot be written back to the complacency of a homogeneous, empty time. (p. 287)

In breaking the aged woman from the constrains of time and place, the queen’s account of her history and the traumatic experiences of ageing women gives life to this figure, enabling her to take conceptual shape even when she is denied a bodily, temporal presence.

The aged woman has no voice or space to define her life or identity. She alternatively takes shape through the queen’s fear and perception of her, becoming a figure of the queen’s own making. The queen gives power and life to the spectre by allowing this figure to guide and inform her actions and identity throughout the film. As her fear, pity and rejection of the life and fate of a preceding generation sees her assume an oppositional identity and role as a perpetually youthful woman, the queen’s monologue highlights a generational tension similarly played out between herself and Snow White. Consequently, the haunting presence of the aged woman moves the tale’s conflict away from a rivalry between two women, and extends the conflict across various generations (an argument evidenced further below).
In both films the aged woman has increasing presence as she lurks behind and begins to surface in the queen’s appearance. For example, in *Mirror Mirror* the queen’s rejuvenation during “the treatment” (as discussed in section one) gives further definition to the aged woman as the idealised attributes of youth the queen obtains (i.e., full lips, cleansed skin/even complexion and tightened stomach) alludes to the contrasting characteristics of ageing the queen has erased/sought to evade (thinned lips, uneven skin and loose stomach). In this way, while the aged woman is physically absent from the scene, by defining the queen’s youthful transformation as a means to combat ageing, the scene is haunted by the identity and image of the aged woman.

A similar process is seen near the film’s conclusion when the queen uses a crank and her servants’ full force to tighten her corset, announcing “I knew I was the same size” after they finally get the wedding dress from her youth to fit. The sequence draws attention to her delusional perception of her body and her attempt to contain her ageing form. As seen in figures 4.38 and 4.39, the camera repeatedly cuts between the mechanism used to tighten the queen’s corset, the open corset, Baker Margaret’s struggle to close the corset and the queen’s frazzled appearance: her hair askew and face reddened and pained. In repeating this sequence twice, and concluding with both characters exhausted and the corset still open, their struggle serves as a reminder of the queen’s distance from her youth.
Figure 4.38 Struggle to tighten corset, *Mirror Mirror*. 
Figure 4.39 Struggle to tighten corset 2, *Mirror Mirror*. 
Nonetheless, at the very moment that the aged woman seems to make a physical appearance, surfacing through the queen’s body, the scene sees the ageing body and thus the aged woman contained, with a male servant using his full force to turn the mechanism and close the corset (Figure 4.40). In corseting the queen, she is artificially returned to the frame and shape of her younger self. Although the image of her body prior to its corseting is hardly grotesque, the force used to corset her—the queen pulled sharply backwards with the strength of the servant’s final exertion—points to the aged woman’s growing dominance, with her presence in the film becoming increasingly difficult to confine and erase.
Where in *Mirror Mirror* the aged woman remains largely invisible, in *The Huntsman*, she has increased onscreen visibility as the queen moves between youth and increasingly aged states. Like *Mirror Mirror*, the queen similarly seeks to mask her ageing/aged form. However, unlike *Mirror Mirror*, as the queen repeatedly becomes aged, the aged woman doesn’t simply lurk behind her character but functions as a repeated emergence from within.

The first time the queen ages, she is shown inspecting wrinkles at the corner of her eye. A close up shot further reveals her age marked skin and a slight puckering of the lips (Figure 4.41). Through a conversation with her brother, the queen connects her use of magic to her aged state:

Finn: “Magic comes at a lofty price”
The queen: “And the expense grows”
Finn: “you look”
The queen: “old”

Having recently healed herself after a stabbing, the film implies that her use of magic drains her of youth. However, just as magic ages her, her consumptive acts enable her to regain a youthful state. As described previously, she quickly reverses her aged appearance by sucking the youth from a young girl (Figure 4.18). In contrasting her aged image at the start of the scene (Figure 4.41) with her regained youth at the end of the scene (Figure 4.42), the film disconnects her movement between different age
brackets from time, alternatively enabling her to leap frog through and between different age categories.

In altering her age on screen through the use of digital ageing and prosthetics, the sudden alteration to her appearance denies ageing as a slow and natural process. For example, when she tries to save her brother from death, she rapidly ages on screen into old age (as seen in figure 4.37). In this sequence, the digital ageing initially used and the speed of her transformation as she turns over onto her back, gives the appearance of an older form bursting forth from within the queen’s body. In this way, the aged woman’s sudden appearance on screen takes shape as an emergence. Further, as the queen seeks to suppress her aged self within a youthful form, the queen’s struggle to maintain her youth gives the aged woman a continued presence, with her repression heightening the anticipation for her reemergence on screen.

Figure 4.41 The queen’s first reveal as an ageing woman, The Huntsman.
While the characters’ struggle with ageing gives further life and presence to the spectre, as both queens return to youth and/or masquerade as youthful, the aged woman is not given life or a clear identity. Alternatively, she functions as an othered figure, both within the queen and separate to the queen’s identity, the queen having never accepted or permanently lived as an aged woman. The queens’ preference and alignment with youth reflects the way “postfeminism thrives on anxiety about aging […] while also always extending the promise/possibility of age evasion” (Negra, 2009, p. 12). In so doing, the queens’ performance, evasion and distaste for ageing simultaneously highlights the intense pressure placed on women to preserve a youthful appearance and the way this youthful masquerade entrenches older women in invisibility, and social stigmas of decay and decline (as discussed in chapter 2; also see Whelehan, 2013).

In mimicking these dominant social narratives the films reiterate a post-feminist discourse that elevates youth over old age. Further, it reinforces generational tensions and encourages the rejection of older women, their lives and values (see Wearing, 2007), through the demonisation and improper ageing of the queen—a woman who refuses to make way for the next generation—through the queen’s own fear and
rejection of the aged woman within, and finally through the spectral depiction and othering of the aged woman.

When the aged woman makes her final appearance at the end of the films, her emergence is framed as a trauma and is strongly linked to the queen’s death. In Mirror Mirror the queen rapidly ages onscreen as Snow White frees her father from the queen’s curse. Cross-cutting between the king’s transformation from monster to man and the queen’s sudden ageing, these paralleled scenes frame the aged woman as the film’s new monster. The eruption of the aged woman on screen, disconnected from the slow and chronological passing of time, is framed as a punishment for the queen’s villainous behaviour, with the mirror informing the queen that her transformation is the cost of using magic. In connecting the queen’s aged appearance to her abuse of magic the aged woman is framed as other, as transgressor and as abject monster.

Where the queen had previously masked signs of ageing, in this moment she fails to hide her aged appearance, with the scarf used to cover her age marked hand (Figure 4.43 & 4.44) failing to conceal the alteration to the rest of her body (Figure 4.46). Her aged body is made hyper-visible, through straight-on shots of her ageing appearance (Figure 4.46); the contrast between the mirror’s and the queen’s appearance (Figure 4.45); and the queen’s costuming (Figure 4.46). For example, as seen in figure 4.45 by bringing the queen out of focus and having her look away from the camera, while bringing the mirror into focus and having her gaze directly at the camera, the spectator is positioned to take note of the mirror’s wrinkle free skin, even complexion, prominent cheek bones and jaw line. The youthful appearance of the mirror stands at odds with the queen’s age marked, darkened and softened skin (Figure 4.45), providing an immediate reference point for the degree of her transformation.
Though the contrast between the queen and the mirror clarifies the nature of the queen’s change, it is her costuming that affirms the permanence of this transformation. For example, although the scarf covers the queen’s hands, its gray and brown colouring in fact matches the queen’s grayed hair and darkened skin (Figure 4.46). The scarf’s alignment with her bodily appearance and its contrast with the vibrancy of the queen’s gold dress reaffirms and hints at the age marked hands that hide beneath. Further as the queen’s altered appearance extend outwards from beneath her clothing, her aged skin creeping out from under her sleeve (Figure 4.43) and collar (Figure 4.46), the aged woman appears to rupture from within the queen, refusing the containment her costuming had previously provided.

*Figure 4.43* The queen’s ageing hand, *Mirror Mirror.*
Figure 4.44 The queen’s attempt to mask ageing, *Mirror Mirror*. 
Yet, just at the moment she appears as the aged woman, following the logic of the disappearing ageing female Woodward (2006) describes (i.e., now we see her, now we don’t), the queen’s transformation is immediately followed by her final scene and death. Her death brings a conclusion to the tale and thus an end to her story. However, the queen’s death as an aged woman in *Mirror Mirror* gives her character continued life.
as the film’s alignment with preceding tellings sees the queen entrenched in a continued and dominant cultural memory of her role. In this way, *Mirror Mirror*’s queen becomes detached from time and place, echoing preceding tellings and further strengthening a strand of the tale for future adaptations to engage with and/or adapt. Additionally, her physical death enables her character to obtain a continued presence within the film as she haunts Snow White and foreshadows Snow White’s future (as demonstrated shortly).

Similarly in *The Huntsman* the queen’s ageing is linked to trauma, with the aged woman’s final appearance met by death and a return to invisibility. However where *Mirror Mirror* establishes a brief separation between the queen’s traumatic experience of ageing and her death by depicting the two events in separate scenes, in *The Huntsman* these happenings occur in unison, bringing the fully aged woman into view at the same time that the queen’s death ensures her disappearance.

This is evident in the film’s final battle scene. Having been stabbed by Snow White attention is immediately brought to the queen’s shock and pain as she begins to simultaneously age and die onscreen. The alignment of the two physical traumas (i.e., stabbing and sudden ageing), casts female ageing as a violent and painful happening. Huddled beneath her mirror, the queen is captured in a close-up as she takes her last breath. Through the use of digital ageing, she subsequently and rapidly transitions into deep old age onscreen (Figure 4.47). However, as she has already died the physical visibility of her aged form takes shape in her psychic absence, no longer apart of the living world. Consequently, the aged woman is yet again denied a material space in the film, with the queen’s death preventing any further development or exploration of the aged woman as a character.

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79 Such as Disney’s (1937), Merrie Melodies’ (1943) and Dell Comic’s (1950) adaptations.
The queens’ ageing and deaths in both films does not symbolically smooth and resolve the generational tensions established through her denial of the aged woman. Instead, she simply becomes and replaces the aged woman she feared, and, as I will now demonstrate, in turn haunts Snow White, Snow White’s future and the tale’s conclusion.

In *Mirror Mirror* the queen and Snow White are initially separated by their social and personal beliefs and qualities. Scenes cut between the two characters, contrasting the queen’s selfish endeavours, with Snow White’s attempts to save her community. Yet, at the film’s conclusion, just before the queen’s death and after Snow White’s marriage, Snow White seemingly aligns with the queen.
For example, in the final scene the aged queen offers Snow White an apple. As ominous music quietly begins to play, the film harkens to earlier adaptations by labelling the apple and the queen as threatening. However, Snow White takes ownership of the apple, offering the queen a slice. In this moment, the ominous music intensifies and Snow White becomes the threatening figure. Framed in a close-up from behind the queen’s shoulder, Snow White’s face loses its kindness and she takes on a softly threatening tone. Mimicking the queen’s line at the start of the film, stating, “it’s important to know when you’ve been beaten, yes,” Snow White aligns herself with the queen.

Snow White’s behaviour undermines the characters’ oppositional roles as good and bad females, with the paralleling of their characters hinting at the possibility of their shared fate. Thus, while Snow White’s future is unwritten, in echoing the queen’s line, the queen’s life, struggle and traumatic ending seem to haunt Snow White’s person and future, as she too will eventually age. Further, as Snow White seeks to deny the presence of the aged woman by forcing her death, she, like the queen before her, perpetuates a generational division by denying the presence and value of the aged woman. In this way, the characters are both isolated from one another, while seemingly tied to a shared and haunted fate.

In *The Huntsman*, the women’s oppositional roles as villain and heroine are maintained throughout—echoing the tendency of action-adventure films to work in dichotomies. However, when Snow White exclaims “I am everything you’re not” to the queen in their final battle, she in fact aligns with the queen. Specifically, Snow White’s rejection mirrors the way the queen sought to separate herself from the fate and identity of the old woman she replaced (as described above). The women are thus linked through their similar denouncement of the lifestyle and fate of a preceding generation.
Further as Snow White kills the queen, she, like the queen, forces the aged woman into invisibility.

Conclusively, both films move the tale beyond a conflict between two women, as their antagonism seemingly plays out across multiple generations, with one group of women replacing the next. Though both films cast the aged woman into invisibility and deny her a material space as a living, breathing character, these tellings nonetheless highlight the way generational tensions can take shape and be perpetuated within contemporary “Snow White” adaptations.

**Conclusion**

Folklorist and fairy–tale scholars have primarily considered fairy–tale films as a subgenre of the literary fairy tale. As a consequence, an analysis of fairy–tale films often centres on their use of literary fairy–tale motifs, themes, characters and spheres of action. However, as a change in medium can generate a completely different interpretation of a story, a reading of fairy–tale films as films provides an alternative and productive way to explore and unpack these texts. This chapter has demonstrated how *Mirror Mirror*’s and *The Huntsman*’s engagement with “Snow White” facilitates an articulation of the tale within a Western contemporary context. Specifically, my analysis highlights how film genres, stardom and representations of time and temporality onscreen can collectively contribute to the construction of complex female characters and storylines that can engage with and represent contemporary perceptions and stigmas surrounding female ageing, particularly in relation to postfeminism and Hollywood.

By and large these films presented stereotypical representations of female ageing. Though fairy–tale scholars might dismiss these works for failing to question
and subvert dominant and regressive ideological values, these texts provide a space to critically and productively explore these representations, unpacking the ways in which dominant and regressive perceptions and discourses are perpetuated. Therefore, rather than simply dismissing these works, I have demonstrated the potential to read these films critically, and to explore how the interplay between “Snow White” and the film medium facilitates the devaluation of old age/female ageing in these two films.

Specifically, I found that while the queen’s role as Snow White’s antagonist was in line with preceding versions, by aligning with different film genres, *Mirror Mirror* and *The Huntsman* provided different story worlds and contexts for the queen to take shape within. The tone established by engaging with different genres fed into a reading of her character and her villainy, downplaying her aggression by presenting her as a source of comedic relief or heightening her evil by representing her as an abject threat to the film’s civilised world. My account of stardom, further demonstrated how the texts and the characters oppositional roles could be interpreted beyond their engagement with fairy–tale motifs and spheres of action by considering how the paralleling of the actresses’ star life-cycle and character roles generated metanarratives for perceptions of female ageing in Hollywood and post-feminist popular culture more generally.

Finally, I demonstrated how each film’s use of dialogue, digital ageing, CGI and editing enabled issues of time, temporality and ageing to play out onscreen, presenting the aged woman as an a-temporal figure who resides within the logic of the disappearing older woman. My reading demonstrated how the films added depth to the queen’s conflict by depicting her fear of ageing as an internal struggle that haunts her character, informs her relationships and which, significantly, is not informed by a time-bound, chronological experience of ageing. Consequently, the films adapted “Snow
White” by extending the conflict beyond Snow White and the queen (as seen in many preceding versions) to a recurring struggle between various generations of women.

My next section will explain how ABC’s television programme *Once Upon a Time* (2011-Present) implements serial, short and episodic storylines when articulating “Snow White.” I will specifically demonstrate how the programme disconnects female growth from measured, linear time through the intertwining of storylines of varying length.
Chapter Five

Once Upon a Time... Constructing Identities Within Television and Magical Time

As discussed in chapter one, adaptations are not simple acts of replication. They are palimpsestous works that function on the level of discourse—both haunted by and moving from preceding versions (Hutcheon, 2006). In this process of adaptation, the interplay between a tale’s core and its medium provides different spaces to engage with and/or re-imagine “Snow White.” Moving from a consideration of film, this chapter analyses “Snow White’s” televisual adaptation on ABC’s *Once Upon a Time* (*OUaT*; 2011–Present), detailing the kinds of stories about female growth and ageing the programme facilitates.

When considering film and television, Hutcheon (2006) asserts that a televisual adaptation is less compressed than its filmic counterpart. The expansion of “Snow White” on television thus accommodates different avenues for the tale and its female characters to take shape, with their stories explored across multiple episodes and/or series. Yet, despite the possibilities for adaptation television enables, (feminist) fairy–tale scholarship has spent little time researching fairy–tale television, with Donald Haase (2004) asserting that more scholarship needs “to be devoted to other significant media, such as film, video, and television as well as art and illustration” (p. 30).

Scholarship published since Haase’s 2004 assertion has largely focused on literature and cinema.\(^8^0\) Even in Bacchilega’s (2013) most recent publication, *Fairy Tales Transformed?: Twenty-First-Century Adaptations and The Politics of Wonder*, she highlights her privileging of literary and cinematic adaptations, asserting that “these are the media platforms that have the broadest distribution and visibility within the fairy–tale web as well as the most power within the articulation of what the critical field

of fairy–tale studies is and does” (p. 16). Although I would disagree with her assertion that literature and film have the broadest distribution, as Haase (2008) notes “television has made frequent use of fairy–tale materials and kept the genre in public consciousness” (p. 947), she accurately highlights the field’s focus on literary and filmic adaptations.

This does not mean that fairy–tale scholars have not engaged with television studies to some degree, as Bacchilega (2013) briefly discusses the production of fairy–tale television in a post 9/11 climate and other fairy-tale scholars outline aspects of the sociocultural and/or historical production of fairy–tale television. 81 Most notably, Greenhill and Rudy’s (2014) publication, Channeling Wonder: Fairy Tales on Television, highlights a growing interest in the medium—serving as the first fairy–tale television anthology of its kind. The anthology largely considers the use of fairy–tale motifs, tropes and characters in contemporary television programming (whether the programmes announce themselves as fairy tales or not). To a lesser extent, the anthology also contemplates how online communities engage with these programmes, unpacking the intersection between television and new media. Despite Greenhill and Rudy’s significant contribution, further research on fairy–tale television needs to be conducted, specifically in regards to the bilateral relationship between form and content, and the representations of twenty–first–century girls and women on contemporary fairy–tale programmes.

Speaking to this gap, I detail how OUaT depicts Snow White’s and the queen’s development from youth to adulthood. 82 I specifically investigate the organisation of

81 Greenhill and Rudy, 2014; Zipes, 2011; Haase, 2008; Preston, 2004
82 My use of the word “youth” in this chapter refers to childhood, adolescence and early adulthood. I have grouped these stages, because, as I will demonstrate, the programme blurs age categories and flattens generational divides, making it difficult to distinguish between these age groups. Within the programme the characters’ youth is similarly
episodic, serial and short (2–4 episodes) storylines within the programme, and
demonstrate how the movement away from the traditional series/serial divide in
contemporary television programming facilitates a more fluid engagement with, and
less traditionally chronological conception of, time, temporality, growth and ageing
within OUaT.

In accounting for the programme’s depiction of youth, motherhood and
community relationships, I argue that the expansion of “Snow White” within this
television series establishes the importance of character building in youth, while
simultaneously depicting adulthood as a flexible state that requires further character
growth. In presenting the adult woman as a figure who can continue to develop, the
programme seemingly moves away from tellings, as detailed in chapter two, that frame
adult women as wholly stabilised (i.e., fixed figures) or in a state of decline. In linking
crime
character behaviour to lived experiences rather than specific age-based identities that
find root in chronometric perceptions of ageing, the programme initially appears to
evade a narrative of devil woman as crone, and seemingly opens adulthood to the
possibilities and progress normally associated with (and reserved for) growth in youth.

The chapter begins by briefly outlining OUaT’s plot and its engagement with
“Snow White.” It discusses the programme’s production, time span (in terms of seasons
and episodes), time slot, actors and characters. My analysis of OUaT is split into three
sections. Drawing on Michael Hammond and Lucy Mazdon’s (2005) consideration of
what Hammond terms “quality American drama,” Trish Dunleavy’s (2009)
contemplation of serial and series programming and Susan Berridge’s (2010)
marked by innocence; continuous and dramatic emotional growth; a belief in and hope
for “happily ever afters;” and an understanding that their future has yet to be written
and as such defined.

83 This PhD will not engage with debates about “quality.” Alternatively, I will explore
the complex narrative structure of what Hammond terms “quality American drama.”
exploration of episodic and serial storylines, these sections detail and investigate depictions of female growth, ageing and/or emotional development in and across the episodic, serial and short storylines. I account for the programme’s representations of child, adolescent and adult identities, and argue that the characters’ movement through different age categories is muddled and detached from clear measurements and signs of physical growth.

First demonstrating how the programme blurs age categories and generational divisions, I then explain how the characters’ emotional/social development is linked to the tale’s central conflict. Centrally, I argue, that while the blurring of characters’ ages seemingly enables the programme to evade a narrative about the queen’s fear of ageing, the characters’ “self-improvement” and emotional growth throughout both seasons in fact perpetuates a post-feminist rhetoric that connects the devil woman to the crone. As I will demonstrate, this connection is enabled by using the characters’ ideological associations with postfeminism and a stereotypical depiction of second-wave feminism to further erase and criticise the older woman and a “past” generation of feminists.

**Programme Overview**

ABC’s *OUaT* is a fantasy programme that draws on romance, adventure and detective genres. Rated PG (season one, NA) and NR (season two, NA), 12 & 15 (season one, UK) and 15 (season two, UK), the programme follows the lives of various fairy-tale characters, after Snow White’s (Ginnifer Goodwin) evil stepmother, Regina (Lana Parrilla), cast a curse that banished them to a small town in New England, America called Storybrooke. Under this curse, all the characters are separated from their loved

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84 Such as Red Riding Hood (Meghan Ory), Rumpelstiltskin (Robert Carlyle), Cinderella (Jessy Schram), and Belle (Emilie de Ravin) to name a few. See Appendix C for the full cast list.
ones and have lost their memories (save Regina and Rumpelstiltskin). Although the programme incorporates and adapts just about every fairy-tale character and story, Snow White, the queen and their conflict remain at the heart of the show’s first two seasons.

First aired 23rd October 2011 (IMDb, 2016), the programme has just completed its fifth season. This chapter looks at the first and second season (44, hour-long episodes) as the third, fourth and fifth seasons focus on other stories, such as The Wizard of Oz, Frozen, “Sleeping Beauty” and the Arthurian legend. While Snow White and the queen remain as main characters in the third, fourth and fifth seasons, the “Snow White” storyline is no longer the programme’s central focus and the women’s conflict is by and large resolved. Alternatively, in these seasons the women help to resolve conflicts between other fairy-tale characters, bringing peace and order to the Storybrooke community.

The programme runs on Sundays 7/8c and is one of ABC’s primetime shows. Though the show has a cast of over 200 people (IMDb, 2016), there are only six cast members to feature in all 99 episodes currently aired (IMDb, 2016). Of the main cast, three are directly related to “Snow White” (Snow White, Prince Charming and the queen), and two (Emma and Henry) are biologically related to Snow White and Prince Charming as daughter and grandson.

The programme uses cinematic techniques such as green screen technology and computer-generated images (Kitsis and Horowitz, 2013, DVD Additional Content), giving the programme a big budget feel. The magical world, which, as an ABC/Disney affiliated production, draws on fairy-tale Disney’s iconic images, is constructed

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85 Ginnifer Goodwin, Jennifer Morrison (Emma), Lana Parrilla, Josh Dallas (Prince Charming), Robert Carlyle (Rumpelstiltskin) and Jared Gilmore (Henry).
through special effects, with characters conjuring fire, moving objects through the air, creating potions, cures and curses, and disappearing into smoke.

The serial storyline primarily takes place in Storybrooke, with the characters’ histories and their fairy-tale stories shown in flashbacks of the fairy world. These flashbacks provide episodic stories that run concurrently with the primary plotline in Storybrooke. The two storylines are played off each other, giving further insight into the characters’ identities and relationships throughout both seasons. Primarily, the stories reflect a heterosexual, caucasian, middle class perspective, with the episodes focusing on the female characters’ emotional development as youths, lovers, mothers, wives and women.

The first season begins when Henry finds his biological mother, Emma, and brings her to Storybrooke. Henry believes that his adoptive mother, Regina, has cursed the town, and he wants Emma to save the community by breaking the curse. Though Emma doesn’t believe Henry, she remains in Storybrooke out of concern for him. The remainder of the season explores the townspeople’s relationships; Emma’s relationship to Henry; Emma’s friendship with Mary Margaret (Snow White);\(^\text{86}\) Regina’s conflict with Emma and Mary Margaret; and Mary Margaret and David’s (Prince Charming’s) affair. The season progresses with Emma finding clues that suggest Henry’s story is true, ultimately breaking the curse and awakening the town with true love’s kiss.\(^\text{87}\)

The second season uses an open narrative structure, which Dunleavy (2009) defines as an “overarching story [that] has no prescribed length” and that is “potentially

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\(^{86}\) The name “Snow” or “Snow White” is primarily used in the fairy world, and “Mary Margaret” in Storybrooke. Following this usage I will use the character’s different names to indicate narrative context and setting. In contrast, “Regina,” “the queen” and “the evil queen” are used in both locations and as such will be used interchangeably throughout this chapter.

\(^{87}\) Henry is accidentally put under a sleeping curse when he eats Regina’s poison apple. Believing that Henry is dead, Emma kisses him on the forehead, awakening him from the apple’s curse and the town’s people from Regina’s curse.
never-ending” (p. 51). This season primarily focuses on the community’s social upheaval. It explores Snow White’s and the queen’s (in)ability to move beyond their history and to emotionally develop as selfless and caring mothers and women. Unlike the first season, the second season’s overarching story is driven by a variety of smaller conflicts, with characters (or groups of characters) driven by different goals.

