Fairy LGBTales

Mapping Queer Fairy-Tale Retellings from the 1990s to the 2010s

Alba Morollón Díaz-Faes

PhD Thesis

Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages

Faculty of Humanities

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

2019

Fairy LGBTales

Mapping Queer Fairy-Tale Retellings

from the 1990s to the 2010s

2019

Fairy LGBTales

Mapping Queer Fairy-Tale Retellings from the 1990s to the 2010s

Alba Morollón Díaz-Faes

Trykk: Reprosentralen, Universitetet i Oslo

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the help of many fairy godmothers and godfathers. First of all, I must sincerely thank my main supervisor, Rebecca Scherr, for her flexible supervision style, which allowed me to find my own way, but also for her insightful directions in the most critical moments of the writing process, which have had an enormous impact on the final form of the thesis. Infinite thanks go to Anne Duggan, my co-supervisor, whose lucid guidance has been essential, whose enthusiasm has kept me going when I was feeling discouraged, and who has enormously impacted not only my impressions of my own project, but also of the fairy-tale genre as a whole. I am also greatly indebted to my midway evaluator, Vanessa Joosen, whose intelligent feedback at a crucial juncture challenged me to turn this project into something worth reading (and writing).

I am forever grateful to Tina Skouen and Bruce Barnhart, project leaders of Literature, Rights, and Imagined Communities, for allowing me to carry out this study, for believing in me and my vision, and for their unwavering support in the last three years. Thanks to the generous funding from the Faculty of Humanities and the Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages, I was allowed to attend numerous conferences and summer schools, and especially to do invaluable research stays at Brown University and Wayne State University. I would like to extend my profound gratitude to Lewis Seifert (Brown University), for his early guidance and thought-provoking conversations, and to the fairy-tale working group at Wayne State University: Anne Duggan, Donald Haase, Janet Langlois, Julie Koehler, Adrion Dula and Lacey Skorepa—your ideas, expansive knowledge, and keen interest lay at the foundations of this study. If we talk about foundations, however, I must always mention the person who, once upon a time, revealed the wonder of fairy tales to me, and so my heartfelt thanks go to Carolina Fernández Rodíguez. I would also like to thank my PhD colleagues at the department, for the lunches, the coffees, the occasional feedback and all the late-night good times. Particularly, I would like to thank my watery friends Mexitli Nayeli López Ríos and Tom Zachary Bradstreet, and my very best partner in crime, Belinda Molteberg Steen, without whom this experience would have been lonely and (worst of all) quite boring.

Finally, thanks to my friends, too many to name, who have always put up with my increasingly weird interests, and to my family, who has never doubted me. Special thanks go to my parents, for their steadfast encouragement, their understanding and their patience for the past twenty-nine years. And last, but most definitely not least, my deepest gratitude goes to Anna Campion, the fairest of them all, to whom this work is dedicated.

Table of Contents

1 Introduction

Supernatural agency and the pleasure of wonder are interwoven in the character of fairy tales

Marina Warner in *Once Upon a Time*

Queering is at its heart a process of wonder

Jeffrey J. Cohen in *Medieval Identity Machines*

1.1 The Case of 'The Queer Minstrel'

The Brothers Grimm added the tale 'Der wunderliche Spielmann' to the second edition of their *Children and Household Tales* in 1819. This tale's title has been variously translated as 'A Miraculous Fiddler,' 'The Strange Musician,' 'The Queer Minstrel.' And miraculous, strange and queer he is, indeed. He plays his violin in the forest, which attracts the attention of various animals. The minstrel, however, is not looking for an animal audience, and so he entraps them, one after the other, displeased by their unwanted attention. Only when a woodcutter arrives, drawn by his wonderful melody, does the minstrel react with delight. 'At last comes the right companion,' he says. At that point, the animals manage to free themselves and rush to attack the minstrel, who is protected by the woodcutter. The minstrel plays once more for his human companion in thanks, and then he is on his way.