Having contextualised the programme, in my next section I begin by explaining OUaT’s story structure. Outlining the differences between serial, episodic and short storylines, I then demonstrate how OUaT’s episodic storylines—storylines that conclude within the hour-long programme—position chronological growth/ageing as subordinate to a sense of magical time. I contemplate whether the programme’s engagement with female growth and ageing defamiliarises the tale and facilitates a reimagining of the tale’s central conflict (as detailed in chapter three), investigating how the blurring of ages speaks to/diverts from the depictions in preceding versions of an ageing queen who is increasingly threatened by the competition of the young and pure Snow White. This section also details how the episodic structure and the use of flashbacks lends an immediacy and permanence to character development in youth, and in so doing, frames youth as the epicentre to an adult identity—positioning it as “a kind of ground zero for the edifice that is adult life” (Brumh and Hurley, 2004, p. xiii; also see chapter two).

Representing Youth: Snow White, the Queen and Episodic Storylines

Before I analyse the storylines that take shape in OUaT’s episodic structure, I will clarify

88 While Bruhm and Hurley are specifically considering narratives of sexual maturation (as detailed in chapter two), I believe their assertion can be expanded to narratives of emotional and social development.
how *OUaT* functions as a structurally dynamic drama; how I am using the terms “episodic,” “serial” and “short” storylines; why I am associating the episodic with the closed structure of series programming and serial with overarching storylines; and how the usage of these three terms speaks to wider discussions in television studies.

As scholars explain, series and serial programming have been traditionally divided. Series takes shape as “never-ending” episodes that can be broadcast in any order — mimicking “an anthology of short stories” (Kozloff, 1992, p. 91) with “the end of each episode conventionally conclude[ing] a main plot” (Corner, 1999, p. 57). In contrast serials follow[…] an unfolding and episodic narrative structure that moves progressively towards a conclusion” over a number of episodes or across a season (Creeber, 2004, p. 8), creating what Jane Feuer refers to as “arc shows” (Feuer, 1995, p. 112 as quoted in Creeber, 2004, p. 9).

Despite this distinction, scholars are in agreement that since the 1990s it has become difficult to differentiate between series and serial due to the hybridisation of the two structures. This hybridisation has allowed for, what Hammond (2005) terms, “quality American dramas,” which “[…] are characterised by both the serial format for the long story arc with open storylines and their combination with the shorter more contained plotlines that come to an end within one episode” (p. 76).

Although the breakdown of the series/serial divide is now commonplace and thus entirely familiar to audiences, this structural break down makes it difficult to use series and serial terminology when interpreting and qualifying the structure and

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89 Berridge, 2010; Creeber, 2004; Corner, 1999; Holland, 1997; and Kozloff, 1992
90 Dunleavy (2009) has since asserted, and I would agree, that the overarching story of the serial has “no prescribed length and can be either ‘open’ (potentially never-ending) or ‘closed’ (resolving within a limited number of episodes)” (p. 51), or as I would contend, at the end of a season.
91 Jowett and Abbott, 2013; Berridge, 2010; Dunleavy, 2009; Mittell, 2006; Hammond and Mazdon, 2005; and Creeber, 2004
processes of storytelling enabled by structurally dynamic dramas. As such, to clarify this narrative complexity, scholars such as Jason Mittell (2006), Berridge (2010) and Dunleavy (2009) have associated series’ self-contained episode structure with the term episodic, and overarching storylines with the term serial. Although, like many scholars, I view these two structures as interrelated, I initially investigate them separately to illustrate the relationship between these structures and the programme’s representation of female growth and emotional/social development.

Finally, the last section of this chapter identifies a third narrative structure occurring within OUaT—the short storyline (stories that span over 2–4 episodes). While Patricia Holland (1997) defines “plot[s that] develop[…] over several episodes, sometimes three or four, sometimes as many as ten or twelve” (p. 114) as serials, the short storylines differ from the serial by intensifying and confining conflicts across a shorter period within the programme’s longer serial storyline. With this in mind, I assert that OUaT’s use of short storylines highlights another component of the programme’s complex structure.

The interweaving of episodic, serial and short storylines, not only facilitates the emergence of complex stories of character development, but it informs how time and temporality are used and represented within the programme. Specifically, the programme’s use of flashbacks within an episodic framework, enables the programme to frequently engage in temporal jumps that, while only shared with the viewer, links the past with the present, recrafting character identities and relationships based on past experiences and motivations. The pairing of the episodic flashbacks and the serial and short storylines breaks down chronological time, as the past and present feed into one another and inform critical events, happenings and relationships in the programme. This

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92 Jowett and Abbott, 2013; Dunleavy, 2009; Mittell, 2006; Hammond and Mazdon, 2005; and Creeber, 2004
temporal overlap, significantly influences a reading of the characters’ growth and development, particularly as the linking of past and present bridges the gap between childhood and adulthood, and draws attention to the complex layering of identity that occurs as character development is explored through non-linear understandings of time, temporality, growth and ageing (return to below).

*OUaT*’s use of flashbacks, is not unique to the television medium, and in fact closely aligns with the use of flashbacks in the programme *Lost* (2004-2010). It is perhaps unsurprising that *OUaT*’s use of flashbacks mirrors *Lost*, as Edward Kitsis and Adam Horowitz, the creators of *OUaT*, both worked on *Lost* as writers, supervising producers, co-executive producers and finally as executive producers (IMDb, 2016b; IMDb, 2016c). The programmes’ overlap also extend beyond their use of episodic flashbacks to their varying temporal depictions within the episodic and serial storylines, with the episodic and serial tellings governed by different understandings/representations of time and temporality.

However, where this complex engagement with time and temporality in *Lost* facilitated an exploration of religious, philosophical and scientific understandings of destiny, faith and reason (see Burcon, 2012), in *OUaT* the “Snow White” tale provides the space to explore female character development and growth beyond chronological understandings of time and temporality. With this in mind, the remainder of this chapter will explore how *OUaT*’s complex temporal engagement in and across episodic, serial and short storylines, works in conjunction with the tale’s core and fairy tale’s temporal disinterest, to construct complex understandings of female character development and growth.
Part one: Magical time and conflated ages.

In this section, I will analyse *OUaT*’s episodic tellings, which adapt, expand and recraft fairy tales by presenting the stories as flashbacks of the characters’ pasts. Each episode includes several flashbacks that centrally focus on the characters’ youths. Collectively these flashbacks tell one episodic story that is based on or related to one significant event in “Snow White.” These events are depicted nonlinearly across the season—with each episode jumping between significant happenings in “Snow White” and in time from week to week.

This section will investigate the function of episodic storylines in relation to the programme’s structure, the adaptation of “Snow White” and its representation of female characters’ physical and emotional growth. However, before conducting this analysis, I first detail how these episodic tellings muddle chronometric expectations of time, temporality, growth and ageing in the fairy world, reflecting fairy tales’ structural disinterest in time (as discussed in chapter two; Haase, 2000). In the programme, the episodic storylines’ self-contained plots, individually and collectively, evade chronometric measures by reducing these storylines to all but the most significant moments, by not accounting for the time between significant happenings and by muddling age categories, with actors playing (increasingly) younger versions of their characters. In not chronicling the passing of time, the fairy world alternatively uses what I refer to as magical time. Magical time takes shape in the absence of a linear, measured retelling, alternatively using characters’ (changing or changed) relationships, references to significant events and costume changes to establish loose timelines.

For example, in *OUaT* Regina’s marriage to Snow White’s father is a pivotal event in her character history, which helps to position other flashbacks (pre- or post-marriage). In this way, while each episode contains its own independent plotline, a
general timeline takes shape based on the flashback’s incorporation of, reference to or ignorance of significant events. Magical time, hinged around significant happenings, doesn’t detail the space/gaps between moments, making it difficult to accurately determine how much chronometric time has passed and whether (or by how much) characters have aged. Consequently, magical time is not an ordered and chronological temporal experience, but takes shape through the events and relationships that cumulatively create the story of a character’s life.

Episodic storylines, condensed to display only the most significant events, dramatise and intensify the events and relationships that make up magical time. This intensification and directness of focus lends immediacy to the transformative moments that shape the characters’ histories. An example of this is seen when Regina begins to transform into a villain in “The Stable Boy” (1.18). Her character change occurs over five flashbacks, ranging in length from 2 minutes 49 seconds to 8 minutes 10 seconds. When added together the flashbacks consist of 24 minutes 7 seconds of screen time across the entire episode. While Regina’s transformation seemingly occurs over several days within the fairy world, the time that elapses between these days is unclear. As such, the flashbacks’ screen time, and their framing, focus and use of magical time gives the impression that her first steps towards evil occurred over a brief period.

Similarly Snow White’s transformation into a “good” person in “The Queen is Dead” (2.15) occurs over five flashbacks amounting to 10 minutes 52 seconds of screen time and occurring over a couple of days within the fairy world. The individual flashbacks are shorter and range between 1 minute 59 seconds and 3 minutes 30 seconds. Although Snow White’s metamorphosis may occur over a shorter period than Regina’s, both transformations appear sudden given the episodic stories’ confined time frames. In detaching characters’ histories from chronometric measurements of time and
reducing their pasts to all but the most significant happenings, the closed episodic structure makes the characters seem pliable and easily influenced by the events and people around them in youth.

Clarifying how magical time impacts representations of growth and ageing, I will now demonstrate how a general timeline unfolds in magical time and how age categories are blurred. A timeline for Regina’s history takes shape through the visual contrast between Regina’s evil and good character roles. In flashbacks that occur after she has married and murdered Snow White’s father, she wears red and/or black gothic couture with dark lipsticks, thick fake eyelashes, thick eyeliner and red or fuchsia eye shadows (Figure 5.1). Her body is also sexualised in costumes that exhibit her bust line (Figure 5.1), reveal a bare back or hug her form. In contrast, when a young, unwed Regina is first introduced in “The Stable Boy” (1.18), she wears light coloured, buttoned up riding clothes, her hair is softly pulled back and braided, and her makeup is natural (Figure 5.2). Though played by the same actor, her simple appearance disconnects her from her identity as the evil queen, coding her as young and innocent, and situating “The Stable Boy” (1.18) earlier within Regina’s history and the “Snow White” tale.
Her relative age is also coded by the physical appearance of characters around her, namely her father, Henry (Tony Perez). For instance, in an episode occurring after Regina’s marriage, “Fruit of the Poisonous Tree” (1.11), her father has white hair, deep wrinkles on his forehead and large, defined bags under his eyes (Figure 5.3). In

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93 Storybrooke Henry is named after Regina’s father Henry.
contrast, in “The Stable Boy” (1.18) he has salt and peppered hair that is cropped short, his forehead is smooth and while he has bags under his eyes, they are not as heavy or defined (Figure 5.4). Although Regina shows no signs of bodily ageing, the contrast between her father’s age before and after Regina’s marriage helps to illustrate the passing of time between her life as a youth and time as a wife.

![Figure 5.3](image1.png) Henry after Regina’s wedding (“Fruit of the Poisonous Tree,” 11.1)

![Figure 5.4](image2.png) Henry before Regina’s wedding (“The Stable Boy,” 1.18)

Where this example shows how the episodic stories create a timeline for the character, as I will now illustrate, chronometric measurements of time, growth and ageing are evaded as “The Stable Boy” (1.18) fails to depict Regina as either an adolescent or young adult. Initially, her father’s (relative) youth, and her unwed status in “The Stable Boy” may lead one to classify her as an adolescent. The episode further supports this notion by revealing that she lives with her parents and has her educational lessons arranged by her mother, drawing attention to her (economic) dependence—a
cultural, social and institutional condition associated with adolescence (see Driscoll, 2002 and Rutter 1980, as discussed in chapter two). However, this reading is problematised by the casting of the physically mature 34 year-old actress Parrilla as Regina, and by Regina’s mother Cora’s (Barbara Hershey) complaint that she is “becoming an old maid” while all the other “girls” her age have married. Consequently, the contradictions between her position as a dependent (i.e., adolescent), her mother’s remarks about her ageing status in contrast with other “girls,” and her physicality as a 34 year-old actress makes it difficult to assign and clearly associate Regina with a clear age category within these flashbacks.

Similarly, childhood and adolescence is also muddled in the programme. For example, when first introduced to Young Snow White (Bailee Madison) in “The Stable Boy” (1.18), the then 12 year-old Madison assumes a particularly young appearance as her full cheeks, round face and her costuming codes her for youth and innocence—wearing small flowers in her partially down and curly hair, and a white and pink dress (Figure 5.5). The episode takes place after the death of Young Snow White’s mother (Eva, Rena Sofer), seemingly mirroring adaptations, as noted in chapter three, where Snow White’s mother dies in childbirth, and the evil queen becomes her step-mother before her seventh birthday. Although this similarity might suggest that Young Snow White is a child, her child status is subsequently problematised in “The Queen is Dead” (2.15) when the now 13 year-old Madison plays a younger version of Young Snow White. Madison’s physical embodiment of a younger Snow White is convoluted in the episode as Madison’s character is coded for youth through her pink dress and Eva’s presence, while Madison appears physically older with a thinned and slightly matured face (Figure 5.6).

94 It is stated in this episode that Eva (Snow White’s mother) died years ago.
Her older appearance, and the episode’s plotline, which centres around various rights-of-passage: namely, her birthday, her crowning, her mother’s sudden death and her new royal responsibilities, seemingly represents her transition into adolescence (though her age is never specified). As such, when she meets Regina years later, as portrayed in “The Stable Boy” (1.18), she should be clearly established in her teens. However, as detailed above, in “The Stable Boy” (1.18) she is coded as a child. In making use of magical time and by muddling age categories, these episodic storylines challenge dominant chronological accounts of time and ageing as it is commonly understood in contemporary Western society, alternatively rooting female characters’ emotional growth in significant life happenings and lived experiences. Further, the programme problematises the notion that the body can be used as a measure for
chronology and development. In this way, these episodic tellings account for a level of fluidity to the female form that is unaccounted for in chronometric understandings of ageing.

The two episodes, though disconnected in terms of their central plotlines, are united by Snow White’s character, the “Snow White” tale and by the understanding that these stories collectively detail and define her history. In constructing Snow White’s history in relation to Eva’s death, whilst disconnecting her physical growth from chronometric (linear) expectations of growth and ageing, her story takes shape within a set of relations. Both characters’ histories thus centre on lived experiences that occur independently of their age, shifting the programme’s focus away from adaptations that centre on the queen’s fear of ageing and of being replaced by a young girl. This is not to say that the women are not in conflict. Alternatively, as illustrated below, their character development continues to put them in opposing roles, mimicking the angel/devil representations that commonly occur in “Snow White” adaptations.

Part two: Female development as a result of lived experiences in youth.

In this section I will specifically consider the nature of Regina’s and Snow White’s character transformations. I will focus on the events in “The Stable Boy” (1.18) and “The Queen is Dead” (2.15) as these episodes are foundational to Regina’s and Mary Margaret’s identities throughout both seasons and are accredited as such by the characters in the serial storyline.

In addition to providing a back-story, the flashbacks rationalise characters’ behaviours and relationships in the present (i.e., in Storybrooke/the serial storyline). For Snow White, her identity as a self-sacrificing, caring person is accredited (by both Snow White and Prince Charming) to the lesson she learned in the build up to her
mother’s death and her subsequent crowning (“The Queen is Dead,” 2.15). Although it is difficult to say whether her crowning represents her movement out of childhood for the reasons detailed above, it does symbolise a moment of character growth as Snow White assumes a ‘good’ identity and leaves behind spoiled tendencies.

In these flashbacks, Young Snow White’s character is seemingly in need of social and moral guidance when she cruelly scolds a servant for trying on the crown set aside for her upcoming coronation. Though the woman is significantly older than Snow White, played by then 60 year-old Lesley Nicol, Snow White treats her as an inferior, talking down to her and showing her physical and social superiority by lifting her chin, and stating, “It’s not for a servant […] servants don’t wear crowns” (Figure 5.7). Young Snow White is revealed as classist, elitist and mean, a representation that stands at odds with the previous 36 episodes that depict her as kind hearted. The contrast between her behaviour in the previous episodes and Young Snow White’s cruelty disconnects youth from innate purity and invites a narrative about her transformation into a kind character.

This narrative is immediately instigated by her mother’s, Eva’s, disapproval and chides, which reinforce the notion that a good leader serves the people by acting fairly, putting other’s needs first, and by recognising that “we are all the same.” Although
Eva’s assertions of equality stand at odds with the visual contrast between her and Snow White’s jewelled clothing and the servant’s simple dress, Eva nonetheless socially educates Snow White and prompts character growth. This is evident when, in the episode’s final flashback, Snow White gains her mother’s approval by showing the ability to become a benevolent leader and act in the name of “goodness.” Further, as Snow White’s mother dies and she is left with a new level of responsibility, she is forced to emotionally mature to preserve her mother’s legacy and rule as her mother instructed.

The events in this episodic storyline, while explaining her development into a hero, also rationalises her behaviour and actions in the serial storyline—as Mary Margaret notes, “I’ve played the same role my entire life, hold on to goodness, that’s what my mother taught me” (“The Queen is Dead,” 2.15). In this way, although the flashback’s plotline is confined to one episode, the content nonetheless feeds into and engages with the serial storyline. The two structures (episodic and serial) are thus intertwined, with the programme implementing stories of varying length to dynamically develop the characters’ identities and roles, and to explore character formation from, through and between youth and adulthood. As Mary Margaret comments on the circularity of her identity as seen above, her remarks reflect Lynne Segal’s (2013) assertion that,

Ageing is neither simply linear, nor is it any single discrete process when, in our minds, we race around, moving seamlessly between childhood, old age and back again. There are ways in which we can, and do, bridge different ages, psychically, all the time. (p. 19)

In holding on to her mother’s lesson and seeking to embody this identity over the course of her life, her remarks and the interweaving of the episodic and serial storylines serve to question dominant understandings of chronometric growth and ageing by
enabling the past and present to resonate in unison beyond a linear and ordered temporality.

In terms of Snow White, the programme positions spectators to read Snow White’s selfless conduct as ideal, despite her personal losses and struggles, when each of her trials leads her back to happiness, inclusion and reward in the episodic and serial storylines. In rooting Snow White’s character transformation (i.e., emotional growth) in youth, the programme highlights the importance of character development in this stage of life, seemingly speaking to dominant discourses around childhood by reaffirming youth as the foundation of an adult identity (as discussed in chapter two).

Further, as an exploration of this character change is confined to 10 minutes 52 seconds of screen time in one episode, the limited attention given to Young Snow White suggests that the importance of her transformation has less to do with how she existed and lived as a youth, but how a specific experience (her mother’s death and her crowning) informed her identity as an adult across the serial storyline. In this way, the programme reaffirms Brumh and Hurley’s (2004) assertion that narratives about childhood (or in this case youth) are often stories about adulthood, adult society and the formation of functional or dysfunctional adults (see chapter two).

Like Snow White, Regina’s emotional development in youth dictates her identity as an adult. Her character formation in youth is specifically shaped by Cora’s selfish, controlling and abusive behaviour; the death of Regina’s first true love Daniel (Noah Bean); and Snow White’s betrayal when she mistakenly reveals Daniel and Regina’s relationship to Cora. As Snow White’s betrayal functions as the final catalyst in Regina’s transformation from a good to bad character (“The Stable Boy,” 1.18), OUaT’s characterisation of the queen differs from preceding versions where the
queen’s villainy is motivated by her vanity (Zipes, 2011) and by a fear of being replaced by a younger counterpart (Sale, 1978; see chapter three for specific examples).

In juxtaposing Regina’s history with her villainy in the serial storyline, the programme expands her story and complicates her character, creating a sympathetic and emotionally complex figure who is both victim and villain. With the spectator positioned in a higher place of knowledge—witnessing both Regina’s personal and private suffering, and her abuse of other characters in Storybrooke and the fairy-tale realm—Regina’s inability to cope with loss and to put the needs of others above her own, separates her from Snow White and the “good” characteristics Snow White embodies. The spectator is thus positioned to read Regina’s misery, villainy and her inability to find her own happy ending, as a consequence of unresolved emotional issues with her mother and Snow White, her misplaced anger, selfishness, hate and unmitigated female power, but not, crucially, her advancing age.

Having investigated how female character development takes shape in episodic depictions of youth, my next section details how these qualities are tested, reinforced or renegotiated as Mary Margaret and Regina assume their roles as mothers and Storybrooke community members in the serial storyline. Here I consider how the programme extends female character development into adulthood, using the open structure of the serial storyline to allow for gradual, ongoing character change within the context of and in relationship to “Snow White.”

A Continued Maturation: Motherhood, the Community and the Serial Storyline

*OUaT*’s serial plotline tends to focus on the present tense and primarily surrounds Mary Margaret’s and Regina’s relationships and struggles. Following a serial structure the “[…] story unfolds in a sequential, usually linear, fashion, with each episode
contributing new developments and often ending in some kind of cliffhanger to incite audience speculation about events yet to come” (Dunleavy, 2009, p. 51). Unlike the episodic storylines, which are condensed to display the most significant events, the linear build-up of the serial storyline slows down time by displaying the intimate and, often, mundane elements of daily life (Dunleavy, 2009).95

In slowing down time, one might expect the serial’s representation of daily life in Storybrooke to naturalise growth and ageing by confining it to a linear progression. The first episode fulfils this expectation by beginning the story with clear markers of time, such as Emma’s 28th birthday, the arrival of her 10 year-old son (who she gave up for adoption) and the starting of chronological time in Storybrooke, which had previously been frozen for 28 years. However, though the first episode is contextualised with chronometric measures, as the Storybrooke community develops, the measures of age become less marked: many characters’ ages are unknown, and there is non-linear—magical—movement through age brackets (for example a man may be transformed back into a boy). Storybrooke moves between measured and magical experiences of time as characters partially participate in chronological progressions of daily life, while continuing their magical engagement with growth/ageing.

The ambiguity of characters’ ages and their temporal experience of growth and ageing is further emphasised by muddled generational divisions. For example, although Regina is Emma’s step grandmother, and Mary Margaret is her mother, Regina, Mary Margaret and Emma are played respectively by actresses, age 34, 33 and 32.96 While the lack of division is explained by the curse, their relative ages flatten generations (a notion explored below), working at odds with the serial storyline’s focus on daily life.

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95 Also see Creeber (2004) for further discussions around intimacy and continuity within serial narratives.
96 These were the actresses’ ages when the programme first aired.
and development by unsettling the experiences of character growth associated with specific age categories or age groups (as discussed in chapter two).

Only Henry (the sole main character born on earth) verbalises the passing of time in specific terms by stating his age at 10 in the first season and 11 in the second. Although Henry’s growth helps to reinforce the linear movement of the serial storyline, as Henry is neither from the fairy world nor subject to the queen’s curse, he does not reflect the Storybrooke community’s temporal experience. For example, while Henry questions why none of the adults are aware of how long they have been in Storybrooke, the adults never compare or contextualise Henry’s age with their own, or with the children he would presumably outgrow. Therefore, despite the linear development of the serial storyline and Henry’s growth, Henry’s embodiment and understanding of time and temporality simply reveals the Storybrooke community’s division and disconnect from conventional, linear experiences of time, temporality, growth and ageing.

As the remainder of this section will illustrate, because the fairy–tale characters’ growth (physical and emotional) is not driven by clear chronometric measures of growth/ageing or magical time’s singular focus on events, the serial’s overarching structure and its plotline’s attention to characters’ daily lives becomes a means to explore the emotional and sociocultural hurdles characters must continuously overcome as adults. For Mary Margaret and Regina, their social and emotional growth is shaped by their roles as mothers, their struggles to live up to ideals of motherhood and their desire to be included and loved within their community.

As detailed in chapter two, the young mother stands at the boundary between young adulthood and female ageing, with post-motherhood connected to menopause (Whelehan, 2013). However, the characters’ muddled engagement with time, temporality, growth and ageing allows them to sustain their position on this boundary.
by shifting in relation and difference to the categorisation of the young and old. In this way, though dominant discourses of adulthood present it as a temporary period of independence, knowledge, maturity and a stabilisation of identity that eventually leads to decline and decay (i.e., (post-)menopause/old age) (Whelehan, 2013, Karlyn, 2011 & Driscoll, 2002), as I will illustrate, this adaptation expands “Snow White” and re-
imagines and/or reaffirms character roles by refuting the stabilisation of identity associated with adulthood, casting it as a period of continual growth. In so doing, the characters’ experiences, trials, relationships and their renegotiation of self enable them to evade discourses of decline through their continued association with progression.

**Part one: Female growth through experiences of motherhood.**

From the first episode motherhood is a central theme within the programme. Where in previous adaptations representations of motherhood took shape through Snow White’s relationship with her biological and/or stepmother (see chapter three), in this programme motherhood is primarily explored through Henry’s relationship with all three female leads—each character assuming a motherly role as Henry’s biological mother (Emma), adoptive mother/step great-grandmother (Regina) and biological grandmother/teacher (Mary Margaret)—and secondly through the reunion of daughter and mother (Emma and Mary Margaret). Significantly less time is spent in the serial storyline considering Regina and Mary Margaret’s familial ties, with the two actresses presented as peers. In moving the tale away from an exploration of a mother/daughter rivalry; connecting all three women around the needs of a loved child; and framing mothering as fundamental to their development as ideal females, the programme adapts the tale and “participat[es] in the representational trend that posits motherhood as salvation” (Negra, 2009, p. 29).
The framing of motherhood as transformative takes shape through the programme’s contrasting representations of “good” and “bad” mothering, and the characters’ struggles to become “good” mothers across the first two seasons. As such, I will first contextualise the different mothering roles the characters assume, and then illustrate how the characters, particularly Regina, seek to re-imagine these mothering roles by embodying a post-feminist idealisation of motherhood (i.e., new-momism).

Tying back to “Snow White,” this section will conclude by outlining how representations of motherhood speak to and adapt the tale’s central conflict and characters.

Unsurprisingly, in the first two seasons Regina, as the evil queen, is represented as an inadequate mother. Mirroring Tania Modleski’s (1997) description of the villainous mother in soaps, Regina repeatedly puts her needs above her son’s, uses her son to manipulate, control and influence other characters, and even temporarily kills him when attempting to poison Emma (“An Apple Red as Blood,” 1.21). Her failure as a mother, aligning her with the queen’s aggressive and violent nature in preceding versions of “Snow White,” is further marked by Henry’s need for therapy and by Mary Margaret’s insinuation that Regina is not catering to her son’s emotional needs (“Pilot,” 1.01).

Though her selfish nature marks her as deficient, Regina rationalises her shortcomings with her single mother status, stating,

You have to understand, ever since I became mayor, balancing things has been tricky. You have a job I assume?[…] Imagine having another one on top of it, that’s being a single mom, so I push for order. Am I strict? I suppose, but I do it for his own good. I want Henry to excel in life. I don’t think that makes me evil, do you? (“Pilot,” 1.01)
Regina’s remarks on being a single, working mother paired with Henry’s unhappiness, aligns her with the single mother figure who, Amy Benfer (2000) suggests, is seen to “struggle socially; sexually or financially” (paraphrased in Feasey, 2012, p. 73).

Though not connected to the financially struggling working mom—as evidenced by her financial security (i.e. her large house), high-level position as mayor and her Burberry clothing (Saxton, 2013)—Regina’s remarks on single motherhood connects her to the socially struggling mother figure Rebecca Feasey (2012), Kathleen Rowe Karlyn (2011) and Ritch Calvin (2008) identify in popular culture, as she attempts to negotiate a public and private life. Regina’s struggle to exist within both spheres as well as her authoritative and aggressive identity not only depict her as deficient but, as I will detail below, links her mothering to “dated” and “faulty” parenting practices.

While Regina is visually aligned with Emma and Mary Margaret in terms of age, she differs from their new-momist approach, which Karlyn (2011) refers to as “a cultural trend that surfaced in the 1990s and purports to celebrate motherhood, but by making mothers subservient to their children rather than their husbands” (p. 3). Unlike Mary Margaret and Emma, Regina does not attempt to put Henry’s needs first and fails to develop a relationship with him based on “a level of laughter, friendship and fun” (Feasey, 2012, p. 92). Alternatively, she is an authoritative figure, expressing a dominance and control that hinders her ability to support Henry’s emotional needs and his individual identity.

Regina’s parenting style in Storybrooke, framed as stifling, mirrors that of her mother Cora’s in the fairy world. The connection between the women takes shape through the paralleling of episodic and serial storylines in the episode “We Are Both” (2.02). In a flashback a young Regina is shown running away from her mother and her

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97 Cora exists within both worlds, but doesn’t come to Storybrooke until the second half of season two.
upcoming union to Snow White’s father. Cora stops Regina with bewitched tree branches and denies Regina the freedom she longs for (Figure 5.8; “We Are Both,” 2.02). Similarly, when Henry tries to run away from Regina, she mimics Cora’s behaviour by stopping Henry with bewitched tree branches and imprisoning him in their family home (Figure 5.9; “We Are Both,” 2.02).

The paralleling of the two storylines and both scenes’ imagery aligns Regina and Cora in terms of parenting style and amoral behaviour. This overlap rationalises Regina’s conduct by implying that Regina’s “bad” parenting was learned from Cora and shaped by her own abuse in youth—simultaneously depicting Regina as victim and abuser. With Regina’s parenting echoing experiences in her past, the “inadequacies” of her and Cora’s parenting are contrasted with Mary Margaret’s and Emma’s new-momist approach (detailed further below). In so doing, the programme seemingly reaffirms the perception that, as motherhood is re-imagined and past practices are abandoned, the mothering of previous generations is framed as dated, harmful and insufficient (Feasey, 2012; Karlyn, 2011; Ann Kaplan, 1992).

*Figure 5.8* Cora controlling Regina (“We Are Both,” 2.02)
Interestingly though, while Regina is framed as a misguided and parentally dated mother, one might argue that her youthful appearance allows her to evade the visual connection made between the aged/ageing woman and devil woman in preceding and subsequent versions (also discussed in chapters three and four). In this way, it would initially appear that it is a woman’s ability to “correctly” parent and reflect contemporary parenting practices and not her wrinkle free skin that determines her “goodness.” However, as I will now demonstrate, Regina’s connection to Cora’s parenting practices and characteristics allow for the continued critique of aged women, perpetuating ideas of the devil woman as crone.

Regina’s association to the aged devil woman is made explicit through the visual overlap between Regina and her villainous and aged (post-menopausal) mother Cora (played by then 64 year old Hershey). As seen in figure 5.10, 5.11 and 5.12 the characters are similarly costumed in Storybrooke and the fairy world. Their villainy also mirrors one another as both characters rip their victims’ still beating hearts from their chests. Consequently, Regina’s excessive control over Henry, the stylisation of her character and her abuse of magic directly connects her to the evil, selfish, violent and manipulative characteristics Cora displays as a villain, mother and an aged woman. In this way, Regina’s youth does not disconnect the evil woman from the figure of the
crone, alternatively, the narrative of devil woman as crone persists through Regina’s connection and overlap with Cora.

*Figure 5.10* Regina and Cora as mirror images (“The Miller’s Daughter,” 2.16)

*Figure 5.11* Regina as evil queen in the fairy world (“The heart of a lonely hunter,” 1.07)
Regina’s faulty parenting is held at odds with Emma’s, who tries to foster an emotional relationship with Henry by indulging in his beliefs and by spending time with him. When on occasion Emma resists Henry’s belief in fairy tales, treats Henry as a possession or selfishly lies to him to protect her own interest, she is faced with Henry’s reproof and is told that she is behaving like Regina (“Manhattan,” 2.14) (i.e., a bad mother). In presenting Emma’s failures as a less extreme version of Regina’s, the programme distinguishes Regina’s parenting as a model for Emma and other “good” mother figures to avoid. Further, when Emma is reproofed for behaving like Regina (i.e., for failing to consistently act as a selfless mother), the policing of Emma’s conduct denies the legitimacy, acceptability and even inevitability of being a fallible woman and mother—demanding a level of “perfectionism” from the female characters that is promulgated in post-feminist celebrations of motherhood (see Negra, 2009 and Douglas & Michaels, 2004). Ultimately, Emma’s struggle and desire to become a giving and supportive mother, and to distance herself from Regina, depicts mothers who unselfishly and wholly dedicate themselves to their child’s every whim and need as ideal.
Though Regina’s and Emma’s parenting styles are easily contrasted because they are both Henry’s mother (adoptive and biological), Emma’s single parenting is not the antithesis to Regina’s model in the serial storyline. Despite being the youngest mother in terms of generations, Emma struggles to become the unselfish and emotionally available contemporary mother Henry desires. Alternatively, Mary Margaret fully embodies the new-momist role.

Like Regina, Mary Margaret’s mothering mirrors her mother’s (Eva’s) parenting style. However where Cora provides Regina with a “harmful” and “insufficient” example of parenting, Eva embodies a new-momist approach—functioning as the ultimate selfless mother by dying to protect her child’s innocence and well-being. Further, Eva’s relative youth (played by then 44-year-old Sofer) visually disconnects her from the image and stigmatisation of the post-menopausal woman, as detailed in chapter two, with her death preventing her from entering old age and seeing her crystallised as the forever-youthful mother. In this way, her relative youth in death and association with contemporary mothering practices aligns her with a contemporary generation of women.

Following Eva’s new-momist example, and with Emma fully grown, Mary Margaret becomes Emma’s friend and emotional confidant. Although in popular culture mothers who want to be their daughter’s best friend are often depicted as incompetent or immature, Mary Margaret’s parenting and girlfriend–like bond with her child differs in three ways: firstly, Mary Margaret and Emma are friends and roommates for 22 episodes before she realises that Emma is her daughter; secondly, Emma is an adult when they first meet; and thirdly, Mary Margaret is married to and in a heterosexual relationship with Emma’s father when she realises that Emma is her daughter—thus

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98 Feasey, 2012; Karlyn, 2011; Diffrient & Lavery, 2010; and Calvin, 2008
separating her from single motherhood. These differences allow Mary Margaret to emotionally support Emma, resembling contemporary depictions of the nurturing girlfriend-mother figure, without succumbing to the social stigmas connected to single mothers or to the emotional immaturity other 'best friend' mothers are associated with when trying to befriend a child many years their junior (i.e. Lorelai and Rory Gilmore from *Gilmore Girls* 2000–2007; and Susan and Julie Mayer from *Desperate Housewives* 2004–2012).99

Further, in flattening the generational divides, Mary Margaret is able to continue parenting Emma in adulthood—framing mothering as a lifetime commitment and means for character growth—without being visually, and as such ideologically, associated with older mothers. While inevitably Mary Margaret’s parenting struggles differ from the problems Regina and Emma face when trying to raise a 10/11 year-old-boy, her parenting style, which focuses on her daughter’s emotional needs, mirrors Judith Warner’s (2006) definition of the contemporary “good” (young) mother of the new millennia. She states,

> The new definition of good motherhood was, in the popular imagination, the state of being ‘almost always on-duty.’ […] Your love for your child was judged not just by the amount of time you spent with him or her but by the amount of time you spent *doing for* him or her. (p. 116)

Mary Margaret embodies the contemporary “good” mother as her life is consumed by what she can do for Emma and how she can develop a supportive relationship with her daughter. As a result, she develops a caring and mature relationship with Emma that Regina cannot establish with Henry, reinforcing the value of child/parent bonding and the contemporary “good” mother role.

Despite the overt divisions between the women’s parenting styles and status as single or married mothers, the open and long running structure of the serial storyline...

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99 Feasey, 2012; Karlyn, 2011; Diffrient & Lavery, 2010; and Calvin, 2008
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provides the space for all three women to develop as mothers, with their attempts at self-improvement signalling and representing their continued emotional growth in adulthood. Though each character has varying levels of success, Regina in particular struggles to change her parenting style. Consequently, in the second season, Regina is faced with losing Henry if she does not change her behaviour (“Broken,” 2.01). She attempts and struggles to become a better mother across nine episodes within the second season and in so doing becomes the self-surveilling and self-improving subject commonly found in postfeminism (see chapter two and Fairclough-Issacs, 2014; McRobbie, 2009; and Gill, 2007b for further discussion). For example, in “Lady of the Lake” (2.03) she is shown respecting Henry’s wishes by keeping her distance, in “The Doctor” (2.05) she begins therapy, in “Child of the Moon” (2.07) she cares for Henry after he is burned (taking on a nurturer role), and in “Into the Deep” (2.08) she works with Henry and David to save Mary Margaret and Emma.

The programme’s focus on the different elements of Regina’s self-improvement slows down her character growth in adulthood and links her eventual success to her movement from “outdated” and “inappropriate” parenting practices towards a new-momist approach that positions her as an emotionally nurturing and available mother. Her character change is rewarded across these episodes as she develops a relationship with Henry, reinforcing the division between good (emotionally compassionate and giving mothers) and bad (authoritative and selfish mothers) parenting.

However, unlike the episodic storylines, which depict character change as immediate and permanent by confining character change to a limited time frame and by concluding and finalising narratives about character growth/ transformation by the end of the episode, within the serial storyline characters can easily revert to their former identities and character norms. As such, despite Regina’s initial success, she is not
without “failures,” at times reverting back to old behaviours and once again assuming a villainous role. Just as her embodiment of the contemporary “good” mother is marked with reward, when failing to embody these norms and to actively engage in self-regulation/improvement (i.e., when she falls short of post-feminist expectations of ideal mothering), she is met with social isolation, personal suffering and the loss of her son. As such, Regina’s emotional development as an adult and mother is framed as an ongoing struggle within the long running serial storyline. This struggle not only presents growth and change in adulthood as a slow, yet ongoing process, but demonstrates the difficulty of overcoming the “dated” and “misguided” parenting practice (as embodied by Cora) Regina previously internalised.

Conclusively, in subverting ageing, the OUaT serial storyline shifts from the many literary, theatric and cinematic adaptations that constrain the queen’s and Snow White’s social and moral development (or lack thereof) within tellings about female vanity, sexual capital and the degradation of ageing female characters. In focusing on narratives of motherhood as salvation, the female characters’ roles and their experience of motherhood allows for continued emotional growth in adulthood, albeit within restricted (post-feminist) parameters. Nonetheless, in framing adulthood as a period of emotional growth rather than of physical and moral decline, OUaT initially seems to evade the narratives of devil woman as crone commonly found in “Snow White” adaptations.

However, as my above analysis revealed, despite visually flattening the generational divides between Regina, Mary Margaret and Emma, the programme’s representation of ideal mothering types connects the characters to different generations. While Regina is given the opportunity across the serial storyline to separate herself from Cora’s parenting practice by engaging with new-momism, in framing Cora’s
mothering as harmful to Regina’s development/well-being as a child and later a mother, the programme reinforces narratives that position the aged/older woman and her social perspective as flawed and/or evil and the young (read contemporary) woman as the “good”/angel woman. In this way, though OUaT veers away from a story about the rivalling of young and old beauties, the programme’s representation of mothering types continues to situate the queen and Snow White in opposition, preserving the narrative of devil woman as crone through an engagement with post-feminist values, contrasting depictions of motherhood/mothering and the reductive representation of the villainous older woman (i.e., Cora).

With this in mind, I would now like to consider how Regina’s and Mary Margaret’s development as mothers is paralleled by their position and growth within the Storybrooke community. I will outline how their embodiment of “second-wave” or postfeminism shapes their relationships and social development as women as well as how the community’s acceptance or rejection of their roles creates the boundaries for ideal female social and emotional maturation within the programme. Centrally, I argue that the daily and, at times, mundane, development of community relationships within the serial format naturalises post-feminist beliefs within the “Snow White” tale and restricts female character development in adulthood to a post-feminist rhetoric.

Part two: Community and the policing of identity.

In preceding and subsequent adaptations of the tale, the fairy–tale community plays a relatively minor role, pronouncing Snow White’s beauty at the beginning of the story; 100 embodying the damage the queen has caused to the kingdom (also discussed in

100 “Betty Boop in Snow White” (Fleischer, 1933); “Snow-White” (Mrs. H.B. Paull and Mr. L.A. Wheatley, 1868 & 1889); “The Vain Queen” (Consiglieri Pedroso, 1882); “The Magic Slippers” (Adolpho Francisco Coelho, 1885).
chapter four), bearing witness to Snow White’s suffering near the end of the tale; witnessing and, as such, implicitly sanctioning the queen’s punishment at the tale’s conclusion (discussed briefly in chapter three); and/or on the rare occasion proclaiming the queen’s punishment. In these adaptations the community assumes a generic identity and largely serves a socialising function.

Similarly, within OUaT, the community’s moral ambitions, beliefs and social policing create standards for Mary Margaret and Regina to be measured against. However, where in preceding versions the community remains as a static and minor presence, within OUaT the community is a dynamic group and dominant force that affects the women’s daily lives. OUaT creates a sense of community by bringing together an assortment of fairy–tale characters that, despite their differences, creates a functioning community that supports one another and sets the tone for the programme’s social values.

The characters’ different fairy–tale stories and the programme’s self-conscious, often ironic, reference to character traits, roles and “happily ever afters” in preceding versions (primarily in Disney productions) provides a source of comedic relief and adds depth to the Storybrooke community, particularly as characters’ histories and identities in OUaT are placed at odds with preceding versions. Nonetheless, despite the programme’s self-conscious engagement with fairy tales and fairy-tale traditions, what collectively defines the community remains elusive, as the open serial format evades

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101 *Mirror Mirror* (Singh, 2012); *Snow White and the Huntsman* (Sanders, 2012); *Snow White a Tale of Terror* (Cohn, 1997).
102 *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (Ames, 1912); *Snow White* (Ames and Dawley, 1916); “The Young Slave” (Basile, 1643).
103 *Mirror Mirror* (Singh, 2012); “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” (Sexton, 1971); *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (Ames, 1912); *Snow White* (Ames and Dawley, 1916); “Snowdrop” (Mrs. Edgar Lucas, 1909); “Snow-White” (Mrs. H.B. Paull and Mr. L.A. Wheatley, 1868 & 1889); “Little Snow White” (Addey and Co, 1863); “Snow White” (Grimms, 1857, 1812 & 1808); “The Young Slave” (Basile, 1643).
104 “Maroula and the Mother of Erotas” (Bernhard Schmidt, 1877).
“happily ever after” endings, and, as such, inhibits the community’s complete and stabilised formation. The characters are thus never transformed into flawless figures, and their struggles and stories are never fully brought to a close. The characters’ complexity enables the programme to explore a variety of social issues, and allows the community to express at times conflicting values and sentiments. In this way, the community’s relationship to and judgment of the women becomes a highly complex interaction that requires continuous renegotiation and understanding between the characters and across the seasons.

Although the programme explores community members’ lives and their fairy stories individually, this section considers their collective identity. In moments of conflict the characters assume a unified perspective, functioning like a Greek chorus by “embody[ing] the collective wisdom of the community” (Wiles, 2000, p. 142), and establishing the boundaries of civil order and appropriate social conduct for the characters. In these moments, Mary Margaret and Regina are expected to be accountable to the community. When the two characters do not explain themselves, and when they don’t have the community’s interests at heart, they are socially excluded until they are amply punished and take ownership of their failings. Punishment, though not the only reason for characters to be accountable, is one way the community facilitates the emergence of social beliefs and norms which Mary Margaret and Regina are then held against as adults.

Mary Margaret’s and Regina’s positions in the community are relatively fixed. However, they move between acceptance and rejection as their behaviour aligns or appears at odds with the community’s values and/or interests. When at odds with the community, the women’s disconnect stems from a lack of understanding between the two parties. This becomes apparent as the spectator, positioned in a higher place of
knowledge, is made privy to the characters’ private feelings, emotions and struggles, and to significant events, happenings and conflicts in the serial, episodic and short storylines, to which the community is ignorant. The spectator’s insider knowledge positions them to identify when the community’s limited knowledge results in the misjudgment of Mary Margaret’s and Regina’s behaviour—encouraging a level of sympathy with the women’s plight. Reversely, when either character is in the wrong, the spectator—witnessing first hand the character’s transgressive act, admission of guilt and the consequence of the women’s actions on the well-being of the community—is positioned to sympathise with the wronged community member(s) and to identify the nature of the women’s social transgression.

These conflicts are resolved as Mary Margaret and Regina reveal aspects of their character/experiences to fellow community members or seek to reflect community values by (re)immersing themselves in community events and activities. In this way, while in preceding and subsequent adaptations the community’s judgment leaves little room for character development or change, the women’s ongoing and dynamic interaction with the community in OUaT’s serial storyline creates an alternative space for female characters to learn and change in adulthood.

Having outlined the function of OUaT’s community, I will now turn to several examples from OUaT to analyse the female characters’ positions in the public sphere and to investigate how their community roles idealise the post-feminist, maternal woman in the serial storyline. Within Storybrooke, Mary Margaret and Regina take-up positions respectively as a primary school teacher and the mayor. Yet, their public positions do not guarantee their social immersion/inclusion. Reversely, their work environments serve to reflect their power over and/or relationship with the community, establishing them as insiders or outsiders.
When at work, Mary Margaret takes on a motherly role surrounded by children, and assumes a welcoming presence, with her modest clothing (long skirts, blouses and cardigans) giving her a homely appearance. Her carer role as a teacher aligns with adaptations of “Snow White” where she assumes a domestic identity by looking after the dwarfs and their home. Her work environment further reinforces her association with domestic tendencies as her classroom, which has books and artwork on the tables, and homework on the walls (Figure 5.13), reflects a lived in space that includes the lives and accomplishments of her students.

Her work environment enables Mary Margaret to invest in the intellectual and emotional status of her community, while allowing her community to become entwined in her personal and public life. Community members can thus freely interact with Mary Margaret in this space, seeking her guidance, asking her for explanations and taking note of her personal (romantic) life. In contrast, Regina, despite her role as mayor, works in an isolated and authoritative space. Her office, neatly fashioned in blacks, whites and silvers, seems unlived in—its every impeccable surface clean and shining

105 Mirror Mirror (Singh, 2012); Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (Disney, 1937); Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (Ames, 1912); Snow White (Ames and Dawley, 1916)
Unlike Mary Margaret’s homely appearance and lived-in classroom, Regina’s office and formal work attire gives the space a very adult feel, solely reflecting Regina’s style and preferences, while mirroring her self-centred perspective. In this way, Regina’s role as mayor mirrors her identity as queen within the fairy world.

Figure 5.14 Regina’s office (“The Thing You Love Most,” 1.02)

Though other characters enter Regina’s office, the space does not serve as a welcoming public location. For example, the first time Emma meets Regina at her office, Regina tricks Emma into calling Henry crazy, knowing that Henry will overhear her. After the conflict (and once Henry has run away), Regina spreads her body across the chair, displaying her dominance and hostility towards Emma (Figure 5.15). As seen in figure 5.15, the spectator is positioned to see Regina from Emma’s perspective. Looking directly down and over Emma’s shoulder, Regina, despite feeling that she has ‘won,’ is physically framed as little. Paired with Emma’s statement “you have no soul,” her small stature, manipulative nature and hostile behaviour in this space reveals her as petty and abusive.

Though a civil servant, she is relatively unconcerned with public responsibility, alternatively using her job to position herself above criticism and inspection. In this space her work is secretive, requiring characters to break-in when they want to uncover
information and evidence she has hidden. The closed-off nature of her work environment is symbolic of her division from the community and the power she asserts over them. It also mirrors the queen’s behaviour in preceding adaptations (specifically when the queen plans and prepares her attacks—the poison comb and apple—in seclusion),\textsuperscript{106} with Regina’s isolated status, abusive behaviour and deceitful nature positioning her as a tyrannical queen, albeit in a contemporary context.

The characters’ varying work environments symbolise the difference between their social powers over or incorporation within the community. However, their positions and (abuse of) power is actualised through their refusal or willingness to account for themselves to the community. For example, when the programme first introduces Snow White as Mary Margaret, Regina, with Emma as witness, demands to know what involvement Mary Margaret had in Henry’s disappearance (“Pilot,” 1.01). Mary Margaret explains her innocence, reasoning that she only gave Henry a book of fairy tales to help him with his loneliness. As the camera cuts between the three

\textsuperscript{106}“Snowdrop” (Mrs. Edgar Lucas, 1909); “Little Snow White” (Raphael Tuck & Sons, 1907); “Snow-White” (Mrs. H.B. Paull and Mr. L.A. Wheatley, 1868 & 1889); “Snow White” (Lucy and Walter Crane, 1882); “Little Snow White” (Addey and Co, 1863).
women’s faces, Mary Margaret takes ownership of her parental interference (giving Henry a book without Regina’s permission) through her passive body language, looking down and emotionally explaining her reasoning. Although she redistributes some responsibility for Henry’s disappearance and strong belief in fairy tales by highlighting Regina’s inability to rectify Henry’s unhappiness, her confession offers herself up to Regina, Emma, and the spectator alike. In so doing, Mary Margaret surrenders herself to judgment and takes responsibility as a teacher, woman and, centrally, as a member of the Storybrooke community.

Conversely, Regina repeatedly refuses to explain herself, showing her superiority and division from the community. Regina’s guilt is captured in close-up shots of her face as she expresses satisfaction when evading suspicion, or worry when her misdeeds may be uncovered. Her facial expressions are acts of admittance that, though hidden from the community, are visible to the spectator. She is thus revealed as a powerful and threatening figure, with her ability to hide her misdeeds positioning her above the community’s authority and establishing her as an outsider.

The division between the two characters’ positions as insiders/outsiders, and the community’s general acceptance of Mary Margaret, frames Mary Margaret as the preferable female—reinforcing notions of femininity that see ideal females as caring, compassionate figures, who do not pursue power and authority, but whom take responsibility and have the community’s interest at heart. Mary Margaret’s relationship with the community mimics her new-momist approach to parenting as she assumes a caring, supportive and self-sacrificing role when addressing the needs of her community. While her maternal nature is not an uncommon feature of Snow White’s character, in embodying the perception that women flourish in the public sphere by
assuming a maternal role, Mary Margaret’s status as the “good” woman in fact perpetuates a post-feminist rhetoric.

Both her embodiment of new-momism, which Susan Douglas and Meredith Michaels (2004) identify as “the central justifying ideology of what has come to be called ‘postfeminism’” (p. 24), and her immersion in the public sphere with “paid professional work [that] never drifts too far from the skillset associated with familial domesticity” (Negra, 2009, p. 17) enables the programme to emphasise and glorify a post-feminist stance. The positively-coded feminised elements of Mary Margaret’s classroom/workspace allows her to demonstrate her social value through her maternal “instincts:” seeking to emotionally support and cater to a sad child, teaching children how to love nature and by extension each other, or by subtly instructing parents on how to make their child feel loved and happy (“Pilot,” 1.01). Thus, while working in a public location, Mary Margaret’s maternal role in fact transforms the public into the private by reaffirming “good” family values. The programme’s idealisation of Mary Margaret and her community relationships thus elevate post-feminist beliefs, most notably their celebration of the return to the home (Negra, 2009).