This strange little tale of pleasurable encounters in the forest, of fleeting, anonymous camaraderie, between two men no less, exemplifies the potential of the classic fairy tale for queerness. It is queer in the way Pauline Greenhill and Kay Turner indicate, in the 'nineteenth-century usage of the word, to mean odd, strange making, eccentric, different, and yet attractive' (Greenhill and Turner, 4), but also in the twentieth/twenty-first century sense, to mean everything not cis/hetero/normative—particularly as the tale focuses on male companionship between the musician and the woodsman. 'The Queer Minstrel' even manages to sidestep genre expectations in that it disavows the marriage plot, the happy ending that most reinforces the connection between fairy tales and heteronormativity. And it is perhaps the enduring connection

between heteronormative endings and fairy tales what has so delayed the recognition of the genre as a fertile site for queer readings. However, as Turner puts it:

> Even if many tales hurtle headlong toward normative reunion, marriage, and stability, often the route navigates a topsy-turvy space filled with marvels, magic, and weird encounters that don't simply contradict the 'normal' but offer, or at least hint at, alternative possibilities for fulfilling desires that might alter individual destinies. (Turner 248)

Some could argue that 'The Queer Minstrel' is not, in fact, a fairy tale: it is an animal tale under the Aarne–Thompson–Uther folktale classification system. There are some tales, however, which come closer to what most people understand as fairy tales and which still follow the sinuous, queer routes to normative happy endings that Turner mentions above. Most notably, there are the many maiden knight tales, in which young women crossdress for various reasons and often end up in heterosexual, royal marriages. Such is the case of Giovanni Francesco Straparola's 'Constanza / Constanzo' and Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy's 'Belle-Belle, or the Knight Fortuné,' both of which contain crossdressing knights who perform exceptional deeds and rise through the ranks, become the king's favourites, are eventually revealed to be women, and ultimately marry the king. However, none of these crossdressing tales (nor 'The Queer Minstrel,' for that matter) have infiltrated the contemporary fairy-tale canon, which mostly eschews tales that foreground gender nonconforming protagonists.

It is thus understandable that, for the average reader, fairy tales would have remained exclusively cisheterocentric texts, but even fairy-tale scholars have only recently started to interrogate the normative surface of the tales. Moreover, they have failed to pay closer attention to the budding subgenre of queer retellings that has flourished in the past thirty years, and which offers an immediate, effective, context-specific challenge to the genre's apparent cisheterocentrism. This study will thus examine retellings in English from the 1990s to the 2010s which have received little or no scholarly attention, and it will analyse the strategies for genre queering they deploy. It will argue that these works do not break with a heterocentric fairy-tale tradition, but that they exist on the same discursive continuum, as they amplify the queer echoes already present in the genre and are tethered to one another by a queer chain of retelling, and that contemporary retellings are as impacted by their creators' sensibilities and varying

sociohistorical contexts as their pre-texts.[1] Fairy tales are indeed not only wondrous tales of magic and escapism, able to adapt to fluctuating, strange desires, but they are also potent historical documents. By employing a sociohistorical approach to queer fairy tales, this study aims to offer an in-depth analysis of the many intersections between these tales and the cultural, political, historical and social elements surrounding their production. It will also draw variously from queer theories in order to evaluate the techniques queer retellings use to reflect, reinforce, subvert or question shifting attitudes towards LGBTQI people, as these works converge with historically salient events and tendencies, such as the AIDS crisis, the mainstreaming or assimilation of queer identities, and the migration of queer communities to online spaces. Ultimately, this study will trace the emergence of queer fairy-tale retellings, the evolution and sophistication of this subgenre, so as to offer a roadmap of the queer uses of the fairy tale in contemporary society.

1.2 Queer, Queering, Fairy tales

'Queer' is commonly used to refer to those identities, sexualities, practices and bodies that resist normative constructions, many of which are popularly grouped under the initialism LGBTQI, to which sometimes a plus sign is added (LGBTQI+).[2] Furthermore, queer theorists expand its meanings thus: according to David Halperin, queer is everything that 'is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant' (8); and for Judith Butler, it is that which exists outside of the 'heterosexual matrix,' that is, the 'grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders and desires are naturalized' (*Gender Trouble* 151). For his part, Steven Angelides defines queer as 'an umbrella category for the sexually marginalised' situated in a 'no-man's land beyond the heterosexual norm' that challenges 'the familiar distinctions between normal and pathological, straight and gay, masculine men and feminine women' (168-71). Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick understands the term more broadly as an 'open mesh of possibilities,

[1] I use 'pre-text' throughout this study to mean the source a retelling is making intertextual reference to. Often this pre-text is not a single identifiable work (for instance, d'Aulnoy's 'Finette Cendron'), but rather a tale type that has been retold and collected by different people (for example, ATU 500, 'Cinderella and Cap o' Rushes').