Alternatively, Regina is largely unable to gain acceptance in either the public or private sphere. Her struggle to conform to new-momism and her desire for a non-maternal career in the public sphere becomes a source of criticism as her public ambitions align her with reductive and stereotypical depictions of second-wave feminists—with whom the programme seemingly finds fault. Mirroring a post-feminist framing of second-wave feminist as hostile (Modleski, 1999) and distant from the maternal (Karlyn, 2011; Radner and Stringer, 2011), Regina’s role as mayor (i.e., her

107 Also see Negra (2009).
108 For more on postfeminists’ return to the home/maternal see Karlyn, 2011; Elspeth Probyn, 1997; and Bonnie Dow, 1996.
non-maternal position in the public sphere), her aggressive behaviour, and her desire for control, power and authority over both Henry and the community separate her from post-feminists’ values and their romantic views of ‘the return to the home’ (Negra, 2009; Dow, 1996).

Alternatively, the programme aligns Regina with the figure of the old female professional (as discussed in chapter two; see Negra, 2009) by presenting Regina as an anti-role model for the protagonist (Emma) and as a figure of calculated deceit and insecurity. Since in post-feminist discourse the old woman is associated with the values of “older” or “outdated” forms of feminism (see chapter two; Wearing, 2007), Regina’s connection to the old female professional and the programme’s depiction of her as hostile and distanced from the maternal sees her character embody a stereotypical post-feminist representation of a second-wave figure.

Despite the blurring of Regina and Mary Margaret’s ages she is held in sharp contrast with Mary Margaret: the good, contemporary, post-feminist woman. In this way, the failed mother, the devil woman and the crone are connected to and all embodied by a stereotypically depicted “second-wave” figure, generating a storyline that belittles the beliefs and struggles of this ideological and sociopolitical perspective. In this way, OUaT not only reaffirms the narrative of devil woman as crone found in preceding and subsequent adaptations, but the programme in fact further defines and specifies the characteristics of the devil woman within a contemporary post-feminist context.

The critique of “second-wave” feminism is clearly established through Regina’s attempts to reform her identity and gain acceptance from her community, reaffirming dominant discourses in popular culture that suggest that the values of “older” generations are dated, harmful and faulty (as detailed in chapter two; also see Modleski,
1999). The rejection of her stereotypical second-wave identity, takes shape and parallels her attempt to become a “better” mother (i.e., a post-feminist mother), namely as she leaves her job as Mayor in “Lady of the Lake” (2.03); she begins nurturing Henry in “Child of the Moon” (2.07); she seeks to join in community celebrations, bringing a lasagna and demonstrating her domestic skills in “The Cricket Game” (2.10); and finally when she decides to sacrifice her life and power for the needs of the community in “And Straight on ‘til Morning” (2.22).

Her actions are rewarded with social inclusion, and the title of hero (“And Straight on ‘til Morning,” 2.22). These rewards reaffirm that her conduct constitutes “good” behaviour within the programme. Her struggle to become a maternal, approachable, non-hostile figure reaffirms a post-feminist discourse that purports that “young women […] can gain social and sexual recognition only by distancing themselves from feminism” (Karlyn, 2011, p. 27). In this way, although OUaT adapts the tale by enabling Regina’s character transformation—branching away from versions that condemn the queen to death—Regina’s “emotional growth” is nonetheless confined to a post-feminist attitude, that only recognises her emotional maturation when she distances herself from the “values” of an “older” generation of women, and when her “growth” signals a return to the private sphere and familial roles.

The serial storyline does critique past generations of women and “their” social and ideological perspectives. However, the characters’ ability to move beyond the “shortcomings” of aged women/“older” ideologies, suggests that female characters’ “failings” are not a product of physically ageing but occur when characters mistakenly assume “faulty” (i.e., “dated”) values. Although, in a small way, the serial storyline provides the space for female development to be explored in terms of “gains” rather than losses—with the characters undergoing continued character growth in adulthood—
ultimately the programme erases the aged woman by reductively representing her value and contributions, and further engages with a post-feminist rhetoric by representing the female characters as always in the process of “becoming.” Further, in suggesting that ideal character development can only take shape when adult women align themselves with their younger counterparts, the programme reinforces already dominant post-feminist discourses, as investigated in chapter two, that stigmatising and erase the older woman by encouraging her symbolic and literal death.

My next section looks at female development within short storylines. This section pays particular attention to how episodic, serial and short stories work in conjunction and draw on specific aspects of “Snow White” when representing temporary character changes and reaffirming character norms.

**Temporary Transformations: Short Storylines About the Importance of Social Education**

This section focuses on temporary character changes within short storylines, specifically detailing how these, at times, dramatic happenings are rationalised within the programme. Illustrating the connection between short, serial and episodic tellings, I outline how the interplay between these storylines adds depth to “Snow White.” I assert that the programme relies on a level of flexibility between narrative structures when depicting complex, at times, seemingly contradictory, character roles within the short storyline. Using Mary Margaret’s involvement in Cora’s murder in episodes 2.15–2.18 as my primary point of reference, I account for her character alteration and consider how stories about adulthood become entwined with and dependent on characters’ “proper” social education in youth.
The short storylines and their conflicts diverts from the mundane tendencies of the serial, focusing on moments such as murder investigations, custody battles, family arguments, sudden character reversals, and threats of an apocalypse. The dramatic nature of the short storylines, which might otherwise seem jarring within the mundane development of the serial story, are accounted for by the episodic storylines weaved throughout the programme. The episodic stories often adapt the fairy-tale tellings by highlighting (or creating) “forgotten” or previously unnamed character facets and aspects of the tale. These (new) stories, when paired with short or serial storylines, use the characters’ fairy-tale pasts to explain their present. In this way, the interweaving and layering of the past and present creates, what Segal (2013) refers to as, “temporal vertigo” with each character simultaneously containing/embodying traces of all the selves they had previously been. As I will demonstrate in my contemplation of the villainous Mary Margaret storyline, the constructed nature of the histories and its relationship with the short and serial plots facilitates the recrafting of female characters’ identities and roles as the past and present intermingle.

Contextualising Mary Margaret’s villainous transformation and the didactic implications tied to this short storyline, I will first consider how Mary Margaret’s corrupted identity contrasts with her ‘good’ identity in the serial story. Prior to Mary Margaret’s involvement in Cora’s murder, she is depicted in the serial story as kind, caring, forgiving and selfless. In Storybrooke she volunteers at the local hospital (“Pilot,” 1.01, “Snow Falls,” 1.03, “That Still Small Voice,” 1.05); repeatedly takes in the desperate, providing both Emma (“Snow Falls,” 1.03) and Ruby (Little Red Riding Hood) with a place to live (“Red-Handed,” 1.15); and willingly risks her own life to save Regina (“Broken,” 2.01). In the episodic fairy world she forgives Regina for her assassination attempt (“The Heart is a Lonely Hunter,” 1.07); she takes care of an
injured peasant girl who she is unacquainted with ("The Evil Queen," 2.20); and she sacrifices her own freedom in exchange for Grumpy’s life ("7:15AM," 1.10). The spectator is positioned to view her as a kind, pure and approachable character as she is visually depicted wearing costumes which code her as innocent in youth—in white and pastel dresses with bows and flowers in her hair ("The Stable Boy," 1.18 & "We Are Both," 2.02)—and as unthreatening in adulthood—wearing button up cardigans, blouses, and knee length dresses and skirts that mask her sexual identity and give her a homely appearance. Her character is also framed as sentimental and loving through the romantic sound track that aurally codes her scenes and singularly accompanies her character.

Yet, in the villainous Mary Margaret story, Mary Margaret abandons these character traits and norms by vowing to kill Cora ("The Queen is Dead," 2.15). The immorality of her decision is emphasised by the episode’s use of non-diegetic music, a foreboding soundtrack that positions the spectator to identify her transition from a wholly good to a corruptible figure. Although this character change may seem rash, the short narrative accounts for her dramatic transformation in adulthood by incorporating an episodic story that depicts a once spoiled and cruel Young Snow White ("The Queen is Dead," 2.15), and by heightening the intensity of the short storyline when Mary Margaret witnesses Cora kill her childhood servant Johanna, and learns that Cora also killed her mother.

The first episode of this short storyline re-imagines the “Snow White” tale, and Snow White’s identity in OUaT’s second season by revealing Young Snow White’s spoiled and less than pure nature in youth (see above: pp. 234–236). Diverging from the one-dimensional representations of her role in many popular adaptations,\textsuperscript{109} her

\textsuperscript{109} Most notably the Grimm Brothers’ and Disney’s versions.
character flaws present her as an emotionally complex character, and rationalise Mary Margot’s self-serving decision to kill Cora in Storybrooke—framing her decision as a “return” to her selfish past, rather than a deviation from her character norm within OUaT. In this way, the weaving of the episodic and short storylines creates a bridge between different ages and related identities, revealing the process of character formation, growth and development as a non-linear happening by reflecting the notion that as we age we are rendered “psychically, in one sense, all ages and no age” (Segal, 2013, p. 4). Mary Margaret seamlessly embodies the various traits of her childhood, adolescence and adulthood as she is faced with varying conflicts, as her body evades chronometric ageing and as the interweaving of episodic, short and serial storylines both represent and break down the discrete identities characters assume at different periods in their lives/moments in their stories.

In giving into these flaws and satisfying her desire for revenge in “The Miller’s Daughter” (2.16), Mary Margaret is filled with regret and pain, expressing her sorrow to David (“The Miller’s Daughter,” 2.16) as well as crying to Regina while asking to be killed (“Welcome to StoryBrooke,” 2.17). Her transgression also has seemingly serious and very physical consequences. For example, when Regina temporarily pulls Mary Margaret’s heart out of her chest, she identifies a dark spot at the centre of Mary Margaret’s otherwise red heart. Regina explains that this spot is the physical consequence of evil actions (Figure 5.16; “Welcome to StoryBrooke,” 2.17). Positioned behind Mary Margaret’s shoulder, the spectator is situated to see the evidence of Mary Margaret’s corruption and to identify her as no longer pure.

The extent of her corruption is further clarified when Regina concludes that Mary Margaret will be unable to prevent her heart from fully blackening with evil, and that when it does she will lose her “goodness” and all that she holds dear. Regina’s
claims seem to have merit as Mary Margaret continues her evil descent, first losing control of her anger and slapping another character, and then expressing concerns that she will transform into a villain (“Selfless, Brave and True,” 2.18). In giving into her flaws, she is depicted as the source of her own downfall, reinforcing the idea that female characters must avidly resist their amoral desires to maintain their goodness.

Nonetheless, following “Selfless, Brave and True” (2.18) Mary Margaret returns to her former identity, and, in episode 2.19 (“Lacey”), decides to continue to follow her mother’s example/lessons—revealing the strength and importance of lessons learned in youth.\footnote{Although the value of her mother’s teachings could be seen to elevate the knowledge of older women, as detailed previously Eva’s early death detaches her from the figure of the aged woman, while her alignment with new-momism associates her with a contemporary value system and a post-feminist generation. The strength and importance of Eva’s lesson thus serve to idealise a post-feminist perspective within the programme.} The character growth Mary Margaret undergoes in the short story detailed above, reveals that female character development is not isolated to the individual stages of youth or adulthood, but occurs across the entirety of the characters’ lives as past lessons and values are tested and reevaluated. In this way, the characters’ continued growth in adulthood complicates the categorisation of the young and old (as detailed in chapter two) by muddling the associated narratives and discourses of progression and

\textit{Figure 5.16} Regina showing Mary Margaret, Mary Margaret’s blackening heart (“Welcome to StoryBrooke,” 2.17)
decline, and by presenting ageing as a process of complex layering in which different ages are psychically bridged all the time (see Segal, 2013).

This being said, despite the characters’ continued growth in adulthood, the contrasting timespans (in terms of seasons, episodes, storylines and screen time) in which Mary Margaret and Regina assume transgressive positions reaffirms the importance of “proper” social development in youth, and, in this way, mirrors Bruhm and Hurley’s (2004) assertion that in narratives about children, childhood serves as the platform from which adult identities take their shape. Mary Margaret, though temporarily deviating from her “good” role, easily finds her way back to “goodness” within the short storyline because of the narrative’s closed structure; its inclusion of an episodic storyline that shows her “proper” social education in youth; and the dominance of her ‘good’ character role in the serial storyline.

Conversely, Regina’s struggle to shed her villainous identity and dysfunctional behaviour in the serial storyline can be linked to its open structure which eludes conclusions and with it “happily ever afters;” to her episodic history that reinforces the links between her victimisation in youth and her villainous behaviour as an adult (in both episodic and serial storylines); and to the dominance of her dysfunctional role in the serial storyline. As episodic storylines of their youth rationalise their behaviour in both the serial and short storylines, the contrast between the two characters’ pasts in the episodic storylines and their character growth in serial and/or short storylines exaggerates the importance of youth in the continued and successful development of heroic and loved female characters into/throughout adulthood.

**Conclusion**

Responding to Haase’s (2004) assertion that
the gender-related work that [fairy-tale scholars have] done in [other significant media] needs to be expanded—not only with more individual interpretations and with work on media creations by women but also with comprehensive studies contributing in a broader way to the history of the fairy tale, (p. 30)

this chapter established how female characters’ identities and roles are represented as they grow and age in OUaT’s twenty-first-century televisual adaptation of “Snow White.”

In analysing television, chapter five has facilitated a dialogue between ageing, childhood, fairy-tale and adaptation studies to account for how issues of time and temporality, and growth and ageing play out in a contemporary televisual adaptation of “Snow White.” Centrally, I determined that the interplay between OUaT’s structure and its adaptation of “Snow White” within multiple, interrelated storylines provided the space and temporal frameworks to reimagine female character roles, identities, relationships and conflicts within the programme. Although it could be argued that film can similarly incorporate multiple storylines, as my investigation showed it is the use of both closed and open plotlines of differing length (confined to one hour episodes, 2–4 episodes and spread across a season) that allows the programme to distinctly adapt “Snow White,” the tale’s temporal engagement, and the characters’ lives before and after “happily ever after.”

As an audiovisual medium, television enabled the programme to represent female characters’ experiences of growth and ageing on screen. However, as I demonstrated, in casting three female leads of relatively the same age, the programme alternatively muddled the characters’ generational divisions and shifted OUaT away from a narrative about the queen’s fear of ageing and being replaced. Refocusing the characters’ conflict around Snow White’s betrayal of the queen’s trust in OUaT, I determined that the programme made use of magical time, the fairy-tale characters’
disconnect with growth/ageing, and the programme’s multiple and interconnected storylines to add a complexity to the women’s identities and emotional development within the programme. Specifically, my critical analysis revealed how the interweaving of episodic, serial and short storylines linked the characters’ present tense identities with their past selves, creating layered identities of all the selves they had been. In this way, the programme challenged chronometric understandings of time, temporality, growth and ageing, and gave additional depth to previously one-dimensional characters.

Nonetheless, despite these alterations, as this chapter has demonstrated, the characters continued to align with preceding adaptations as they assumed oppositional roles as ideal and “undesirable” females. As I explained above, in connecting the queen (Regina) and Snow White (Mary Margaret) to “dated” and/or contemporary mothering practices, and “second-wave” and/or postfeminism, the programme not only reinforced a narrative of devil woman as crone, but further developed this stereotype by associating it with a stereotypical and reductive depiction of second-wave feminism. The programme’s blurring of ages thus masks its critique of the older woman and its idealisation of youth. This suggest that even when post-feminism seemingly has little to say about ageing (see Whelehan, 2013), the discourses of age friction that regularly feature in postfeminist texts (see Negra, 2009) perpetuate the stigmatisation of female ageing and the older woman, even when this figure is hidden from view. Conclusively, though the medium allowed for the expansion of “Snow White” and introduced character complexity, it nonetheless created a didactic narrative that idealises female character development that conforms to post-feminist values and that sees (and encourages) the adult female characters to more closely align with a “younger,” “youthful” generation of women.

Like the films in the previous chapter, this television programme by and large
perpetuated stereotypical representations and post-feminist values. However, *OUaT* nonetheless provided a space to critically and productively explore how these representations are at times masked and perpetuated. In unpacking the intricate layering of episodic, short and serial storylines, and their various temporalities, my research has highlighted how scholars can begin to analyse the diverse ways televisual adaptations of fairy tales take shape and character complexity is established. In considering the intersection between form and content, I have demonstrated the potential to read fairy-tale television programmes critically, and to further understand how fairy-tale texts can and do engage with complex social norms and values. I believe this research creates a potential framework for future studies on fairy-tale television by demonstrating how these tellings can be understood in relation to their medium of adaptation.

Exploring representations of the maturing female body in comic books, my next section explains how representations of time, temporality, growth and ageing unfold on the physical space of the page. I will consider whether *Fable’s* adaptation of “Snow White” reflects the stigmatisation of comic books as hyper sexualised and violent—contemplating the depictions of Snow White’s maturing body and the re-imagining of her lived experiences during periods of growth.
In this chapter, I investigate the comic adaptation of “Snow White,” using Bill Willingham and Mark Buckingham’s *Fables* (2002–2015) as my primary point of analysis. Specifically, I illustrate how *Fables*’ depiction of female growth/ageing and character development take shape when representations of characters, locations, and (the movement through) time are confined to the physical space of the comic book page.

What distinguishes comics as a visual medium is the sequential arrangement of images that “occupy a different space” (McCloud, 1993, p. 7). As Scott McCloud argues, in spatially juxtaposing images to create a narrative, “space does for comics what time does for film” (p. 7), with space informing how and what a given narrative (can) communicate(s). This is not to say that comics don’t engage with a concept of time or follow a temporal logic. Alternatively, time and temporality takes shape spatially through the linking of static images (Kukkonen, 2011), the use of word balloons, the gutter (the space between panels), closure, panel arrangement/page lay out (Royal, 2007) and visually communicated sound effects (McCloud, 1993).

In depicting time, temporality and in turn growth and ageing, spatially, comics control and manipulate representations of time and temporality by reducing motion “to pertinent postures” (Kukkonen, 2011, p. 43), and by using panels of varying sizes to arrest or quicken eye movement—altering the tempo of the storyline. Comics thus give the impression of forward movement while in fact controlling tempo and juxtaposing the past, present and future all within the same space (Chute, 2008).
Yet despite the complexity of the comic structure and the number of fairy–tale comics produced in the last 26 years,\textsuperscript{111} fairy–tale scholars have largely ignored, criticised or dismissed these adaptations. As Adam Zolkover (2008) points out,

Historically, there has been little space in the discipline of folkloristics for the study of the American comic book. This was the case in 1980 when Alex Scobie wrote that folklorists ‘have not evinced the same degree of interest as has been shown by their colleagues in the social sciences’ (70). And it is no less true today when, despite an expansion of folkloristics into the realm of popular culture, discussion of sequential art in print remains conspicuously sparse. (p. 38)

Using the term “folkloristics” to encompass both folklore and fairy–tale scholarship,\textsuperscript{112} Zolkover’s claims have continued relevance, with fairy–tale scholars publishing little on comic books since 2008. Although Cristina Bacchilega (2013) argues that comics, specifically \textit{Fables}, have attracted the attention of fairy–tale scholars in recent years, citing Zolkover (2008), Karin Kukkonen (2011) and Jack Zipes (2009) as evidence, the fact that only two of these scholars are fairy–tale scholars (Zolkover and Zipes),\textsuperscript{113} and of the two, only Zolkover considers comic books worthy of study, undermine Bacchilega’s assertion that comics are gaining acceptance by fairy–tale scholars.

As Bacchilega (2013) passingly points out, Zipes criticises \textit{Fables}. He specifically states, “the resistant quality of the fantastic is minimized [in \textit{Fables}], as it generally is in most popular forms of art such as comics and graphic novels, to have a large appeal” (Zipes, 2009, p. 87). Zipes believes that “fantasy can be subversive and


\textsuperscript{112} Although I recognise that fairy–tale studies and folkloristics are separate fields, as noted in chapter one, it is not uncommon for scholars to conflate the two disciplines, as Zolkover does here.

\textsuperscript{113} Kukkonen labels herself as a narratology and cognitive approaches scholar. While she writes about \textit{Fables}, she does not singularly write about fairy tales and her work is from a narratology perspective.
resistant to existing social conditions. That it can …] undermine what passes for normality, […] expose the contradictions of civil society, and […] right the world out-of-joint in the name of humanity” (p. 82). In concluding that comics cannot fulfil this role, he dismisses the medium as a form that simply reproduces the status quo.

Work that has been done by fairy-tale scholars and folklorists on comics argues for the importance of the medium (Scobie, 1980; Zolkover, 2008), discusses the use of folklore motifs in super hero comics (Baker, 1975), and considers how twenty-first-century fairy-tale comics reflect post 9/11 politics and socio-cultural perceptions (Bacchilega, 2013). This chapter, drawing on adaptation theory (as discussed in chapter one) will extend the work fairy-tale scholars have done on comics by explaining how the interplay between form and content informs aspects of the tale’s enunciation and with it, its embodiment of time, and representation of female growth and ageing.

Building on Brian McFarlane’s (1996) analysis of adaptation, I will demonstrate how the comic’s plot strategies and altered sequencing defamiliarises the story, and in this way, reflects Linda Hutcheon’s (2006) assertion that a change in form and/or context can create completely different interpretations of a work (as discussed in chapter one). To support this analysis I will draw on Kukkonen’s (2011) structural account of the comic form and her contemplation of transmedial narratology. Specifically, the chapter will detail how the comic book’s use of physical space, narration and, in the case of Fables, cartooning, collectively informs Fables’ temporal logic, which, as I will illustrate, enables new and old stories about female growth and ageing to take shape.

The chapter begins by outlining Fables’ plot, characters and structure. Following this, my analysis is split into three sections. My first section demonstrates how the comic’s visual representation of a child Snow White and her sister Rose Red
universalises the figures, playing with expectations of childhood as utopic and fairy tales as transformative to question the idealisation of the innocent child (as discussed in chapter two). My second section explores the pairing of violence with the female characters’ physical and emotional developments. I account for how the juxtaposing of the past, present and future during moments of trauma disconnects female growth and ageing from the natural progression of time. I argue that the process of growth/ageing occurs in the gutter, with the images, panel sequence, character dialogue and narration clarifying the characters’ temporal experiences. In my final section, I explain how narration, the characters’ perspectives and mode of address silences or gives voice to the female characters’ experiences of physical and emotional growth. I conclude by asserting that the comic’s filtration of events through Rose Red queers “Snow White’s” narrative trajectory, re-appropriates the tale’s core and casts Snow White’s character development as secondary within the adaptation.

This chapter primarily focuses on Snow White and Rose Red, exploring narratives of childhood and female growth/ageing. Centrally, I argue that, counter to Zipes’ conclusion, the comic can question traditional narratives and provide alternative readings, using fantasy to subvert dominant discourses that see the innocent child transition into a contributing and functioning adult.

**Fables: An Overview**

*Fables* is a monthly comic, first published in 2002 (Willingham, n.d.). Despite its fairy–tale theme, this is an adult comic, depicting sexual content/images and violence. It follows the lives of various fairy–tale characters who, failing to defeat the “Adversary’s” empire in the fairy world, have lived in New York city as refugees for
300 years. The comic follows the daily struggles of the fairy-tale community, Fabletown, and the conflicts between its citizens, the Fables.

As Zolkover (2008) and Haase (2007) note, the comic’s “postmodernist blending of elements, from a variety of loci within fairy-tale discourse that serves at once as commentary, play, and a fairy tale in its own right” (Zolkover, 2008, p. 41), marks the comic as pastiche. As such, its assorted cast is predominately dislocated from their fairy-tale settings and histories, with the comic creating new (fairy) stories. The comic provides a self-conscious and ironic engagement with fairy tales, fairy-tale traditions, characters and character roles, critiquing the idealisation of “happily ever after” by evading conclusions and exposing characters to “real world” problems such as financial difficulties; unwanted pregnancies; emotional abuse and instability; and marital troubles.

The comic incorporates characters such as Snow White, Rose Red, Prince Charming, Cinderella, Bluebeard and the Big Bad Wolf (Bigsby) to name a few. The characters are ageless on earth (they did age in the fairy world) and some are virtually impossible to kill—the “mundys’” (i.e., humans’) memory of the characters’ fairy-tale stories protecting them from death. The human shaped fairy-tale characters live amongst the “mundys” while the animal characters (all of whom can talk and largely behave as humans) live in Upstate New York on the Fabletown farm. All of the characters keep their identities and their community hidden from the humans.

As apparent from the above description, Fables shares many similarities with Once Upon a Time. In fact, prior to ABC’s release of Once Upon a Time, ABC sought to adapt Fables for television (Willingham, 2011). Due to the adaptations’ similarities, Once Upon a Time has been accused of copying Fables—rumours that Willingham and the Once Upon a Time team have both denied (Willingham, 2011). Although it is
interesting to consider the overlap between the texts, in line with adaptation theory, I wish to avoid making claims about originality and arguments about fidelity, which are both difficult to prove and unproductive. However, though I will not explore these tensions beyond the above recognition that they do exist, I will consider the relationship between *Once Upon a Time* and *Fables* by contemplating the different ways television and comics adapt “Snow White.”

Within *Fables* the characters’ histories are mentioned and occasionally explored across multiple issues. However, unlike *Once Upon a Time*, which weaves the characters’ histories and their lives in Storybrooke together in each episode, *Fables* doesn’t consistently revisit the characters’ fairy–tale stories, alternatively focusing on new stories about their Fabletown lives. For Bacchilega (2013) the classification of *Fables* as an adaptation in its entirety remains unproblematic. Aligning with Robert Stam’s (2000) belief that adaptations don’t contain a core, and that texts “comprise[…] of] a series of verbal signals that can generate a plethora of possible readings” for subsequent works to adapt/re-imagine (p. 57; also see chapter one), Bacchilega counts *Fables* as an adaptation even when it isn’t adapting a tale’s core.

This project, however, does not align with Bacchilega’s or Stam’s perspective, alternatively reflecting Hutcheon’s (2006) belief, as detailed in chapter one, that “the story is the common denominator, the core of what is transposed across different media and genres” (p. 10). To classify the whole comic as an adaptation based on (at times) cursory reflections/references (such as character names or appearances) might open the process of adaptation “to textual accounts that deliberately seek to escape the interpretative and social processes that work to pin down meaning at a particular point” (Geraghty, 2008, p. 4). As Christine Geraghty (2008) points out, this approach “not only makes analysis almost impossible, given the number and fleetingness of possible
associations and connections between texts, but also does not necessarily help our study of adaptation” (p. 4).

This is not to suggest that *Fables*’ adaptation of “Snow White” is not intertextual in nature. As Hutcheon (2006) asserts, adaptations are a form of intertextuality. After all “we experience adaptations (as adaptations) as palimpsests throughout memory of other works that resonate through repetition with variation” (p. 8). However, central to the process of adaptation is an extended intertextuality that actively incorporates a tale’s core. Consequently, I confine my investigation of *Fables* to the comic’s adaptation of “Snow White” in issues 94–97 (2011), and the connection the comic draws between “Snow White” and *Fables*’ long running storyline.

However, before beginning this investigation I will first contextualise the characterisation of Snow White in *Fables*. In issue 1 Snow White takes centre stage as the deputy mayor of Fabletown. Though under the leadership of mayor King Cole, she in fact runs the community, instructing King Cole on what decisions to make. While the comic fetishises her female power in this position, in ultimately placing her under King Cole, the comic engages with a post-feminist discourse that sees female power placed within firm limits. Nonetheless, she is depicted as a strong and authoritative figure, and proves herself capable of protecting and controlling the Fable citizens. While Snow White later steps down from her position to raise her part-human part-wolf children on the farm (Issue 30–33), enacting a retreatist scenario, she maintains a prominent role within the community by helping to make decisions and act on behalf of the Fabletown citizens, albeit in a reduced capacity.

Snow White is also given a troublesome sister, named Rose Red. Rose Red, described as “the original wild child” (Issue 1), stands in deep contrast with Snow White’s values and behaviour. She is highly sexualised, prominently having affairs with
men throughout the series, while referencing sexual encounters with women in issue 6. Though the two sisters are largely estranged for the first five issues, Rose Red becomes central to the adaptation of “Snow White” as the inclusion of her character alters the narrative trajectory of the adaptation and the tale’s central conflict. Within *Fables*’ long running narrative, Rose Red takes on a prominent role in the community as she is placed in charge of the farm (Issue 5), and, leaving behind her party lifestyle, becomes an ally with Snow White. Like Snow White, she retreats from city life and seemingly finds her “place” by becoming a carer for the Fabletown farm animals/community. Through this retreatist narrative her sexuality becomes largely contained, particularly as she seeks to “reform” her identity. Though throughout the series the sisters are at times in conflict, they continue to protect and care about one another.

Rose Red is herself a fairy-tale character, from the lesser-known tale “Snow White and Rose Red.” Within this tale, the two girls must deal with an evil dwarf before Snow White’s prince can transform from bear to man, and Rose Red can marry his brother. Though the characters from “Snow White and Rose Red” and “Snow White” share a name, they are different characters with different storylines. *Fables*, however, conflates the two tales, casting Rose Red as Snow White’s sister. Although Zolkover (2008) argues that the blending of the two tale types breaks character and narrative continuity,114 *Fables*’ recrafting of “Snow White and Rose Red’s” conclusion, successfully merges the tellings as Snow White’s adventure with Rose Red leads her to the evil queen and the seven dwarfs. In issues 94–97, Rose Red learns the truth about her and Snow White’s past, as the two tales are revisited and linked in flashbacks. In

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114 Zolkover’s assertions, published three years prior to the release of issues 94–97, are justifiable as the comic had yet to explain how the two tale types merged. As such, I am not countering or dismissing his argument, but explaining how the comic has since linked the two tales to maintain textual continuity.
this way, character and narrative continuity is not lost, the “Snow White and Rose Red” tale functioning as an added component of “Snow White.”

The “Snow White” tale functions within Fables’ larger narrative as a means for Rose Red to overcome past traumas and her recent depression. The story is told to Rose Red, and the reader, by a third party character who hopes to emotionally heal her. This character assumes different identities throughout the comic, and though the character’s true identity is not revealed, in these issues the character appears as Snow White and Rose Red’s mother. Although this is a “Snow White” adaptation, it casts Snow White as a secondary character, neither allowing her to narrate her own experience or remain as the tale’s singular focus. Nonetheless, the adaptation depicts her and Rose Red’s physical and emotional growth from childhood to adulthood, as the “Snow White” tale unfolds and the characters are exposed to the harsh realities of an adult world.

Framing Childhood: Questions of Utopia and Transformation

This section demonstrates how notions of childhood as idyllic and fairy tales as utopic are played with and re-imagined in Fables. I illustrate how the comic’s engagement with the fairy–tale structure; the characters’ adult remembrance of childhood in present tense panels; and the comic’s depiction of their fairy–tale histories problematises the transformative nature of fairy tales and questions the value of the girls’ innocence in childhood. Ultimately, this section argues that Fables, despite initially aligning with the ideological perception that a “proper” and “pure” childhood produces an “ideal”

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115 When referring to the shape shifter, I will put the word “mother” in quotation marks. When referencing representations of their actual mother in the flashbacks, mother will not be in quotation marks.
adult, 116 questions the validity of this perception when the girls’ innocence exposes them to danger, violence and sorrow.

The retelling of Snow White and Rose Red’s combined history (Issues 94–7) is broken up into seven stories. 117 Each story—initially following the fairy–tale structure—begins with “once upon a time,” followed by the introduction of characters and their central conflicts. However, the comic subsequently diverts from fairy–tale norms by denying resolution, and replacing conclusions with the introduction of the additional “once upon a times” and conflicts.

*Fables*’ use of multiple stories within a longer story arc may appear to mirror *Once Upon a Time*’s complex structure (explored in chapter five), which interweaves episodic, short and serial storylines. However, where *Once Upon a Time*’s episodic and short storylines are self-contained and resolve in an episode or across a limited number of episodes (2–4), *Fables*’ seven stories are not clearly confined or separated by issues. Further, in introducing new stories and diverting from clear endings within the same sequence of panels, the comic evades conclusions and does away with the promise of resolution in upcoming issues. The introduction of these short and unresolved stories within *Fables*, firmly breaks from the fairy–tale structure, alternatively functioning as a means to exaggerate the characters’ inability to secure a newfound and improved equilibrium. 118

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116 A perception that emerged in, and which remained relatively dominant since, the Enlightenment, as discussed in detail in chapter two.
117 The seven storylines are premised around the following 1) Snow White and Rose Red’s adventure with the dwarf; 2) The Bear Prince’s proposal, 3) Snow White and the Seven dwarfs, 4) Rose Red’s journey to Snow White’s castle, 5) Rose Red’s manipulation of the knights in Snow White’s kingdom, 6) Rose Red’s (sexualised) misbehaviour, 7) Rose Red’s attempt to destroy Snow White’s kingdom and marriage.
118 This is not a characteristic of comics more generally, but is a specific feature of these issues in *Fables*. 
Of these seven stories, two address the characters’ childhood. Where the first storyline presents childhood as idyllic and the characters’ fairy-tale story as transformative (as explored shortly), the denial of closure at the end of this first telling, and the repetition of this denial thereafter, eradicates the romantic notion of childhood initially established. In diverting from the fairy-tale structure in the characters’ youth, this period is framed (both in terms of narrative structure and content) as a moment that fundamentally disrupts the characters’ “happily ever after” (i.e., their happy and successful transition into adulthood).

The intersection and spacing of these seven stories also establishes the importance of childhood, with significantly more space dedicated to depictions of youth. Specifically, of the 219 panels that compose the seven stories, 138 panels depict the characters’ childhood. These panels focus on one year of the girls’ lives. The significant number of panels used to detail this period informs the comic’s tempo, with the comic’s depiction of daily life and mundane happenings enabling the comic to slow down time and more closely align with a chronometric temporal experience. Where many preceding adaptations ignore or make brief reference to Snow White’s childhood/child identity, Fables’ visual and temporal representation of childhood

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119 My use of the word romantic throughout this chapter is not pointing to a queer reading of the text. Alternatively, I am using the term in a literary sense, to refer to the sentimental and nostalgic representations of children and childhood that took shape in literature in the Romantic Era (see Watkins in Hunt, 2005; Nikolajeva, 2000; Macleod, 1992). Aligning with Macleod (1992), my usage specifically denotes an idealised perception of childhood as a time of innocence and purity. See chapter two for further clarification.

120 Mirror Mirror (Singh, 2012); Snow White and the Huntsman (Sanders, 2012); Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (Planet Interactive/Ubisoft Game Boy Color, 2001); Snow White a Tale of Terror (Cohn, 1997); “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” (Sexton, 1971); Snow White (Barthelme, 1967); Walt Disney’s Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (Dell Comics, 1950); “Coal Black and De Debben Dwarfs” (Merrie Melodies, 1943); Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (Disney, 1937); “Betty Boop in Snow White” (Fleischer, 1933); “Snowdrop” (Mrs. Edgar Lucas, 1909); “Snow-White” (Mrs. H.B.
further contextualises this stage of life, with its detailed and considered depiction
heightening the importance of childhood to the main events and conflicts in “Snow
White” (as demonstrated below).

Yet despite the attention given to this period, the characters remain relatively
underdeveloped and stereotypical. As I will demonstrate, this stylistic approach enables
*Fables* to move beyond an exploration of individual character perceptions to consider
childhood as a concept, one that continues to be shaped by nineteenth century anxieties
over child purity, the protection of the child and the policing of childhood innocence (as
discussed in chapter two and explored in chapter five; also see Cunningham, 1995).

To explain how the comic constructs and explores childhood/the innocent child
as a concept, I will first detail how the characters are generically and stereotypically
depicted. Although the girls are initially differentiated based on their characteristics,
Snow White described as “gentle and quiet” and Rose Red as “wilder [… enjoying]
run[ning] about the fields and forest” (p. 33), they display the same amount of fear,
caution and agency. The girls’ unity and similarities are emphasised throughout the
story as they are depicted within the same panels or arrangement of panels, holding
hands, and taking part in shared adventures. In presenting the girls as a unit, the reader
is invited to see them and their named differences as intrinsically interrelated.

While in a sense the characters are “fleshed out, [and] corporealized” (Zolkover,
and *Once Upon a Time’s* (2011–present) live-action sequences further define the
characters’ physical attributes in relation to the actors who play the roles (see chapters
four and five), in *Fables*, child Snow White’s and Rose Red’s cartooned faces are
largely undetailed (Figure 6.3). With their ages left unspecified, their physical markers

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Paull and Mr. L.A. Wheatley, 1868 & 1889); “Snow White” (Grimms, 1857, 1812 &
1808); “The Young Slave” (Basile, 1643); “Richilde” (Musäus, 1782).
of difference are relatively simplistic and stereotypical—Snow White with black hair and a white dress and Rose Red with red hair and a mauve dress. The simplification of the girls’ faces, their generic differences and unspecified ages enables the characters to represent/be symbolic of a larger populous, establishing them as universal figures.

In opening up their identity, the comic explores how their childhood embodiment of innocence speaks to wider ideals, expectations and concepts of childhood, reflecting fairy tales’ tendency to “deal […] with universal human problems” (Bettelhelm, 1975, p. 6; also see chapter one). Playing with a romantic sense of childhood, the characters’ (in)ability to see this period take shape within a utopic frame becomes a central conflict throughout the characters’ development. This conflict helps to critique narratives which frame childhood innocence as a means to assure proper maturation and ideal endings by framing Snow White and Rose Red’s innocence as an impediment to their happy maturation into adulthood.\textsuperscript{121}

To contextualise how romantic narratives of childhood take shape and are ultimately deconstructed in Fables, I will begin by detailing the type of romantic childhood narrative Fables initially constructs through dialogue, landscape/location, imagery and the gendering of space. Prior to the first flashback, “Mother” frames the girls’ childhood as transformative when she states, “Mommy’s going to take your misery away[,] […] by going back to a time when everything was still bright and wonderful” (p. 30). “Mother’s” remarks, which relocates the story in time and transports the characters and reader in place, invites the reader to connect “Mother’s” description of their past as utopic and potentially healing/re-generative with the physical setting of their childhood, reflecting the still dominant, mid-nineteenth-century

\textsuperscript{121} See my discussion of Brumh and Hurley (2004) and Stockton (2009) in chapter two for further discussions on narratives about childhood innocence and ideal maturation.
perception that childhood is the best time in life (Cunningham, 1995) and a site of nearly limitless potential (Brumh and Hurley, 2004).

The first panel of the characters’ past uses earth tones to depict a small cottage and thatch-roofed barn surrounded by forest and farm animals (Figure 6.1). This welcoming and peaceful imagery is mirrored by the forest, which has bright blue skies, green grass and lush trees. The imagery and colouring of both the cottage and the forest highlight the life and fertility of these locations and this time period. In their family cottage the girls are shown in a state of rest, sitting near a fire and reading; sleeping; or eating as a family, while in the forest the girls are shown exploring and playing. They are never shown working in either location.

In contrast, in this volume the Fabletown’s New York setting is overrun by evil. As seen in figure 6.2, the city, gray and dark, looks uninviting and threatening. Its large concrete buildings, which loom over the street, also make it feel enclosed and claustrophobic. Added to this, the depictions of crime and violence in preceding and subsequent panels mark the city as corrupt. As the characters’ try to fight the evil that has overtaken the city and forced them to abandon their home, their present tense lives are placed in a state of disorder.

The contrast between the two locations enables Fables to draw on the pastoral tradition, using “the spatial distinction of town (frenetic, corrupt, impersonal) and country (peaceful, abundant), and the temporal distinction of past (idyllic) and present (‘fallen’)” (Garrard, 2004, p. 35) to contrast Fabletown’s modern New York setting and social turmoil in the long running comic with childhood flashbacks of the pastoral that “obscures the realities of labour and hardship” (p. 33). The juxtaposition of these two settings helps to establish the girls’ childhood as idyllic, despite the knowledge that
both characters do not obtain their “happily ever after” and are for many years estranged within the long running comic.

*Figure 6.1* Snow White and Rose Red’s family cottage, “Rose Red.” *Fables*, 15(94–97), p. 30
Tied to this idyllic representation of place and, by extension, childhood is gender. Both the girls’ home and the forest are monopolised by the feminine. In the first 21 panels, the three female characters (Snow White, Rose Red and their mother) are shown together within the same cottage or in the forest. The repetition of these
characters’ images, in a group or pairs, emphasises the dominance of the feminine within this space (the girls’ father neither mentioned nor depicted). Notwithstanding that nature is associated with the feminine in literature, popular culture and social theory (Garrard, 2004), the comic extends the feminine social space beyond the family’s cottage when the girls’ mother explains that she has made “bargains” for their security in the forest. Their mother’s ability to ensure their safety, enables the remaining panels in which their mother is largely absent, to connect the forest’s landscape to the family’s feminine home, social relations and female power.

In connecting this feminised location with the pastoral and “Mother’s” idyllic/healing description of childhood, the feminine social environment takes on a utopic quality. Reversely, there is also the implication that the feminine order allows the utopic to take shape. After all, it is their mother’s “bargains” that allow the girls to happily and safely live in their cottage and explore the forest. Within this social space/order the girls demonstrate increased levels of agency, climbing trees, catching fish and saving the dwarf from harm. The girls also develop a meaningful relationship with each other, expressing their desire to always be together. Not yet exposed to patriarchy and the marriage market, the feminine order allows them to be partners rather than in competition. Consequently, the comic’s framing initially gives the impression that a feminine order can allow female children to safely/ideally explore and develop their identity, and opens up “Snow White” to narratives of sisterhood and female bonding, which are usually absent from the tale.

Yet, despite the girls’ growing confidence, the limits of this utopic and transformative space/period are exposed when the reader is made privy to happenings and character conversations to which the girls are not. As such, after the first 19 panels, the comic deconstructs its utopia, drawing the reader’s attention to the dangers the girls
(unwittingly) are subjected/exposed to. For example, shortly after the family takes in and befriends the Bear Prince, the girls, trusting their mother’s judgment and the bear, are shown playing with the bear. However, the panel arrangement, images and dialogue simultaneously invites the reader to question the bear’s good intentions. The bear’s remark “Snow White! Rose Red! Don’t beat your lover dead!” paired with their mother’s reaction in the subsequent panel when she states, “Not a good thing to say Mr. Bear, even in Play. They’re still much too young and I can see something of what you really are, even under your animal cloak” (p. 36), draws the sexual(ly) (deviant) undertones of the bear’s remark to the surface (Figure 6.3).
The panel, providing a close-up of their mother’s serious face, arrests the reader while isolating the girls, who, not given the space to react to or even acknowledge the bear’s and their mother’s remarks/insights, seemingly remain unaware of the bear’s potentially deviant nature. In contrast, their mother speaks directly to and includes the reader, inviting them to question whether the sexual implications of these remarks are both serious and inappropriate when addressed to girls who are still “much too young.” In drawing the threatening nature of the bear’s statement to the surface, the comic
highlights the outside (masculine) world as potentially dangerous and animalistic while suggesting that the feminine order their mother has constructed is not so limitless in power and its ability to protect the girls that it mustn’t be policed and reinforced.

The comic’s use of space, its inclusion of the reader through imagery, dialogue and captions, and its exclusion of the girls, invites the reader to identify when the girls’ innocence and lack of insight/foresight prevents them from perceiving evident dangers. Through this process, the comic gradually breaks from the transformative nature of the fairy tale and its imagined state of “happily ever after.” Countering Max Lüthi’s (1982) description of fairy tales, specifically fairy-tale forests, as a space for the hero to find adventure, friends to aid him and rewards, the girls do not find friends, they are punished and the “reward” they receive, namely the promise of marriage from the Bear Prince, breaks up their family, forcing Snow White to flee to her aunt’s kingdom, and her mother to fake Snow White’s death. In maintaining the girls’ romantic identities as children—namely as innocent, and pure characters who are largely unaware of others’ immorality—throughout the gradual disintegration of their happy lives and the perversion of the fairy-tale structure, the comic casts doubts on the value of a romantic childhood and suggests that their innocence, rather than protecting them, simply leaves them vulnerable.

The link between the girls’ innocence and vulnerability becomes apparent when the dwarf tricks the girls. As seen in figure 6.4 the girls come to the dwarf’s aid without perceiving that he is a villain. The dwarf’s appearance, white eyed, with a sharp nose, ears and brow line, paired with his grumpy dialogue, frames the dwarf as a wholly uninviting character, encouraging the reader to recognise his evil nature. Yet the girls take his needs at face value and accept his lies even though, as Snow White notes, he shows signs of bad character. The comic’s self-reflexivity and use of irony, while
situating the reader in a higher place of knowledge, provides an apathetic view of the girls’ innocence by wryly depicting their ignorance.

In line with this dry humour, the girls’ help is misplaced, as they mistakenly offend the dwarf by cutting his beard and as they unwittingly help him steal gold. Though the girls subsequently realise that he is a “sneak,” they fail to understand that he has committed a crime and as such continue to aid the dwarf on two more occasions, believing that they are “just helping” someone in need. Thus, as the girls innocently aid the dwarf, and as such mistakenly offend the weavers of fate and an eagle who consequently curses them, the comic’s use of irony increasingly invites the reader to see the girls’ innocence as ignorance.
Further, when the eagle curses the girls for helping the dwarf, it is evident that the girls’ innocence doesn’t protect them or guarantee them a happy ending. In diverting from a narrative that sees the innocent child rewarded with a “happily ever after,” the comic undermines the ideological perception that the maintenance of child innocence and purity sees children mature into ideal, functioning adults (i.e., secures
their happy and fruitful future; as considered in chapter two and investigated in chapter five). Revealing this storyline as fictitious, the comic aligns innocent child narratives with fairy tales through their imagined states of perfection and the comic’s self-conscious engagement with fairy-tale traditions and norms. Thus, when the girls’ mother dismisses their pleas to find their fairy-tale “happily ever after” by marrying the Bear Prince and becoming princesses— their mother stating that fairy tales are “stuff and nonsense! […] nonsense from the storybooks and old tales” (p. 56)—her rejection of fairy tales’ romantic happy endings simultaneously sees the comic dismiss narratives of romantic childhoods and their idealised endings as nonsense.

The reality of their mother’s assertions are subsequently evidenced as the reader bears witness to the Bear Prince’s conversation with his father in which he states,

[...] both of these girls are incredibly naturally magical. Each practically reeks of the elegant energies. [...] I’m not addled by love, father. Far from it. I’m interested in attaching more power to our household. I’m thinking of our future as always. (p. 58)

The prince’s emotional indifference to the girls and interest in power paired with the girls’ mother’s dismissal of utopic happy endings, invites the reader to identify their own fallibility had they accepted the comic’s opening hopeful and romantic premise.

The comic’s positioning of the reader in a higher place of knowledge; its visual representations of the girls’ childhood; its self-conscious engagement with fairy-tale traditions/norms; its ironic tone and humour; and the tale’s “utopic” setting collectively invite the reader to question whether innocence can ensure the girls’ proper maturation into adulthood. The denial of “happily ever afters,” paired with the knowledge that Snow White and Rose Red are for years estranged in the long running series, foreshadows the characters’ dysfunctional development as they transition into adolescence. The next section contemplates how the adaptation further problematises narratives of maturation in adolescence and adulthood. I argue that the comic’s
incorporation and adaptation of the “Snow White and Rose Red” tale alters the premise of “Snow White” by linking significant events in “Snow White” to her and Rose Red’s childhood.

The Traumatic Maturation of the Innocent

Unlike Once Upon a Time (2011–), which blurs the division between childhood, adolescence and young adulthood (see chapter five), these specific stages categorically divide Snow White and Rose Red’s growth. Although in the long running series the characters are said to be over 300 years old, because they stopped ageing after leaving the fairy world for earth, their youthful appearance disconnects them from middle or old age. Consequently, in preventing further growth, their youth and early adulthood centrally defines their identities.

Within the flashbacks, physical growth is indicated through the characters’ increased height, costuming, panel captions, dialogue and the sharpening of facial features. For example as a child, Snow White primarily has a cartooned, generic, soft, undetailed face (Figure 6.5), and a small stature—no taller than their mother’s waist. As Snow White transitions into adolescence the narration states that “Snow White had grown in both years and beauty,” and the image shows her with an increasingly defined chin line and lips. Her hair, ornately pinned up with a flower, points to her growing sophistication and hints at her developing sexuality (a notion reinforced by the girls’ conversation in the panel) (Figure 6.6). She has also physically grown, and stands at shoulder height when next to adults. Finally, as a young adult, Snow White is shown with an increasingly defined angular nose, a slightly longer face and more ‘realistic’ eyes (Figure 6.7). She is also depicted at the same height as other adults. With Rose Red similarly transformed, the comic’s use of cartooning and illustration help to chart
the characters’ movement from childhood to adulthood, using their increased facial
definition as an alternative means to represent physical growth.

Figure 6.5 Child Snow White, “Rose Red.” *Fables*, 15(94–97), p. 39
In representing character change in terms of stages, the comic naturalises the characters’ physical growth by depicting it in an orderly progression. However, despite...
the flashbacks’ linear pattern, the comic controls and manipulates the movement/passing of time, skipping over years of the characters’ lives or representing an extended period within a single “pregnant pause.” Like the other adaptations explored in this thesis (see chapter four and five), within the flashbacks the comic is less concerned with how the characters slowly progress as they physically age and emotionally develop, as it is with how specific moments and events shape their perceptions, emotional identities and physical appearances as they transition into adulthood. The comic’s focus on significant happenings emphasises the importance of these events, enabling these happenings to rationalise the characters’ development over/across the entirety of their lives (i.e., in the long running series).

As evidenced from my detailing of Snow White’s trials in chapters three, four and five, storylines and events involving Snow White’s physical and/or emotional growth are often marked by the overcoming of strife or abuse; Snow White’s formation of a sexualised young adult identity; the display of increased agency or physical ability; the display of increased domesticity and/or; experiences of romance. Though these experiences are at times marked by strife, insecurity and turmoil, they similarly conclude with renewal and improved circumstances for Snow White.

In contrast, although strife and turmoil are also at the centre of Snow White and Rose Red’s experiences in childhood, adolescence and young adulthood, the characters do not experience many of the other rites of passage, closing down the possibility of hopeful reform. Where Snow White’s innocence and beauty often secures her shelter, romantic love and a happy ending, *Fables’* adaptation takes on darker tones as the comic, refusing narrative closure for its seven storylines (discussed above), undoes possible happy endings by exposing Snow White to further hardship—the unperceiving
and innocent Snow White thus subjected to sexual violence, death, abandonment and betrayal.

In merging the two tale types, *Fables* frames the girls’ childhood as the rationale for the comic’s darker rendition of “Snow White,” evident when the eagle curses a child Snow White and Rose Red for helping the dwarf, stating,

Snow White and Rose Red, you’ll *regret* what you have done. The dwarf is made of malice and dread, as are his seven *sons*. For one of you seven evils await. For the other the loss of one dear. Such are the whims of all-weaving fate towards those who interfere, (p. 47)

The events in “Snow White,” namely her time with the seven dwarfs, are thus foretold and reframed as a punishment for childhood mistakes, shifting “Snow White” away from a narrative about female rivalry and hopeful renewal, towards a tale about punishment and its associated violence.