[2] The ever-expanding acronym, in one of its most popular forms, stands for 'lesbian, gay, trans, bisexual, queer and intersex,' and the plus sign is meant to include the spectrum of identities and bodies that fall outside of the norm in various ways, such as pansexual, genderqueer, asexual, et cetera.

gaps, overlaps' (*Tendencies* 8), and for Mary McIntosh it is a defiant term, 'defined more by what it is against than what it is for' (365).

'Queer,' however, can also be used as a verb. I understand 'queering' as a critical process that would entail challenging and breaking 'apart conventional categories' (Doty xv), to which end one would need to 'unpick binaries and reread gaps, silences and in-between spaces' (Giffney and Hird 5). I also, however, do not wish to overlook or downplay the connection between queerness and non-normative sexualities and identities, so, much like Seifert, I understand 'to queer' as:

> to make strange by accentuating what departs from normative social expectations . . . thus exposing the notions of "normal" gender and sexual identities as myths (albeit powerful ones). (Seifert, 'Introduction' 16)

Following this, throughout this study I embrace the indefinite and expansive umbrella term 'queer' to signify everything and everyone outside of the cisheteronorm, and the power of 'queering' to disrupt, disturb and deconstruct that which is perceived as the normal—particularly regarding gender and sexuality within the fairy tale.

These flexible understandings of 'queer' are particularly useful when applied to the fairy tale. As Jennifer Orme points out, this indefinability, 'the shifty instability of the term *queer*' is 'one of its few stable aspects' (148), which can also be said of the term *fairy tale*: yet another slippery umbrella term often re/defined and used to refer to various things. As fairy tales get told, retold, adapted, re-written and reimagined in a variety of forms—from short story, to novels, films, video games and adverts—what makes a fairy tale a *fairy tale* becomes increasingly unclear. The genre is, in other words, constantly queered, made progressively stranger and more unpinnable. Somewhat paradoxically, it is the plasticity of the fairy tale, its ability to adapt its essence indefinitely, and, in short, its potential for queering, that has ensured the genre's survival. Furthermore, despite the ubiquitous normative endings, the strange world of the fairy tale is also necessarily queer: it operates following the unknowable rules of wonder, existing at the crossroads of fantasy and reality, where normalcy and all its agents are banished.

It would be disingenuous to insist the fairy tale is inherently queer without also acknowledging that, at least the canonical tales, are part of a heterosexist corpus that work to preserve what Adrienne Rich called 'compulsory heterosexuality,' by which non-heterosexual experiences are deemed abhorrent or 'rendered invisible'

('Compulsory Heterosexuality,' 26). While interspecies tales, like Jeanne Marie Leprince de Beaumont's 'Beauty and the Beast,' and transspecies tales, like Hans Christian Andersen's 'The Little Mermaid,' retain an underlying queerness, they are nevertheless drawn to the orbit of heterosexuality: the Beast becomes a man, who establishes a heterosexual relationship with Beauty, and the little mermaid transforms into a woman to seduce the prince. Problematizing the exclusion of non-heterosexual identities from the fairy tale canon, which for so long has been 'used to enshrine heterosexual love' (Seifert, Introduction 18), will be one of the main foci of this study.

1.3 Re-Vising the Fairy-Tale Canon

This study will primarily, but not exclusively, focus on retellings of canonical fairy tales in the western European tradition. This choice has to do with the usual limitations of any research project, but it is also due to the current state of my object of study, the contemporary queer fairy tale in English, which majorly references pre-texts from the European canon.[3] Of course, there is no such thing as an official fairy-tale canon, but a loose, *de facto* canon soon emerges for those who work with the genre. I use this concept along the same lines as Tom Shippey, for whom the canon is this 'rather small core-group of familiar stories' that tend to get retold, adapted and collected most often (161). In his experience, this includes 'Bluebeard,' 'Snow White,' 'Cinderella,' 'Little Red Riding Hood,' 'Sleeping Beauty,' 'Rapunzel,' 'Beauty and the Beast,' 'The Frog Prince,' and 'Snow White and Rose Red' (Shippey 161). This 'core group' amounts primarily to tales penned by the Perrault-Grimm-Andersen trinity, many of which were further established as canonical, and even re-shaped, by Disney's adaptations. Thus, and going by my own experience with retellings and collections, I include 'The Little Mermaid,' 'Little Thumb,' 'Puss in Boots,' 'The Ugly Duckling,' 'The Snow Queen,' and 'Hansel and Gretel' in the list of canonical tales.