This unhopeful representation of female characters is not uncommon in comic books. As a medium that has largely been considered masculine (Gibson, 2010b), comics are often criticised for their excessive (sexual) violence and treatment of women. As Roger Sabin (1993) has indicated, when female characters appear “[…] they are invariably either plot devices (there to be rescued) or sex symbols (all plunging necklines and endless legs)” (p. 221). However, these stereotypical character roles and hyper-sexualised illustrations are not simply a product of the medium. As Jacqueline Danziger–Russell (2013) points out, and Mel Gibson (2010b) and Valerie Walkerdine (1984) would agree, not all comics are regressive/reductive in their depiction of women. Alternatively, Danziger–Russell (2013) argues that comics have the power to “transcend […] stereotypes [and] reach female readers [,] allowing them to connect with strong and complex female characters” (p. 1). In recognising this potential, it is evident that one should not mistake the medium for the message, and assume that
because the narrative takes shape in a comic book, that it will automatically conform to (sexually) violent and reductive representations of women.

This is not to say that the characters in *Fables* are not eroticised or do not experience (sexual) violence throughout the *Fables* series. In fact, the characters are sexually explicit, at times visually depicted seducing men or in the midst of coitus, and are (physically) threatened, attacked or raped. The violence can also be hyper inflated, for example in issue 1 every inch of Rose Red’s apartment is covered in her blood and in issue 9, Snow White, when shot in the head, is depicted falling with blood exploding out both the front and back of her skull. Despite these violent portrayals, as Zolkover (2008) points out, they are emotionally complex characters, who are not simply static figures used to progress a masculine storyline. Rather, the comic’s focus on community allows the female characters’ experiences (violent or otherwise), sexuality and identity to take shape based on their own individual backgrounds, circumstances, exposures, choices and relationships within a diverse community and varied socio-political conditions.

Further, the violent and sexual content in the comic mirrors and speaks to similar representations in fairy tales, after all in the Grimms’ version the queen is made to dance to death in fire-hot cast iron shoes, and though Snow White’s sexuality may not have taken physical shape in the Grimms’ description of her character, the value of her sexual capital is nonetheless at the centre of their telling. *Fables* is also not the first adaptation to explicitly depict the story in sexually violent terms. For example in Angela Carter’s (1979) “The Snow Child,” the king copulates with a child Snow White’s corpse after the queen has led her to her doom (see chapter three), in Neil Gaiman’s (1994) short story “Snow, Glass, Apples,” Snow White takes vampiric shape, copulating with men in the forest while feeding on and killing them, and in Rupert
Sander’s (2012) *Snow White and the Huntsman*, Snow White is subject to an attempted rape. With this in mind, it is clear that although the comic produces a dark retelling, violence is not an uncommon feature of “Snow White” adaptations more generally.

What the comic book and its representational conventions facilitate is the opening of variant avenues to explore and depict the violent elements commonly found in the tale. Contemplating *Fables*’ use of space and visual absence, I will investigate the relationship between representations of violence/trauma and the characters’ maturation (physical or emotional) in the adaptation. Although one might argue that the girls’ experiences of violence and trauma does not directly cause them to age either emotionally or physically—the comic simply depicting the characters’ lives at different moments in time—as I will illustrate in the remainder of this section, the characters’ experiences of emotional and/or physical trauma connects violence/trauma with their physical and emotional development, and in so doing, encourages the reader to trace the characters’ traumatic transformation from an innocent child into a(n) (dysfunctional) adult.

The juxtaposing of panels of the past, present and future brings order to the characters’ physical transformation as the comparison of their changing image (as detailed on pp. 298–301) and the story’s linear progression gives structure to how they age. However, their physical development is not gradual, the characters moving from childhood to adolescence or adolescence to adulthood within a single panel or page as the comic cuts between significant events. These cuts skip over large periods of time, in which the characters’ gradual development would assumedly occur. The process of growth and ageing thus occurs within the gutter, i.e., the space between panels and time between moments.
In framing character defining moments around punishment, and the violence and trauma paired with said punishment, the physical development that occurs in the gutter is placed in a causal relationship with these significant and symbolic happenings. Where violence isn’t explicitly depicted, it nonetheless takes shape within the panel through dialogue and captions, and helps to explain the characters’ physical and emotional changes. For example, though Snow White’s rape isn’t visually represented, as seen in figure 6.8, the dwarfs’ remarks, “Scrub harder girl! This is work time, lazybones, not playtime! That comes later” and “It will! It surely will! My turn tonight!” (p. 69) reveals the rape that has and will occur as the dwarfs take turns with their “comfort girl.”

As a full-page spread (Figure 6.8), the image freezes the motion of the story by referring to the past, representing the present and hinting at her dreadful future all within a single image. This extends the time frame of the panel, and the content it incorporates, presenting the dwarfs’ abuse as an ongoing and significant happening in Snow White’s life. Consequently, rather than toning down the violence within the tale, the sexual implications of their remarks leaves the reader to imagine the various shapes this sexual violence takes.
// Figure 6.8 Snow White at the dwarfs’ cottage, “Rose Red.” *Fables*, 15(94–97), p. 69

Placed as the central focus, Snow White is framed in a cleared and open corner, while the dwarfs, cluttered in the space above and around her, look towards her (Figure
6.8). The dwarfs’ shared viewership invites the reader to similarly look at and examine her body. This body, now in ragged clothes, shows both signs of abuse and physical development. Contrasted with her image on the adjoining page (Figure 6.9 & 6.10), in which an adolescent Snow White has a rounded nose without a complete bridge, eyes with no lower eyelid, and a forehead that is made smaller by her hair which covers her brow and chin line, a young adult Snow White by contrast is aged with a more defined face. Her eyes are given further shape with the incorporation of a lower eyelid, her hair, falling away from her face, gives a clearer sense of a defined forehead and jaw line, and her nose becomes more prominent with a clear bridge and a slight point at the end (Figure 6.8).
Figure 6.9 Snow White’s discovery of the dwarfs’ cottage, “Rose Red.” Fables, 15(94–97), p. 68
One might conclude that her changed appearance reflects the years that have past since she arrived at the dwarfs’ cottage—the full-page spread reducing years to a single moment. However, the caption on page 69, clarifies the time encompassed within the image and the gutter, stating “They [the dwarfs] treated her badly and she was with them for many hard months.” The clarification of time between the panels on page 68 and 69 encourages the reader to revisit past panels and to witness the alteration in the character’s physical state (i.e., the condition of her clothes, which indicates her mistreatment and the sharpening of facial features, which indicates physical development). In stressing the amount of time in terms of months, the comic disconnects these physical alterations from a chronometric temporal experience of growth, alternatively attributing her physical change to her experiences of abuse. In this
way, the violence implied (i.e., her rape) and depicted (i.e., her slavery) within the image can be seen to cause her physical development into young adulthood.

For Rose Red, experiences of loss and betrayal seemingly inform the (re)construction of her developing identity. She undergoes two character transformations after Snow White’s “death,” and is described as “no longer the same happy girl [...]” (p. 73) and with “[...] no spark. Not a bit of spark” (p. 73). Though her experience of loss is less traumatic than Snow White’s rape, Rose Red undergoes the most significant character transformation, as she stops seeing the world in romantic terms, and assumes a ‘bad girl’ identity (a point returned to shortly). Like Snow White’s physical development described above, Rose Red’s emotional alteration takes shape in the pairing of panels, connecting her feelings of betrayal with the angry and vengeful identity she later assumes as a young adult. This is evident when comparing the adjoining pages 74 and 75 (Figure 6.11).

After learning that Snow White is in fact alive, Rose Red, feeling betrayed by Snow White, is shown in a close-up crying and stating, “all this time and she never TOLD me” (p. 74; Figure 6.11). Adjoining this page and split into two panels, Rose Red is subsequently depicted with an entourage heading towards Snow White’s castle (p. 75; Figure 6.11 & 6.12). When asked if she is excited to join her sister, Rose Red replies, “Excited, Sir Jerreth? No... more like determined. Time to set some things aright.” Rose Red’s comment, paired with her indignant appearance, highlights the anger and resentment she holds towards Snow White (Figure 6.12). This panel, mirroring the shape, size and positioning of the bottom panel on page 74 in which Rose Red is shown crying (Figure 6.11), invites a comparison between the content of each image, suggesting that the pain of betrayal Rose Red expresses in adolescence informs her angry identity and subsequent misconduct in adulthood (returned to shortly). In this
way, like Snow White, her experiences of pain and trauma act as a catalyst for her character’s development.

In pairing the girls’ physical and emotional transformations with experiences of pain and trauma, the comic plays with the connections commonly made between growth (as progression and possibility) and youth; and ageing (as decline) and old age (Karlyn, 2011; also see chapter two). As Snow White’s and Rose Red’s physical and emotional development in youth is increasingly linked with narratives of decline and degradation, the terms “growth” and “ageing” are respectively disjointed from connotations of progression and decline, and from specific age categories. In this way, the comic further breaks from discourses of youth as a period of growth (as progression and possibility), and alternatively sees the characters’ physical and emotional development unfold in relation to lived experiences.
Figure 6.11 Rose Red learns that Snow White is alive, “Rose Red.” *Fables*, 15(94–97), pp. 74–75
Although the pain and trauma that informs the characters’ physical/emotional development into adolescence and young adulthood may seemingly reframe their
childhood as an ideal time despite its tragic conclusion, the comic diverts from this perception by linking their traumas in adolescence/young adulthood back to the girls’ time with the dwarf. For example, as the caption in figure 6.8 reads, “By simple fate or evil purpose Snow fell into the clutches of the seven sons of the wicked dwarf of her youthful adventure” (p. 69). The caption’s description links her fate in adolescence to her childhood, first using the word “fate” to reference back to the eagle’s prophesied curse in the first part of the story, and by then seeing the prophecy fulfilled, revealing that she is in the clutches of the first dwarf’s seven sons. In fulfilling the prophecy, Snow White’s experiences and the nature of her physical development is not a product of a purely evil outside world or her condition as a potentially vulnerable maturing female, but as a result of her transgressions in youth when she unknowingly helped the dwarf steal from the forest.

Similarly, Rose Red’s fate is causally linked to the curse placed on her in childhood as she loses someone dear—namely Snow White. Her pain, sorrow and later anger in adolescence and young adulthood also stems from this period as her misperceptions in youth blind her to the circumstances that forced Snow White to leave. Without this knowledge in childhood, her ignorance causes her to misplace her pain and anger onto Snow White, resulting in the sisters’ continued suffering and misfortune as they are set against one another.

In this way, the comic works against narratives that Brumh and Hurley suggest require the maintenance of innocence in childhood to preserve and create ideal members for an adult society. In centring the characters’ development on punishment, violence, trauma and loss, the comic denies the characters a happy maturation. Alternatively, their physical growth and social identities in adolescence/young adulthood serve to question and critique romantic narratives of the child. The romantic
values and perceptions of childhood—as established in the age of enlightenment and reinforced in the Romantic era—are depicted by the comic as an illusionary fiction, that when mistaken for the real, inhibits characters’ agency and their idealised development into stabilised, contributing and happy adults.

In self-consciously questioning and undermining fairy-tale traditions and romantic narratives of the child, the comic alters the narrative trajectory of the tale and provides the space for alternative readings and tellings. As the following section illustrates, comic conventions enable representations of character growth to be filtered through multiple levels of narration, which, as I will argue, allows for the queering of the text.

**Queering “Snow White”**

In detailing how the comic provides narration through the layering and juxtaposing of semiotic modes (word, image and sequence) and formal conventions (speech bubbles, captions, borders, images, gutters and panels), I demonstrate how Snow White becomes a secondary character within this “Snow White” adaptation, while Rose Red assumes a central position. I argue that in shifting the tale’s focus, the comic downplays dominant storylines about Snow White and the queen’s rivalry, and Snow White and the prince’s “true love” (i.e., heteronormative love), alternatively focusing on a telling about queer sisterly relations.

In discussing Rose Red’s queer attachment, I am not simply suggesting that Rose Red sexually longs for Snow White—although the comic opens up and closes down this possibility (as explored later). Alternatively, when referring to Rose Red’s queer attachment, I am aligning with a definition of queer in which

‘queer’ would be reserved for those films and popular culture texts, spectator positions, pleasures, and readings that articulate spaces outside gender binaries
and sexuality categories, whether these are outside normative straight understandings of gender and sexuality or outside orthodox lesbian and gay understandings of these things. (Doty, 1998, p. 150)

In this context, I argue that the intensity of Rose Red’s love and her competition with male suitors for Snow White’s affection, queers her sisterly love by revealing a bond which if not incestuous, extends beyond a normative relationship between sisters. Her queer affections, and the sorrow, pain and anger she experiences when she believes these feelings are not shared, repurpose “Snow White” to explore how the events in Snow White’s life (tale) directly impact her sister’s wild and (self-)destructive behaviour in(to) adulthood. In this way, “[e]ven without a graspable connection to queer energies, sibling love can, therefore, be read as a queering of the narrative trajectories of romantic fantasy” (Flannery, 2007, p. 22), as Snow White’s “happily ever after” is subverted/overshadowed by her sister’s emotional development, attempts at revenge and later their reconciliation.

However, before outlining the specific ways “Snow White” is subverted and queered; and investigating the kinds of stories about female development Rose Red’s sisterly love enables, I will now detail how the comic’s narration, focalisation, engagement with time and temporality, and use of space facilitates these readings. Within Fables, “Snow White” is narrated explicitly and implicitly through (the negotiation of) written text, images and sequence. While the implementation of these modes may seem simplistic, none of these modes take shape in one form or necessarily narrate uniformly. For example, written text can take shape in panel captions, speech bubbles, thought bubbles or sound effects. The information that is delivered through each of these conventions may work together to communicate a single written story, may tell isolated tales or may function uniformly within an overarching story while still communicating characters’ individuated experiences.
To illustrate, in *Fables* the flashbacks’ captions fulfil the role of an omniscient third-person fairy–tale narrator, offering a one-dimensional retelling of the story’s events, mimicking “[...] the Western fairy–tale canon’s... descriptions of characters which] ordinarily ‘lack physical and psychological depth’ (Lüthi 12)[... and which are] usually vague at best” (Zolkover, 2008, p. 41). Working alongside this narration, Rose Red’s present tense dialogue (speech bubbles) recontextualises her past experiences, feelings and perspectives in childhood from her adult point-of-view, while “Mother’s” reflections (in speech bubbles) corrects Rose Red’s misperceptions about Snow White. Though the captions and characters’ dialogue are separated by time, location and panel space, the two come together to give the characters and their experiences further psychological depth—Rose Red’s and “Mother’s” commentary providing the character description and perspectives that the captions don’t address.

Images add additional levels of narrative complexity by reaffirming content provided by the written text or contradicting the written text’s storyline. For the first half of the adaptation, the images reaffirm the captions by visually depicting the events the fairy–tale narrator describes, adding further detail to the fairy–tale narration with the inclusion of images rooted in the fairy–tale structure and/or motifs, and by maintaining a one-dimensional representation of the girls’ image and character (as described in the first section). The images also support the characters’ dialogue in the present tense by corporealisng the characters’ reactions—showing the physical strain on Rose Red’s face, and intercutting dialogue in which she expresses pain and sorrow with images of her bending her head and covering her eyes in anguish.

The close alignment between words and images could imply that images simply bolster the written text as the comic’s dominant mode of narration. However, as a multimodal medium,
the modes of images, words, and sequences constantly interact with each other, as the readers explore the page and make sense of what they see. The meaning-making potential of each mode can corroborate, reinforce, or question that of the other modes that enter into this dynamic process. (Kukkonen, 2011, p. 40)

Thus while images may work to reinforce or corroborate aspects of the written text, the interaction between the various modes and the comic’s formal conventions also facilitates individuated and/or contradictory stories. This is evident when considering the pairing of flashbacks with the characters’ commentary, and the disconnect that occurs between the fairy-tale narrator and the images, panel sequence and dialogue (within the flashbacks) in the second half of the adaptation.

For instance, when considering the arrangement of Rose Red’s and “Mother’s” panels, their present tense dialogue—occurring at the start of the retelling, at the end of each issue and after the final flashback—is structurally tied to the past as their panels border and enclose the flashbacks and as the characters reflect on the significant events depicted in the flashbacks. The panel arrangement gives the girls’ history and the tale itself continued life as the linking of past and present roots the characters’ perspectives, behaviours and relationships in Fables’ long running story in past happenings. This is first evident in figure 6.1 when “Mother” introduces the flashback as a means to “take [Rose Red’s] misery away” in the present tense. In introducing the past as a means to heal Rose Red, her history becomes the solution and rationale for her depression (rooting her dysfunctional life in her sorted relationship with Snow White).

As each depiction of the past is recontextualised within the present, the positioning of their dialogue at the end of each flashback further filters the narrative. In this way, the comic facilitates a critique of the past and the romantic premises it presents. Its multiple (and often contradictory) modes of narration also allow the comic to internally adapt the tale by problematising, challenging or altering potential interpretations of events. Thus while the images may implicitly align with the captions
and characters’ dialogue in their respective panels, the arrangement, pairing and sequencing of the flashbacks and present tense panels allows the comic to narrate a complex storyline about female development and the role idyllic representations of youth play in the female characters’ construction of self.

Finally, as the flashbacks’ images and dialogue in the latter half of the adaptation defy the fairy-tale narrator’s narrative trajectory, *Fables* diverts from a fairy-tale structure and critiques fairy-tale norms. As explored in detail shortly, this break occurs as the panel images and character dialogue refuse the “happily ever after” the fairy-tale narrator attempts to provide, alternatively depicting Rose Red’s emotional turmoil, her inability to move forwards, find love and allow forgiveness. Occurring in the same time period and panel sequence, the contrasting representations of Rose Red’s past highlight the fairy-tale narrator’s (the written texts’) lack of authority within the adaptation, demonstrating comics’ ability to story tell through the negotiation and contrast between modes and conventions.

The pairing of past and present is not “unique” to the medium—as evidenced by my exploration of *Once Upon a Time* in chapter five. However, what comics do provide is the negotiation of different modes (image, words and sequencing) and their corresponding stories within a shared space. By overlapping, aligning and contrasting these modes in sequence, the reader is invited to look between and compare the content communicated by (and between) the comic’s formal conventions (speech bubbles, captions, borders, images, gutters and panels). It is through the negotiation of comic conventions and *Fables’* temporal engagement that the adaptation can internally adapt “Snow White,” aligning the flashbacks with *Fables’* overarching storyline and re-imagining the tale around the lives of different characters.
For example, the adaptation’s enunciation of “Snow White” coupled with Rose Red’s increasingly dynamic identity recasts the “Snow White” tale and character as secondary. This shift becomes apparent as *Fables* links the title “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” with the subheading “Chapter Three of Rose Red.” The subheading re-qualifies (reclassifies?) the tale by implying that the retelling is about Rose Red and is thus not an exclusively “Snow White” telling.

The panel framings further contextualise Rose Red’s centrality through the use of red rose page borders. Explaining the function of *Fables*’ borders Kukkonen (2011) notes

[…] the frames and emblems on the pages in *Fables* encode information about who is focalizing the unfolding action, signaling diverging perspectives on events and different horizons of knowledge and experience. These frames can distinguish between larger social horizons of knowledge and experience—the ‘social mind’ of the oriental and western fairy tale characters, […] or they can distinguish between the individual focalizations of particular characters. (p. 48)

Adding to this description, I would assert that these borders also help to establish location and tense. Within *Fables*, panels that depict Rose Red as an adult in the present tense are bordered with red roses on a mauve background, while panels that depict Rose Red’s childhood/adolescence/young adulthood are bordered with red roses on a white background.\(^{122}\) Within the flashbacks, and Rose Red’s and “Mother’s” present tense commentary, the red rose borders are used on every page, even on pages that singularly depict an adolescent/young adult Snow White. The borders limit the panels’ perspective as the reader is invited to contemplate events from Rose Red’s perspective.

In addition to borders, the panels incorporate stencilled images of inverse red and white roses (Figure 6.15), black roses on a red and orange background (Figure 6.13) and realistic red and white roses (Figure 6.16). The stencilled red and white roses

\(^{122}\) Snow White’s borders in *Fables*’ long running serial depicts a snowscape or, in the most recent issues, uses white and gold roses.
highlight the girls’ union, occurring in or near images where the girls are shown playing together or holding hands, while the black roses occur when introducing new characters and events that threaten Rose Red’s close relationship with Snow White. The realistic roses, tied together with a knotted vine, occur when the girls’ bond is introduced, threatened and finally broken at the announcement of Snow White’s “death.” The contrast between the knotted flowers and the girls’ relationship emphasises significant shifts in their bond. None of these flowers are used after the girls are separated in childhood. The bond these images represent helps to contextualise Rose Red’s understanding of their experiences, and the moments she identifies as catalysts for their changing relationship in childhood.

Where the borders clarify who is focalising the various happenings and the rose imagery elucidates Rose Red’s understanding of her and Snow White’s (changing) relationship, the negotiation between the caption’s fairy–tale narration and the comic’s other modes and conventions fundamentally shapes Rose Red’s prominence in the tale, develops her dynamic character and voice, and cast Snow White as a one-dimensional, secondary character. For example, Snow White’s emotional growth and character complexity is underdeveloped as the fairy–tale narrator takes a prominent role in the adaptation of her tale. Of the 26 panels that directly depict Snow White’s time with the queen through to her romance with the prince, 20 panels use captions. Totalling 447 words, the significant amount of narration the captions provide, establishes it as the dominant form of storytelling. This dominance is reinforced by images, and character dialogue that align with the captions’ descriptions.

To illustrate, as seen in figure 6.9 the fairy–tale narrator’s assertion that “[e]ventually she did find a cottage, but not the one she recalled from her youth,” is mirrored by the depiction of Snow White walking towards the dwarfs’ run-down
cottage, and her dialogue, “It looks smaller than I remember. And not as well kept.” Both the image and dialogue, while reaffirming the caption’s text, fail to provide additional information about how Snow White is feeling, or what she thinks about the huntsman’s attack, the queen’s violence towards her and her uncertain future. As fairy-tale narration tends to give one-dimensional descriptions of character emotions/perceptions (Lüthi, 1982; Haase, 1988; Zolkover; 2008), without additional commentary from her adult persona in the present tense or detailed dialogue and images that indicate her adolescent perspective/feelings, her character is not given the space to demonstrate a dynamic identity, and her feelings towards and understanding of her experiences are largely overlooked.

In contrast, Rose Red’s adolescence/young adulthood, given more space (43 panels) with less fairy-tale narration (13 captions, totalling 278 words), repositions images, sequence and dialogue as the dominant means of storytelling. Significantly, it is during this period that the authority of the fairy-tale narrator is undermined. As seen in figure 6.11, just before Rose Red learns that Snow White is still alive, the caption states “Only, one impossible thing could wake Rose Red from her sorrow. But sometimes impossible things are entirely possible, if there’s magic enough in the world” (p. 74). However, rather than finding release and renewal, the visual representation of Rose Red’s pain and anguish, and her remarks “All this time, and she never TOLD me” (p. 74), contradicts the hopeful renewal the fairy-tale narrator presumes.

These contrasting representations of events seemingly disjoint the fairy-tale narrator, who in the next caption states, “Once upon a time, Rose Red, a lovely girl of humble birth, who never became a princess, did in time become the sister of a princess. And that was nearly as grand and wondrous. Right?” (p. 75; Figure 6.12). The question, “Right?” which is spaced two lines below the initial caption, highlights the fairy-tale
narrator’s hesitation and undermines its authoritative voice, giving up its dominant position.

In contrasting the caption’s presumed happy ending, the sequence, images and dialogue allow Rose Red’s experiences and emotional development to take shape through her own voice and through her bodily reactions to/relationships with other characters. The characters’ (in)ability to give voice and express their experiences takes on a particular significance as it separates events/happenings characters simply partake in (i.e., Snow White), from events/happenings characters internalise and respond to throughout their emotional development and growth (i.e., Rose Red). Voice is thus fundamental to the agency characters assume during moments of growth.

However, (the limitation of) voice (given through dialogue and bodily reactions) doesn’t simply inform the characters’ development in the flashbacks. Alternatively voice shapes how the characters’ histories are brought forth and understood within the present tense (i.e., Fables’ overarching storyline) and helps to remind the reader of the purpose this remembrance has within the long running comic. Thus, Snow White’s notable absence during Rose Red’s and “Mother’s” consideration of events, reinforces the notion that their remembrance is not singularly about Snow White or how Snow White felt at a particular point in time, but about how Rose Red’s misperceptions of their past has prevented Rose Red from living in the present. In physically excluding Snow White in their present day discussion, Rose Red’s maturation and needs within the long running comic becomes the rationale and driving force for the adaptation, and, as I will now argue, queers the narrative trajectory of “Snow White” and the characters’ combined history.

The comic’s multimodal storytelling within a shared space/sequence creates the additional layers needed to give Rose Red psychological depth as she assumes a queer
position. With this complexity of character, Rose Red’s queer sibling love replaces narratives about heterosexual maturation and romance with tales of homosocial (homoerotic) bonds.

As evidenced in the first section, Rose Red and Snow White are relatively one-dimensional and universalised in childhood. Yet, it is also during this period that Rose Red and Snow White’s strong bond is developed (i.e., through the depiction and narration of shared adventures (Figure 6.13), the shared panel space (Figure 6.3 & 6.13), the depiction of the girls holding hands (Figure 6.13 & 6.15), and the girls’ dialogue about their desire for a perpetual union (Figure 6.14 & 6.15)). The children’s isolation and their reliance on each other for company may seemingly explain this strong homosocial bond. However, through the layering of the fairy-tale narration, comic conventions and Rose Red’s adult reflections, Rose Red’s attachment is seemingly queered.
Figure 6.13 Rose Red and Snow White’s strong bond, “Rose Red.” *Fables*, 15(94–97), p. 37
For example, after the dwarf’s death, the grouping of the Bear Prince’s transformation into a man, his vow to wed Snow White, and an adult Rose Red’s remark, “That’s the day I lost her, mommy” (p. 53) on the adjoining page works to frame Rose Red as a suitor for Snow White’s affection (Figure 6.16 & 6.17). Rose Red’s use of the word “lost” both places her in competition with the Bear Prince for
Snow White’s love and implies a type of ownership over Snow White that she was unable to maintain. The placement of these panels on adjoining pages encourages the reader to revisit the Bear Prince’s transformation and question whether his proposal promises a “happily ever after” or an end to Rose Red and Snow White’s developing queer relationship. In this way, the panel sequence enables Rose Red’s comments to recontextualise the Bear Prince’s transformation and proposal by recentring it from Rose Red’s perspective, and feelings of loss and desire.

Figure 6.16 The Bear Prince’s transformation, “Rose Red.” *Fables*, 15(94–97), p. 52–
This recontextualisation of events is evident when her remarks encourage the reader to reinterpret the characters’ (physical) positioning and relationships within the flashback. Prior to Rose Red’s commentary, the children are seemingly aligned to
witness the Bear Prince’s transformation. The girls’ faces, largely hidden from the reader and assumedly directed towards the Bear Prince, helps to position the Bear Prince, who is both the biggest figure in the image and the only character the reader can fully see, as the panel’s focal point (Figure 6.18). In this way, his (heteronormative) desires and promises seem to take precedence and function as the tale’s driving force.

However, though it is clear that Snow White and the Bear Prince are looking at each other—evidenced by the angling of both characters’ heads—adult Rose Red’s commentary recontextualises her own position in the panel and as such the panel’s focal point (Figure 6.18). Rose Red, whose face is fully hidden, could arguably be looking at Snow White. With this change in perspective, Snow White, rather than the Bear Prince becomes the panel’s focal point. The image’s colourings further emphasise this reading as the orange of Rose Red’s hair and the Bear Prince’s cloak aligns the two characters, while Snow White’s colouring, namely her stark white dress and black hair, creates a visual contrast that separates and foregrounds her character.

Positioned in a “v” between the Bear Prince and Rose Red, Snow White is seemingly at the centre of the two characters’ desires (Figure 6.18). As such, Rose Red’s adult filtration and ambiguous position in the image recontextualises the panel’s meaning as a child Rose Red and the Bear Prince assume oppositional roles for Snow White’s love, and Rose Red’s adult dialogue in the present tense opens the tale to a queer reading of her affection.
Accepting Chris Straayer’s (1990) assertions that “conceptually, female bonding is a precondition for lesbianism” and that “a male’s intrusion upon female bonding, then, is just as likely to homoeroticise the situation as to induce corrective heterosexuality,” then the interruption of the girls’ childhood bonding and the rivalry to
which the adult Rose Red alludes, leaves the space to question whether Rose Red’s attachment is also sexual in nature.

This of course is not the first time the comic hints at the possible sexual tension between the sisters. For example, in issue 6 Rose Red tells her sister about her past affairs with women, assuring Snow White, as they get into bed, that even if she could get past the incest, Snow White isn’t her type. While any queer sexual desires she may have for Snow White is closed off with this remark, in even presenting this queer possibility, the reader is invited to contemplate the potential sexual tension between the women. Thus, though her sexual identity in childhood may be ambiguous to some degree in the flashbacks—taking shape through her adult filtration (i.e., through an act of retrospection; see Stockton, 2009 and chapter two)—her queer positioning throughout the comic helps to facilitate the above reading.

Further, her queer position becomes explicit in the flashbacks when, feeling hurt and betrayed, a young adult Rose Red undergoes a character transformation and seeks to use her sexuality to punish Snow White. This is clearly seen in figure 6.19. Remarkig on the separation Snow White has placed between them, the feelings of dejection Rose Red voices takes physical manifestation as Snow White is shown sitting at the opposite end of the table. Rose Red, depicted as largely isolated, rests her head in her hand and looks downcast, inviting the reader to see this isolation and distance from Snow White as a painful and lonely experience.

However, rather than simply slipping into sorrow, as seen in the bottom panel, Rose Red begins to make socially inappropriate, sexual references, stating, “Sir Morwen. You can confess to your wife what you and I were doing to each other in the gardens last night” (p. 82). The panel sequence invites the reader to connect her remarks in the bottom panel with her feelings of dejection and Snow White’s (emotional &
physical) distance in the above sequence. Paired with subsequent panels in which Rose Red reveals that she never had sexual relations with the knight, her sexualised comment, rather than reinforcing heteronormativity, takes on queer undertones—her behaviour and newly established sexuality driven by her feelings for and towards Snow White, and her possible desire to attract Snow White’s attention by inciting jealousy.
Figure 6.19 Rose Red’s feelings of dejection, “Rose Red.” *Fables*, 15(94–97), p. 82

The use of her (hyper)sexuality as a means to lash out at Snow White frames her as an unstable, poisonous and aggressive figure, and queers the tale by centring the story’s conclusion around the girls’ dysfunctional relationship, rather than Snow
White’s conflict with the queen and her “happily ever after.” The comic aligns with “American culture[ally] produce[ed] narratives that on every register of high and low, posit the existence, return, and love of a sibling as something fundamentally dangerous” (Flannery, 2005, p. 6). From this perspective, one might assume that it is her queer relations that result in her dysfunctional development, reinforce the sisters’ troubled relationship and prevent the tale’s typical ending.

Yet as Denis Flannery (2005) also notes,

“sibling love in U.S. culture, and in Western culture more generally, is marked by less intense forms of something of the same dizzying phantasmatic contradictions as those that mark homoerotic desire. Sibling love is valued, visible, incited, and foundational[… at the same time that it] is also feared, shame-ridden, disavowed, and haunted by specters of dissolution. (p. 6)

Existing within this contradictory representation of sibling love in popular culture, even though Rose Red poisons Snow White’s (young) adult life, the comic does not frame Rose Red’s queer sisterly love in itself as problematic or misplaced. Alternatively, the tension between the women is rooted in Rose Red’s inability to realise this queer relationship as they grow and age. This becomes particularly evident when, at the end of the adaptation, Rose Red’s realisation that Snow White never purposefully abandoned her or stopped loving her, transforms her character, awakening her from her depression and her life long misperceptions. In this way, the sisters’ shared love is regenerative.

Nonetheless, Rose Red’s queer attachments alter the tale’s focus as the heterosexual maturation Snow White often undergoes and her romantic heterosexual union is replaced with Rose Red’s queer homosocial (homoerotic?) bonds and attachments. With the queen cast as a subsidiary character, the core of “Snow White” (as detailed in chapter three) nonetheless remains consistent as the conflict between the queen and Snow White is briefly played out, and as the conflict between Snow White
and Rose Red depicts the antagonism between two women that assume oppositional roles as they grow and age. Her sisterly love thus shifts the tale’s central conflict and re-appropriates the tale’s core as her relationship with Snow White overshadows the conflict between Snow White and the queen.

The interplay amongst the comic’s modes and conventions helps to construct the complexity of the characters’ developing identities as women. Rather than creating a one-dimensional retelling, as the characters’ fairy–tale pasts become muddled, misremembered, misinterpreted, reinterpreted and informed by changing emotions and perceptions, the characters assume a human complexity that queers the tale, complicates their development and rationalises their relationships within the comic’s long running narrative.

Conclusion

Where Zipes (2009) criticises the comic book medium for minimising the resistant qualities of fantasy and reaffirming existing social conditions for mass appeal, this chapter has shown how Fables’ “Snow White” adaptation problematises and challenges social narratives about romantic children and childhood, and ideal forms of female (character) development. Specifically, my analysis highlights how the comic constructs complex characters and an intricate storyline that can deal with and address female maturation as a dynamic process.

Although film and television are also multimodal, “the constellation of modes in comics[...] have a considerable impact on the storytelling possibilities supported by the medium” (Kukkonen, 2011, p. 35) as comics’ negotiation of words, images and the arrangement of panels enables different levels of narration to physically emerge within and between these modes. Added to this, the comic’s encompassment of the past,
present and future in a shared space—while providing a more fluid understanding of age-based identities through the layering of tenses and characters’ perspectives—provides the means to readily engage with the material by comparing and contemplating shifts in narration, imagery and storytelling within, amongst and between panels.

As my above analysis shows, the interaction between modes within and across space and tense fundamentally shifts how significant events and happenings are understood and reframed throughout the adaptation, reflecting how different media facilitate a re-imagining of the tale, defamiliarise the story and inform the tale’s enunciation (see McFarlane, 1996; Hutcheon, 2006; and chapter one for further discussions). Like Once Upon a Time, Fables’ structural framing of the past and present reinforces narratives where youth fundamentally informs the characters’ adult identities. However, as I demonstrated the comic’s critique of romantic childhood narratives undermines the notion that childhood innocence leads to the development of a functional adult. In this way, the comic challenges dominant social narratives that idealise innocence in youth, alternatively encouraging a reading of ideal female growth and development through a consideration of sisterhood and sisterly love.

Focalising content from Rose Red’s perspective, I found that the comic minimises a narrative about the generational tensions between the queen and Snow White, alternatively focusing on how perceptions of childhood innocence and sisterhood inform female development. As I have argued, Rose Red’s queer sibling love, queers “Snow White’s” narrative trajectory and re-appropriates the tale’s core, with female bonding subverting heteronormative frames of “happily ever after” by presenting sisterly love as central to whether/how characters (ideally) mature; and with the antagonism between Snow White and Rose Red seeing them assume oppositional roles as they grow and age. Thus, as Rose Red is healed through the fulfilment of her
queer attachment—learning that Snow White never purposely abandoned her or stopped
loving her—sisterly love and the recognition of an un-idyllic childhood facilitate the
formation of a functioning adult within this adaptation. In this way, I have identified
how the comic provides an alternative space to explore ideal female growth and
development, with the comic overcoming generational tensions through sisterly bonds
and shared knowledge.

In addition, as my analysis has demonstrated, the comic’s negotiation of time
and temporality also questions the dominant links between growth (as progression and
possibility) and youth; and ageing (as decline) and old age. As the terms “growth” and
“ageing” are respectively disjointed from connotations of progression and decline and
from specific age categories, the comic constructs the characters’ physical and
emotional development around lived experiences, more specifically experiences of
violence and trauma. My critical analysis thus demonstrates how the comic deconstructs
and reimagines dominant cultural beliefs and norms surrounding growth and ageing,
and thus establishes how comic books in fact draw on rather than minimise the resistant
qualities of fantasy.

Consequently, I believe this research demonstrates the productive avenues for
analysis that are possible when considering mass-mediated comic book adaptations of
fairy tales. Further, by considering the complex structure of the comic form, I believe
this research opens the avenues and provides the methodological framework for fairy–
tale scholars to consider how the intersection between form and content can inform
readings of contemporary fairy–tale adaptations.

Having explored the kinds of stories about female growth and ageing different
media adaptations of “Snow White” enable, the thesis’ final chapter outlines the value
and limitations of my approach. It considers how this thesis speaks to the aims and questions outlined in my introduction, and details gaps for future research.
Chapter Seven
Conclusions, Chapter Ties and Contributions

In accounting for representations of female growth and ageing in adaptations of “Snow White,” this thesis found that the interplay between form and content creates different avenues for the tale’s retelling. It detailed the sociocultural norms that guide and code the female characters’ ideal development from childhood to adolescence, adulthood to old age; the kinds of stories about female growth and ageing different media adaptations of “Snow White” enable; and how issues of time and temporality, and growth and ageing play out in twenty-first-century adaptations of “Snow White.”

Rather than passing judgment or discounting mass-mediated “Snow White” adaptations for (at times) representing female characters and their identities “regressively,” I came to the conclusion that these adaptations provide the space to critically unpack the formation and perpetuation of dominant discourses surrounding female ageing and the innocent child in contemporary popular culture texts. Reversely, as these adaptations can also reimagine and/or question social norms and character roles as they dynamically engage with fairy tales, and contemporary Western discourses and ideologies, I determined that these adaptations also create avenues to resist dominant beliefs and norms.

Although each chapter is largely self-contained, focusing on different media, my analysis chapters are united by their focus on fairy-tale, adaptation, childhood and ageing studies. As I draw this thesis to a close, this concluding chapter will clarify how my research facilitates a dialogue between these studies. I will also detail how, in unpacking the possibilities for storytelling different media afford, the thesis contributes to (feminist) fairy-tale scholarship, and ageing and childhood studies—illustrating how fairy tales “provide[…] a particularly imaginative space for negotiating age and its
gendered implications” (Do Rozario and Waterhouse–Watson, 2014, p. 233). Finally, the chapter will conclude by contemplating gaps for future research.

Findings and Contributions

The thesis’ first aim was to detail the formation of “Snow White” as a tale type and to identify the tale’s core. In unpacking “Snow White’s” complex history and evolution, my historical survey in chapter three outlined the conventions, elements, characters and storylines shared between versions. I also identified significant shifts in the tale, variances in tellings as well as the avenues for adaptation different versions of the tale facilitated. Centrally, this chapter determined that at the core of “Snow White” is a storyline about the antagonism between two females, one younger and one older, who assume oppositional roles as they grow and age.

The identification of “Snow White’s” core in chapter three enabled me to subsequently identify and select contemporary “Snow White” adaptations for analysis in chapters four (Mirror Mirror and Snow White and the Huntsman), five (Once Upon a Time) and six (Fables). In detailing “Snow White’s” formation as a tale type, I was also able to investigate how these contemporary adaptations, functioning as ‘palimpsestuous’ works, engaged with, diverted from and reimagined elements found in preceding versions. I found that each adaptation self-consciously addressed its status as a fairy tale and, more specifically, as a “Snow White” adaptation. This engagement primarily served to reimagine character roles, identities and narrative functions, particularly as adaptations drew attention to their departure from preceding tellings.

An understanding of the tale’s history and conventions also made it possible to identify how contemporary versions facilitated a reimagining or altered the enunciation of norms, conventions, motifs and characters commonly found in “Snow White”
adaptations. For example, as I found in chapter six, the comic’s incorporation of violence was in line with many preceding versions. However, the comic’s representational conventions heightened and altered the enunciation of the tale’s violence as the panels, images and the gutter extended the time frame in which violence occurred, leaving the reader to imagine the characters’ experiences of violence both within and beyond the panels. As this example illustrates, by working within a broader understanding of the tale, I was able to unpack the relationship between form and content in specific adaptations, to explore the avenues for representation and storytelling different media facilitate. In highlighting the relevance and insightful nature of this approach, this thesis demonstrates the value of considering fairy tales in their collective forms when evaluating the intersection between form and content in contemporary tellings. This approach allows fairy–tale scholars to draw on a wealth of fairy–tale history, research and knowledge, while enabling fairy–tale scholarship to extend beyond folkloristic and literary approaches when accounting for other media forms.

This leads to the thesis’ second aim, which was to investigate the kinds of stories about female growth and ageing different media adaptations of “Snow White” enabled. In chapter four and five I found that representations of female growth and ageing were tied to a post-feminist idealisation of the young and erasure of the old in Hollywood and popular culture more generally (as described by Alison Winch, 2014; Whelehan, 2013; Negra, 2009; Wearing, 2007; Yvonne Tasker & Negra, 2005; Modleski, 1999).

Though arguably this oppositional representation of young and old females might simply reflect the tale’s central conflict and core storyline, where in preceding versions the characters’ relationship as rivals elevated the youthful Snow White over
Chapter Seven: Conclusions

the ageing queen, the adaptations explored in chapter four and five extended the
privileging of youth beyond the characters’ immediate conflict—exploring discourses
of ageing in relation to the beauty industry, Hollywood, new-momism, female sexuality,
stardom, (post-)menopause, community relationships, public/private spheres, female
power and multi-generational relationships. In engaging contemporary contexts and
discourses that largely police the performance of age/ing by encouraging the refusal of
middle/old age in favour of youthful middle/old age, these adaptations extend the
stigmatisation of the older woman and refashion the critique of this figure, primarily
within a post-feminist context.

I determined that the interplay between form and content was critical to this
refashioning. As I demonstrated in chapter four, the films’ formal conventions paired
with the queen’s fear of ageing invited a reading of the aged woman as an a-temporal
figure who resided within the logic of the disappearing older woman as described by
Kathleen Woodward (2006). The films’ engagement with stardom coupled with the
queen’s declining power in each film spoke to the early ageing of female stars in
Hollywood (as detailed by McDonald, 2013; also see Whelehan, 2013; and Negra &
Homes, 2011). Finally, the films’ alignment with comedy or action-adventure genres
paired with the queen’s role as a comic figure or supernatural villain reinforced
stereotypical representations of older/ageing/aged women as both ridiculous and
monstrous (see King, 2013).

Although (feminist) fairy–tale scholars might dismiss these works for simply
reaffirming the status quo, my critical analysis in chapter four and five illustrated the
diverse and complex ways these adaptations reaffirmed the stigmatisation of the old and
idealisation of the young. For example I found that in the films the erasure of the older
woman was explicit, with the queen’s sudden ageing (through the use of digital ageing,
prosthetics and CGI) and subsequent death denying her a material space in the film. In this way, the older woman, unable to use her body to discursively establish and maintain her own identity and sense of self, was denied personhood—embodying to the extreme Germaine Greer’s (1991) complaint that there is no way for an older woman to discursively establish her value through a bodily performance.

In contrast, *Once Upon a Time*'s muddling of ages masked a criticism of the older female, with the erasure of the older woman taking shape through the characters’ ideological alignments and the programme’s privileging of the young postfeminist. I found that although *Once Upon a Time* evaded narratives of vanity and ageing by reimagining the conflict between the queen and Snow White in the episodic storylines, in seeing the generational tensions alternatively play out in narratives of motherhood and community relationships within the serial storyline, the programme’s interweaving of storylines of varying length and temporal qualities implicitly facilitated an exploration of post-feminist values. Although all three adaptations offered a totalising account of the socio-cultural phenomena of the aged woman as secondary to the youthful, fertile and future full female, my findings enrich fairy–tale and ageing studies as the contexts in which this discourse is discursively disseminated and the way the different media facilitate such tellings helps to explain how these stigmas take shape, are naturalised and reinforced in Western contemporary popular culture texts and fairy–tale adaptations.

In contrast to these adaptations, while chapter six primarily explored narratives of the innocent child, the comic’s negotiation of story, narration and sequencing broke from a paradigm that links growth (as progression and possibility) and youth; and ageing (as decline and, eventually, death) and old age, alternatively connecting Snow White’s physical development in youth with narratives of decline and degradation.
Consequently, I determined that the comic revealed the links between youth, growth and progression; and old age, ageing and decline as social constructs. Further, in alternatively rooting ideal female emotional development in the establishment and maintenance of sisterly love, the comic provided an alternative avenue for female character development to take shape in adulthood and, potentially, throughout the characters’ lives. These findings prove that contemporary mass-mediated fairy–tale adaptations can draw upon the subversive qualities of fairy tales and fantasy to question dominant beliefs and ideals, creating an alternative and complex story world that is worthy of study.

In addition to exploring narratives of the older woman and/or ageing, my analysis in chapters five and six detailed *Once Upon a Time* and *Fables*’ variant representations of the innocent child/childhood. In both adaptations the pairing of past and present reinforced narratives as described by Steven Brumh and Natasha Hurley (2004), Patricia Holland (2004) and James Kincaid (1998) where youth fundamentally informed the characters’ adult identities. As I demonstrated, in *Once Upon a Time* the interweaving of episodic, serial and short storylines reinforced the dominant perception that purity in youth facilitates continued and successful development into/throughout adulthood. I also found that as the programme structured episodic storylines around magical time and serial storylines around daily, mundane happenings, the characters’ emotional development in youth took shape with a level of immediacy. This depiction reaffirmed representations of youth as a transformative period and heightened its importance to the characters’ development of “ideal” adult identities and roles.

In contrast, I found that *Fables*’ merging of two tale types, and *Rose Red* and “Mother’s” focalisation of events undermined the idealisation of the innocent child, framing innocence as the impediment to the girls’ happy maturation. Further, in
detailing the comic’s queering of the tale’s narrative trajectory through the layering and juxtaposing of semiotic modes (word, image and sequence) and formal conventions (speech bubbles, captions, borders, images, gutters and panels), and Rose Red’s perspective, I determined that the queered narrative alternatively presented female bonding as central to whether/how characters (ideally) mature. This has led me to conclude that the queering of the tale not only opened “Snow White” up to narratives of sisterhood, but also provided an alternative space to imagine what ideal emotional maturation from childhood to adulthood might look like.

It should be noted that though these two adaptations come to different interpretations, their oppositional tellings do not reflect medium specific outcomes, with the interplay between form and content in television and comics as likely to see the adaptation align with dominant discourses around children/childhood as it is to deviate from such tellings. Alternatively, the adaptations’ different engagement with narratives of childhood innocence/childhood simply highlights the different avenues of storytelling the interplay between form and content created in *Fables* and *Once Upon a Time*, and elucidates the diverse and dynamic ways these mass-mediated works can and do engage with contemporary Western culture and values.

Finally this thesis sought to explain how issues of time and temporality, and growth and ageing play out in contemporary film, television and comic book adaptations of “Snow White.” I found that all four adaptations in some way disconnected growth and ageing from the slow progression of chronological and earthly time and temporality, reflecting fairy tales’ structural disinterest in measured time/temporality (Lüthi, 1982; Zipes, 1988b; Haase, 2000). As characters’ experiences of physical and emotional growth and ageing were shaped beyond the bounds of a linear and measured temporal experience, I determined that their development
alternatively signalled important shifts in their identities, relationships and social roles, giving growth and ageing a symbolic power, and providing the location to explore the socio-cultural and ideological discourses that took shape in these moments.

Despite the adaptations’ similar aversion to chronometric measures of time and temporality, I determined that the adaptations negotiated the disconnect between growth, ageing and measured, linear gages of time/temporality through different formal elements and through each adaptations’ temporal logic. I found that in the films, the muddling of time and place assured the adaptations’ distance from the “real” and facilitated its break from chronometric measures of time, temporality and place. This was accomplished through the films’ alignment with fantasy, with both Mirror Mirror’s ahistoric costumes, and Snow White and the Huntsman’s anthropomorphism/augmentation of nature and its distortion of temporal perceptions disconnecting the films from the natural world. Reflecting the way fairy tales make the unfamiliar, familiar, through magic, wonderment and the suspension of disbelief (as discussed in chapter one), I discovered that in breaking from chronometric expectations of time, temporality and place, and rooting these tellings in the fantastic, these adaptations supported the ontological ruptures that occurred when characters’ movement through age brackets were not confined by chronometric measures (outlined below).

In Once Upon a Time the programme’s engagement with and representation of time and temporality was informed by the programme’s dynamic story structure (interweaving episodic, short and serial storylines) and the storylines’ settings (the fairy world or Storybrook). Tellings that unfolded in the fairy world, informed by the episodic storylines’ closed structure and focus on events, made use of magical time. As magical time takes shape in the absence of a linear, measured retelling, alternatively
using characters’ relationships, references to significant events and costume changes to establish general timelines, I found that chronological growth and ageing in the episodic storylines was subordinate to a sense of magical time.

In contrast as the serial storyline’s open structure evaded closure and put off “happily ever afters,” I determined that character growth and development in this space was never finalised. Further as the serial storyline slowed down time by displaying the intimate and, often, mundane elements of daily life, I found that the tempo and pacing of the linear storyline informed the characters’ emotional growth and development. As I will return to shortly and argued previously, the episodic and serial storylines’ contrasting temporal environments and their alignment with youth and adulthood directly impacted a reading of how female characters were seen to physically and, more specifically, emotionally develop in youth and adulthood.

Finally, Fables depicted time and temporality spatially. Despite the linear nature of the adaptations’ storyline, as I demonstrated, the panel sequencing, captions, dialogue, imagery and the gutter controlled tempo and the story’s movement through tense, consequently manipulating representations of time and temporality. In skipping over years of the characters’ lives or representing an extended period in a single “pregnant pause,” the comic demonstrated a disinterest in how the characters slowly progressed as they physically and emotionally developed. Alternatively, like the adaptations explored in chapter four and five, Fables focused on how specific moments and events shaped characters’ emotional identities and physical appearances as they transition towards adulthood.

Although more often than not, the comic disengaged with chronometric understandings of time and temporality by evading chronometric temporal measures and by seeing the process of growth and ageing take shape in the gutter, the comic
further muddled its temporal logic by at times directly contrasting the passing of time with the characters’ altered appearance. For example, when Snow White was depicted at the dwarfs’ cottage, the disconnect between the caption’s description of time and the panel’s image detached her physical development from a chronometric temporal experience of growth and ageing, alternatively attributing her physical change to her trauma and abuse. As the comic denied the links between chronometric temporal measures and Snow White’s physical development, I determined that it muddled its temporal engagement and the characters’ relationship to time.

This thesis found that the adaptations’ different temporal engagements/representations facilitated the emergence of varied stories about female growth and ageing within the context of each adaptation and in relation to “Snow White.” In the films, the queen’s sudden onscreen ageing denied the slow and natural progression of chronological ageing, and overlooked the character growth and emotional development that might have occurred had characters gradually renegotiated a sense of self at different ages. With ageing disconnected from chronometric measures, the queen’s transformation in both films was alternatively linked to their punishment for misdeeds and experiences of trauma, with the cross-cutting between scenes and the use of dialogue and close-up shots visually and verbally linking the queen’s transformation with her misdeeds/abuse of magic. Centrally I established that in pairing female ageing with a storyline of punishment and trauma, the film further exaggerated a narrative of devil woman as crone and reaffirmed dominant discourses that define female ageing in terms of loss (as described by Whelehan, 2013; King, 2013; Ylänne, 2012; Blaikie, 1999).