As noted, most of these canonical tales stick to stricter normative scripts, but many still contain non-normative encounters, attachments and pathways that invite queer

[3] This is not necessarily exclusive to queer retellings. Fairy tales from the western European branch are the basis for many of the retellings that would come out of Europe and North America during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This is a testament to their enduring cultural currency in the global north, in spite of continued efforts to open up the canon to multicultural versions, of which Angela Carter's fairy-tale anthologies are good examples: *The Old Wives' Fairy Tale Book* (1990) and *Strange Things Still Sometimes Happen: Fairy Tales From Around the World* (1993).

readings. For instance, both the interspecies 'The Beauty and the Beast' and Andersen's coming-of-age tale of 'The Ugly Duckling' contain themes of alterity that can easily be understood in queer terms, if one is so inclined. The pervasive, cross-media, and historically expansive presence of classical tales allows for a deep feeling of familiarity, which might complicate approaching them from a completely 'strange' perspective. Adults might not exactly remember how a particular tale goes, and children might only know Disney renditions of 'Cinderella' or 'Sleeping Beauty,' but, as Cristina Bacchilega notes, we 'respond to stereotyped and institutionalized fragments of these narratives, sufficiently for them to be a good bait in jokes, commercials . . . cartoons, and other elements of popular and consumer culture' (*Postmodern Fairy Tales*, 2). We must thus lift the confounding veil of familiarity, reassess and deconstruct our assumptions of what a fairy tale is (or is not), reconsider how the laws of wonder operate and what can be expected of them. In other words, critics and retellers both must perform an act of 're-vision,' to use Rich's term ('Writing as Re-Vision,' 18), in order to see the old fairy tales with fresh eyes, abandoning naturalised associations so they do not hold us back in our way to probe the queer depths of the fairy tale.

Furthermore, critics and retellers must also navigate external challenges. The mere indication that such tales could be read queerly might be met with a great degree of resistance, Pauline Greenhill explains, as one is perceived to be 'sullying these allegedly innocent stories by suggesting they might not be always resolutely heterosexual' ('Sexualities'). In our times, the fairy tale approximates a sacred cultural institution, generally associated with sanitised plots, conservative morals and cisheteronormativity, reimagined as a genre for children, and whittled down to a handful of canonical tales which (at least superficially) support this narrow vision. Thus, queering these tales (both in the sense of critical reassessment and creative retelling) is to this day quite taboo and can be perceived as a threat. Lewis Seifert describes the case of Lithuanian fairy-tale collection *Gintariné širdis* (*Amber Heart*) by Neringa Dangvydė, which contained two tales depicting queer relationships, and which was censored by Lithuanian authorities in 2014 for promoting 'harmful, primitive, and purposeful propaganda of homosexuality' (Seifert, 'Introduction' 15). More recently still, Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* live-action remake (2017) had sidekick LeFou dance with another man in a blink-and-you-miss-it scene, which was meant to imply he was non-heterosexual. This fairly insignificant moment led to screening cancellations in some cinemas in the United

States, as well as general displeasure and threats of censorship in countries with anti-gay policies, such as Russia (Alexander). These examples of ferocious pushback are illustrative of the risks one runs when queering such esteemed texts, and it makes it all the more remarkable and deserving of attention when creators and critics are bold enough to queerly re-vise the fairy tale.

1.4 A New Frontier for Fairy-Tale Studies

As mentioned, fairy-tale scholars have only recently begun to address a twofold issue: both the queer potential of the genre, and the silencing of queer identities, themes and desires in the canon. At the time of writing, there are only two book-length texts on the queering of fairy tales: Kay Turner and Pauline Greenhill's *Transgressive Tales: Queering the Grimms* (2012), and Anne Duggan's *Queer Enchantments: Gender, Sexuality and Class in the Fairy-Tale Cinema of Jacques Demy* (2013). Moreover, Duggan herself points out in the introduction to *Queer Enchantments* that a cursory search in the MLA International Bibliography of combined keywords such as 'queer', 'fairy tale', 'lesbian', and 'homosexual' returns a total of nine relevant articles (*Queer Enchantments* 11). Duggan wrote this in 2013, but six years later, a similar search in the same database returns only five more articles, on top of the eight articles comprising the 2015 special issue in the journal of interdisciplinary fairy-tale studies *Marvels & Tales*, titled *Queer(ing) Fairy Tales*, in which both historical fairy tales and contemporary retellings were considered. There is, thus, palpable growing interest in the intersection of queer theories and fairy-tale studies, but this approach is still in its infancy.