Working alongside the films’ engagement with the fantastic, the films’ use of dialogue, CGI, costuming and digital ageing also facilitated the formation of the aged
woman as an a-temporal figure. As I argued, in establishing the aged woman as a looming fear, residing in the past, present and future, like a spectre she is simultaneously invisible and visible, escaping the confines of a chronometric temporal reality by presenting as an object of thought and a potential reality. This analysis showed that in drawing this a-temporal figure to mind, the adaptations’ complex engagement with time, temporality and female ageing also facilitated the expansion of Snow White and the queen’s conflict to a tension that exist and persist between multiple generations of women, highlighting the way these narratives can be and are perpetuated.

In Once Upon a Time the episodic storylines’ use of magical time emphasised the significance of happenings, events and relationships depicted in each telling. Paired with the limited amount of screen time in which events unfolded, the character transformations in these moments took place with a level of immediacy, dramatising and intensifying the characters’ transformation in youth and consequently presenting childhood, adolescence and young adulthood as malleable periods.

In contrast as characters’ emotional growth and development in the serial storyline took shape in relation to the mundane elements of daily life; the serial storyline’s open structure; and the serial storyline’s evasion of “happily ever afters,” characters’ emotional development was framed as a slow and ongoing process. As I demonstrated, the varying temporal conditions in which character development occurred in youth and adulthood placed adult transformations at odds with the immediacy of character change in youth. In this way, the programme fed into dominant narratives that present childhood as a fundamental period of growth and as the most significant time for (ideal) character development (as discussed in chapter two; see Brumh and Hurley, 2004; and Patricia Holland, 2004). Yet, though the adult characters were more constrained in their emotional development, I found that the serial
storyline’s structure and temporal engagement also diverted from discourses that present adult identities as established and stabilised, providing a space for continued character growth after youth.

Finally, the interweaving of episodic, short and serial storylines and their contrasting timespans (in terms of seasons, episodes, storylines and screen time) helped to unpack and establish the important relationship between the characters’ emotional development in, between and across youth and adulthood. As I demonstrated, on one hand, as episodic storylines of youth rationalise character behaviour in both the serial and short storylines, the contrast between Mary Margaret’s and Regina’s pasts in the episodic storylines and their character growth in serial and short storylines exaggerated the importance of youth to the continued and successful development of heroic and loved female characters into/throughout adulthood, mimicking narratives that place childhood as the platform from which adult identities take their shape (as discussed in chapter two; also see Bruhm and Hurley 2004).

On the other hand, I found that the weaving of episodic, short and serial storylines simultaneously created a bridge between different ages and age related identities. As I argued, the programme revealed the process of character formation, growth and development as a non-linear happening, with characters showing traces of all the selves they have been. My analysis demonstrated how the programme’s complex engagement with time and temporality facilitated an exploration of female growth and development that was unconstrained by chronometric understandings of time, temporality, growth and ageing, and detailed how the programme accounted for time and development through a consideration of lived experiences, fantastical elements and the complex layering of storylines with varying temporal constraints and dimensions.
As I showed, in *Fables* the characters’ physical and emotional development was not gradual, with the characters’ movement from childhood to adolescence or adolescence to adulthood occurring within a single panel or page as the comic cuts between significant happenings. In leaving their gradual growth unexplored, the comic’s emphasis on and exploration of important events seemingly informed the characters’ bodily or emotional changes. As the happenings in which character change occurred were tied to the characters’ transgression in youth and as the comic denied the links between chronometric temporal measures and characters’ physical/emotional development, their traumatic maturations took shape within a narrative of punishment. In this way, and as I previously argued, the comic opened the space to reconsider the idealisation of innocence in youth and undermined the connections commonly made between growth (as progression and possibility) and youth.

When immediately juxtaposed, as briefly done above, it becomes evident that even when these adaptations similarly engage with fairy–tale traditions; “Snow White;” and the dominant discourses surrounding growth and ageing, childhood, adolescence and adulthood, the intersection between form and content creates varied avenues for interpretation. As I have shown, in understanding the possibilities different forms afford, one can begin to unpack these adaptations’ complex engagement with dominant discourses surrounding female growth and ageing, as well as the diverse identities and roles these characters assume as they align with or divert from the categorisation and norms of different age groups. This shows the relevance of accounting for the relationship between form and content when analysing contemporary fairy-tale adaptations in different media.

Yet, while the intersection of form and content creates marked differences between each version of “Snow White,” as each adaptation, aligning with the fairy–tale
tradition, evades chronometric measures of time and temporality, the varied temporal conditions of these adaptations nonetheless largely root time, temporality, growth and ageing in lived and felt experiences. In evading chronometric measures, the adaptations all highlighted the ideological and rhetorical elements that shape contemporary understandings of female growth and ageing, and in this way reveal female growth and ageing as a socio-cultural construct as much as a biological, chronometric process.

As these adaptations accommodate alternative understandings and experiences of time, they broaden an understanding of characters’ relationship to time and their experience of ageing, with characters living in time and living time. Further, the overlap and muddling of the past, present and future as well as aged and youthful bodies create a type of temporal vertigo in which characters are rendered all ages and no age. As my analysis has shown, characters are in a sense created through the complex layering of identity that takes shape as they reflect traces of themselves at multiple ages. While one might expect this complex layering to undermine contemporary discourses that place younger females at odds and in opposition with older females, as my analysis demonstrates this layering of identity and time in each adaptation is largely overshadowed by the dominant discourses and perceptions of youth, adulthood and old age found in contemporary Western popular culture. Consequently, I found that at the same moment that the division between age categories, identities and roles are broken down, the fears, stigmas and expectations associated with the youthful, adult and aged female body serves to reinforce the artificial boundaries between age groups and enables a continued dialogue to emerge surrounding ideal female growth and ageing in these adaptations.

Although in many ways my analysis reaffirms that these adaptations often reiterate the status quo, I have demonstrated how this occurs (chapters four and five) as
well as highlighted the spaces where ideological norms and expectations are challenged (chapter 6). In identifying the ways dominant narratives take shape and are questioned, my research draws attention to the structures that facilitate the dissemination of dominant discourses around female growth and ageing, and points to the space and avenues where these discourses and beliefs might be challenged or simply reimagined.

In bringing together ageing and childhood studies with an investigation of contemporary “Snow White” adaptations, I have demonstrated fairy tales’ ability to address female characters’ embodiment/performance of growth and ageing as an ideologically laden experience, one that is heavily entrenched in post-feminist ideals; fears and stigmas surrounding female ageing as decline; and the idealisation of the youthful female body. I have also illustrated how feminist fairy–tale scholars can further contemplate contemporary female fairy–tale characters beyond their basic narrative function, and their static and one-dimensional roles in early tellings. In exploring the performance of age and the social stigmas surrounding the growing and ageing female body in Western popular culture, I found that dominant Western social and political perspectives of childhood, adolescence and adulthood similarly emerge within different media adaptations of “Snow White,” and consequently highlighted how “Snow White” provides an imaginative space to explore the gendered implications of growth and ageing.

Ageing and childhood studies provided a means to unpack contemporary fairy tales’ complex societal constructs and their psychologically dynamic characters. In exploring the characters’ movement into and through different age brackets/identities, I found that the boundaries between the child, adolescent and adult broke down and took shape through the negotiation, contrast and overlap between age categories and norms, particularly as characters’ pasts were used to explain their present tense identities. As
the adaptations broke from chronometric expectations of time and ageing, the
boundaries between age categories became increasingly permeable, with characters
identities and roles informed by all the previous selves they had been. While ultimately
these adaptations maintained a division between young and ageing female characters by
aligning with dominant ideologies surrounding female growth and ageing, their
muddled temporalities simultaneously created a space where female growth/ageing can
be explored and understood beyond the individuated “stages” of childhood,
adolescence, adulthood and old age.

In contemplating the diverse ways these filmic, televisual and comic adaptations
of “Snow White” engaged with contemporary ideologies and discourses around
childhood, adolescence and adulthood, I demonstrated how an understanding of form
and content clarifies how these tellings took shape. While to date “the different medial
and technological iterations of tales have received less attention from [fairy–tale]
scholars trained in literary studies and folklore programs” (Rudy, 2015, p. 140), this
research contributes to (feminist) fairy–tale scholars’ increased interests in different
media by highlighting the growing need to move beyond a literary approach when
contemplating filmic, televiual and comic fairy–tale adaptations, and by directly
demonstrating how this can be done. In addressing different media adaptations of the
tale, my research moves beyond oral and literary approaches and brings attention to the
relevant and important research that can be done when taking an interdisciplinary
approach.

In illustrating how fairy tales can provide a platform to engage with, question,
re-imagine and/or emulate dominant understandings of female growth and ageing
within and beyond chronometric temporal constraints, I also clarified how fairy tales
provide a location to explore the socio-cultural construction of different age categories
and norms within Western contemporary popular culture texts. For example, as adaptations of “Snow White,” it was unsurprising that all four adaptations placed the women in oppositional roles as they grew and aged. However, as seen in my analysis of *Fables*, the queering of the tale created the means to reimagine the nature of this opposition and the solution to the women’s conflict, presenting shared sisterly love, devotion and attachments as a solution to female antagonisms within the adaptation. In using sisterly love as a formal resolution whilst denying the value of an innocent childhood, the comic presented sisterly ties and bonds as an alternative means for ideal development in and across youth and adulthood. This example highlights the exciting ways contemporary fairy–tale adaptations can engage with and reimagine the socio-cultural expectations surrounding female growth and ageing. I hope these findings will encourage scholars in childhood and ageing studies to further explore the imaginative space fairy tales provide when representing growing and ageing female characters.

Centrally, my analysis throughout this PhD has highlighted the insightful work that can be done when analysing mass-mediated fairy–tale adaptations in different media contexts. As my analysis has exemplified, these texts provide the space to critically and productively explore how dominant and regressive perceptions and discourses are and are not perpetuated. They offer an imaginative space to explore female characters’ identities as socio-cultural constructs and as part of a larger socio-cultural discourse.

**Gaps for Future Research**

Within this final section, I wish to explore how the work conducted in this thesis opens the gaps for future research. To begin, my exploration of “Snow White” adaptations and three media types, while creating a manageable and necessary point of proximity to
centre my qualitative analysis around, gave me insight into the various shapes “Snow White” has taken and highlighted the potential for storytelling the interplay between form and content created. This approach might be extended to an investigation of other fairy tales. Since, as Kay Stone (1975) highlights, there are many fairy tales where female heroines are not passive and pretty, and are thus not constrained by the young beauty, old villain binary commonly found in “Snow White,” one might discover alternative representations of female growth and ageing in contemporary tellings. Although many of these tales have not been popularised by the likes of Disney, this does not mean that media adaptations of such tales do not exist. In exploring media adaptations of different fairy tales, including non-European based tales, one might discover additional and varied avenues for representations in contemporary fairy-tale tellings.

Additionally, while I centrally focused on representations of female growth and ageing, future research could consider how male characters are seen to grow and age, and the resulting contrasts and/or similarities between the genders. In early versions of “Snow White” the male characters are underrepresented. However, in adaptations like Mirror Mirror, Snow White and the Huntsman, and Once Upon a Time, male characters are given larger and more detailed roles. As such, there are grounds to explore representations of male growth and ageing within contemporary adaptations of “Snow White.”

In terms of character portrayals, it also became apparent throughout my research that there was space to explore representations of class and race in “Snow White.” Many of these adaptations could be explored in relation to whiteness, and an investigation of Once Upon a Time could explore the relationship between whiteness and minority racial groups, contemplating how the casting of these characters engage
with a middle-class, American, Caucasian perspective. Given more space, the PhD could have also analysed the relationship between class and ageing in the tale. References to class occurred within all four adaptations explored in this thesis, with the queen commonly portrayed as a class-climber. As such, I believe a consideration of class and ageing in contemporary “Snow White” adaptations would be a fruitful area for future research.

As fairy–tale studies have only begun to engage with different media more research needs to be conducted. This includes studies on new media such as blogs, wikis, youtube and social media, which, as Pauline Greenhill and Jill Terry Rudy (2014) highlight, have facilitated the manifestation of fairy–tale adaptations/fairy–tale base communities online. In comparing works that are adapted by corporate bodies and channels with works produced by various online communities, the differing levels of standardisation might provide a fruitful space to explore the relationship between variances in media, space and targeted communities, and representations of female characters’ developing minds, bodies and social roles.

Finally, where my research provided a close textual analysis of four “Snow White” adaptations, in conducting audience research, one could investigate how viewers and readers interpret and understand the age related roles/identities the characters assume in these adaptations. This research would compliment the sociocultural investigations fairy–tales scholars have conducted by exploring whether scholars’ textual analysis reflects how audiences come to understand and perceive contemporary fairy–tale adaptations.

With so much research still to be conducted, this thesis has demonstrated the fruitful avenues of analysis that can be pursued in and across fairy–tale, adaptation, ageing and childhood studies. As my above considerations suggest, this thesis opens
many gaps for future research and can help to further an understanding of mass-mediated fairy-tale adaptations and the representations of female growth and ageing these tellings enable.
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Filmography


Teleography


Theatric References


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Appendix A: Adaptations of “Snow White”

This catalogue contains “Snow White” adaptations from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century. Although it is largely comprehensive, referencing all the adaptations I sourced or found reference to from fairy-tale scholars, the *Osborne Collection of Early Children’s Books, Open Library, Endicott Studios, Folklore and Mythology Electronic Texts, SurLaLune Fairtales, Internet Broadway Database, Internet Movie Database, Google, Google Books, Amazon, Daily Motion and Youtube*, this is not a complete catalogue of “Snow White” adaptations. Notably it does not contain early oral versions or non-Western tellings. I may have also missed obscure versions of the tale, texts that are no longer in print/production, texts that were not properly archived, versions that were not included in the above archives/databases or tellings that were not addressed by fairy-tale scholars. Nonetheless it gives a sense of the scale and variety of adaptations that have been produced since the seventeenth century. It details the adaptation’s name, its year of production, the author/director/producer/creator and the medium of adaptation.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Author/Director/Producer/Creator</th>
<th>Media Type</th>
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<td>1643</td>
<td>Giambattista Basile</td>
<td>Literature (Short Story)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snow Drop</td>
<td>1827</td>
<td>James &amp; Joseph Robins</td>
<td>Literature (Short Story)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Little Snow White</td>
<td>1853</td>
<td>Addey and Co.</td>
<td>Literature (Short Story)</td>
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<td>Death of the Seven Dwarfs</td>
<td>1856</td>
<td>Ernst Ludwig Rochholz</td>
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<td>The Three Sisters</td>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Christian Schneller</td>
<td>Literature (Short Story)</td>
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<td>Snow White</td>
<td>1868 &amp; 1889</td>
<td>Mrs H.B. Paull and Mr. L.A. Wheatley</td>
<td>Literature (Short Story)</td>
</tr>
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<td>1870</td>
<td>Laura Gonzenbach</td>
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<td>1877</td>
<td>Bernhard Schmidt</td>
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<td>Consiglieri Pedroso</td>
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<td>Joseph Jacobs</td>
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<td>1905</td>
<td>Isabella Anderton</td>
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<td>Little Snow White</td>
<td>1907</td>
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<td>1909</td>
<td>Mrs Edgar Lucas</td>
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<td>Snow White</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>Winthrop Ames and James Dawley</td>
<td>Feature Length Film</td>
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<td>Betty Boop in Snow White</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Dave Fleischer</td>
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<td>Erich Kobler</td>
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<td>Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs</td>
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<td>Iona and Peter Opie</td>
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<td>Beach Blanket Babylon</td>
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<td>Steven Silver</td>
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<td>Histórias Que Nossas Babás Não Contavam</td>
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<td>Feature Length Animation</td>
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<td>1982</td>
<td>Mario Bianchi</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>Year</td>
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<td>Pacific Comics &amp; Eclipse Comics</td>
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<td>Red as Blood, or Tales from the Sisters Grimmer</td>
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<td>1984</td>
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<td>Grimm Meisaku Gekijo</td>
<td>1987</td>
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<td>1987</td>
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<td>Daddy's Little Bit of Dresden China</td>
<td>1988</td>
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<td>Short Film</td>
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<td>Filmation</td>
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<td>Confessions of a Witch</td>
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<td>Suisan</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Phyllis Carol Agins</td>
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<td>Snow White Blood Red</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Ellen Datlow</td>
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<td>Waiting for Magic</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Ace of Base</td>
<td>Music Video</td>
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<td>Snow, Glass, Apple</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Neil Gaiman</td>
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<td>Shirayuki–hime no Densetsu</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Tatsunoko Animation</td>
<td>Television (Family Programming)</td>
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<td>Snow White: Happily Ever After</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Super NES</td>
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<td>Snow White to the Prince</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Delia Sherman</td>
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<td>Snow White</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Sheilah Beckett</td>
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<td>Snow White</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Rebecca Bondor</td>
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<td>Biancan e I sette nani</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Luca Damiano</td>
<td>Feature Length Film</td>
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<td>Happily Ever After: Fairy Tales for Every Child</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>HBO</td>
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<td>Snow White: A Tale of Terror</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Michael Cohn</td>
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<td>The Tale of the Apple</td>
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<td>Snow White and the</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Tom Holt</td>
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<td>Snow White: The Veil of My Heart</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Eden</td>
<td>Video Game</td>
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<td>The Prince to Snow White</td>
<td>2000</td>
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<td>The 10th Kingdom</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Hallmark Entertainment</td>
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<td>The Justice League “Queen of Fables” (Issue 47, 48 &amp; 49)</td>
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<td>Mark Waid &amp; Bryan Hitch</td>
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<td>Walt Disney</td>
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<td>Snow White: The Fairest of Them All</td>
<td>2001</td>
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<td>Feature Length Film</td>
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<td>Walt Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Planet Interactive / Ubisoft Game Boy Color</td>
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<td>Sonne</td>
<td>2001</td>
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<td>Fables</td>
<td>2002–2015</td>
<td>Bill Willingham</td>
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<td>The Lonely Detective solves “Murder at Snow White” and Ten Additional Exciting Hilarious Mysteries</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Charles Schwarz</td>
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<td>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</td>
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<td>Jane Jerrard</td>
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<td>Mirror Mirror</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Gregory Maguire</td>
<td>Literature (Novel)</td>
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<td>Kagami no Naka no Orgel: Futatsume no Monogatari—Snow White</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<td>Snow White and the Seven Menehune</td>
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<td>Regina Doman</td>
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<td>Mira, Mirror</td>
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<td>The Mirror's Tale</td>
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<td>P. W. Catanese</td>
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<td>Snow White and the 7 Clever Boys</td>
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<td>Blancaieves</td>
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<td>Miquel Desclot</td>
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<td>Snow</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>Ezone iPhone</td>
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<td>Snow White: Early Reader</td>
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<td>Sally Gardner</td>
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<td>Once Upon a Time</td>
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<td>Snow White and the Huntsman</td>
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<td>Lily Blake</td>
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<td>Grimm's Snow White</td>
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<td>Tarsem Singh</td>
<td>Feature Length Film</td>
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<td>Hidden Objects—Snow White</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>CronlyGames iPhone/iPad</td>
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<td>La La Love</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Ivi Adamou</td>
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<td>Seriously, Snow White Was So Forgetful!: The Story of Snow White as Told by the Dwarves</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Nancy Loewen</td>
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<td>Six-Gun Snow White</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Catherynne M. Valente</td>
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<td>Snow White Must Die</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Nele Neuhaus</td>
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<td>Snow White</td>
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<td>Ross Petty</td>
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### The Huntsman Cast Lists

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<tr>
<td>Snow White</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Huntsman</td>
<td>Chris Hemsworth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ravenna</td>
<td>Charlize Theron</td>
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<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>Sam Claflin</td>
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<td>Finn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beith</td>
<td>Ian McShane</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muir</td>
<td>Bob Hoskins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gort</td>
<td>Ray Winstone</td>
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<td>Nion</td>
<td>Nick Frost</td>
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<td>Duir</td>
<td>Eddie Marsan</td>
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<td>Coll</td>
<td>Toby Jones</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quert</td>
<td>Johnny Harris</td>
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<td>Gus</td>
<td>Brian Gleeson</td>
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<td>Vincent Regan</td>
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<td>Liberty Ross</td>
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<td>King Magnus</td>
<td>Noah Huntley</td>
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<td>Mirror Man</td>
<td>Christopher Obi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greta</td>
<td>Lily Cole</td>
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<td>Anna</td>
<td>Rachael Stirling</td>
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<td>Lily</td>
<td>Hattie Gotobed</td>
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<td>Young Snow White</td>
<td>Raffey Cassidy</td>
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<td>Young William</td>
<td>Xavier Atkins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ravenna’s Mother</td>
<td>Anastasia Hille</td>
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<td>Young Ravenna</td>
<td>Izzy Meikle-Small</td>
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<td>Young Finn</td>
<td>Elliot Reeve</td>
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<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Mark Wingett</td>
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<td>Iain</td>
<td>Jamie Blackley</td>
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<td>Broch</td>
<td>Dave Legeno</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percy</td>
<td>Matt Berry</td>
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<td>Aldan</td>
<td>Joey Ansah</td>
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### Mirror Mirror Cast Lists

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<td>Snow White</td>
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<td>The Queen</td>
<td>Julia Roberts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prince Alcott</td>
<td>Armie Hammer</td>
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<td>Brighton</td>
<td>Nathan Lane</td>
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<td>Martin Klebba</td>
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<tr>
<td>Napoleon</td>
<td>Jordan Prentice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Half Pint</td>
<td>Mark Povinelli</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grub</td>
<td>Joe Gnoff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grimm</td>
<td>Danny Woodburn</td>
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<td>Wolf</td>
<td>Sebastian Saraceno</td>
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<td>Chuckles</td>
<td>Ronald Lee Clark</td>
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**Supporting Cast**

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<td>Charlies Renbock</td>
<td>Robert Emms</td>
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<td>Baker Margaret</td>
<td>Mare Winningham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baron</td>
<td>Michael Lerner</td>
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<tr>
<td>King</td>
<td>Sean Bean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town Magistrate</td>
<td>Alex Ivanovici</td>
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### Appendix C: Television Cast

#### Once Upon a Time Cast Lists—Season One & Two

**Main Cast**

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<th>Character</th>
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<tr>
<td>Snow White/Mary Margaret</td>
<td>Ginnifer Goodwin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prince Charming/David</td>
<td>Josh Dallas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Evil Queen/Regina</td>
<td>Lana Parrilla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Gold/Rumpelstiltskin</td>
<td>Robert Carlyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>Jennifer Morrison</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>Jared Gilmore</td>
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**Main Supporting Cast**

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<tr>
<td>Belle</td>
<td>Emilie de Ravin (Season 1&amp;2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruby/Red Riding hood</td>
<td>Meghan Ory (Season 1&amp;2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain Hook</td>
<td>Colin O’Donoghue (Season 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archie Hooper/Jiminy Cricket</td>
<td>Raphael Sbarge (Season 1&amp;2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neal Cassidy/Baelfire</td>
<td>Michael Raymond–James (Season 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Granny</td>
<td>Beverley Elliott (Season 1&amp;2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leroy/Grumpy</td>
<td>Lee Arenberg (Season 1&amp;2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doc</td>
<td>David–Paul Grove (Season 1&amp;2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Mike Coleman (Season 1&amp;2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sleepy</td>
<td>Faustino Di Bauda (Season 1&amp;2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bashful</td>
<td>Mig Macario (Season 1&amp;2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sneezey</td>
<td>Gabe Khouth (Season 1&amp;2)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Jeffrey Kaiser (Season 1&amp;2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mother Superior/Blue Fairy</td>
<td>Keegan Conner Tracy (Season 1&amp;2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>August/ Pinocchio</td>
<td>Eion Bailey (Season 1&amp;2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Princess Aurora</td>
<td>Sarah Bolger (Season 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Whale/Victor Frankenstein</td>
<td>David Anders (Season 1&amp;2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cora</td>
<td>Barbara Hershey (Season 1&amp;2)</td>
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<td>Jamie Chung (Season 2)</td>
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<td>Greg Mindell</td>
<td>Ethan Embry (Season 2)</td>
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<td>Sidney Glass/Magic Mirror</td>
<td>Giancarlo Esposito (Season 1&amp;2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheriff Graham/The Huntsman</td>
<td>Jamie Dornan (Season 1&amp;2)</td>
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<td>Alan Dale (Season 1&amp;2)</td>
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<td>Marco/Gepetto</td>
<td>Tony Amendola (Season 1&amp;2)</td>
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<td>Kathryn Nolan/Abigail</td>
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<td>William Smee</td>
<td>Chris Gauthier (Season 2)</td>
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<td>Tamara</td>
<td>Sonequa Martin–Green (Season 2)</td>
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<td>Jefferson/The Mad Hatter</td>
<td>Sebastian Stan (Season 1&amp;2)</td>
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<td>Julian Morris (Season 2)</td>
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<td>Bailee Madison (Season 1&amp;2)</td>
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<td>Jessy Schram (Season 1)</td>
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<td>Rose McGowan (Season 2)</td>
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<td>King Leopold</td>
<td>Richard Schiff (Season 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>Actor</td>
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<td>Eva Bourne</td>
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<tr>
<td>Queen Eva</td>
<td>Elliot Reeve</td>
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