My thesis aims to contribute to this inchoate academic approach to the genre, which has taken a surprising amount of time to take hold. This is particularly shocking if we consider the key role that feminist critics and gender theorists, from the seventies onward, had in shaping the field of fairy tale studies as it is nowadays, with its focus on the sociohistorical context of fairy tales, the critique of the canon and the recovery of lesser-known stories (Haase, 'Feminist Fairy-Tale Scholarship' 16). Early feminist critics, such as Marcia R. Lieberman, identified classical and canonical fairy tales as texts that perpetuate myths about gender, often overstating the power fairy tales had as socialising tools for girls. These early, somewhat superficial criticisms of the genre soon opened up a more nuanced discussion that would complicate the perception of the fairy tale as uniform in its representations of gender. Given the impact of feminist theories in

queer theories, and the relative continuity between them, an obvious next step, following feminist criticism of the genre, would have been to question the representations of identity and desire, which, as noted, is so seemingly cisheterocentric in the fairy tale. However, looking at the rather meagre collection of texts one can find on the queering of fairy tales, it is clear this line of inquiry has taken around forty years to gain any traction. Above, I suggested some provisional explanations for this delay: the heterocentric alibi of the happy ending might have concealed the queer gaps in the tales, as well as the unexamined assumptions we have inherited about the genre, although one must not discount the fear of pushback critics might feel.

But even though all of the above is as true for critics as it would be for retellers, queer retellings of fairy tales have been around much longer—meaning, in this case, revisions containing explicitly non-cisheteronormative identities that engage critically with the canon. One of the earliest examples of retold feminist fairy tales, Anne Sexton's *Transformations* (published in 1971), in fact also contains the first queer retelling of fairy tales: in her poem 'Rapunzel,' Mother Gothel and the eponymous Rapunzel have a sexual relationship. However, this early example did not immediately elicit a widespread queer engagement with the genre: chapters two and three will reconstruct the steps the genre took until queer retellings of fairy tales started cropping up in significant numbers, from the mid-nineties onwards.

Concretely, from 1995, the year in which Peter Cashorali published *Fairy Tales: Traditional Stories Retold for Gay Men*, and when, speaking of the increasing popularity of queer theory, Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner declared: 'Queer is hot' (343). This suggests a certain level of synchronicity between queer fairy-tale retellings and queer theory, but not fairy-tale scholarship, which contradicts Stephen Benson's observation that there has been an 'extraordinary synchronicity' between fairy-tale retellings and fairy-tale scholarship from the seventies onwards (5). Benson, however, puts forward a compelling reason behind the synchronicity he describes:

> It is perhaps unsurprising to find scholarly work mirrored in the parallel world of contemporary fiction, given that a number of the writers have themselves written about the fairy tale: Carter in her collections of fairy tales, Atwood and Rushdie through a host of literary essays, and most recently Byatt, a former academic whose attention to developments in literary history and theory have made particularly interesting her occasional essays on the fairy tale and related subjects. (Benson 6)

To my knowledge, rarely have retellers of queer fairy tales written about the genre, with the exception of Cashorali, who has written about using the fairy-tale mode to help his psychotherapy patients, and Neil Gaiman, who has written several newspaper articles on fairy tales but has never remarked on their queer potential. However, neither has written academically on the matter. Thus, this lack of creators-turned-academic-critics (or vice versa) in the queer retelling subgenre points to another possible explanation for the delay in academic engagement with the queer fairy tale.

As it were, after 1995, things developed rapidly with regards to queer retellings: chapter four and five will detail how the new millennium brought an increasing number of retellings with a queer slant, and how, by the 2010s, when the first book-length, queer approaches to the fairy tale were being published, the number of queer retellings had become comparatively large, appearing in such a wide range of media (including mainstream television and various online platforms), that it has become virtually impossible to keep track. The impetus behind the present study is thus the increasingly urgent need to catch up with this quickly emerging, and presumably unstoppable, subgenre.

1.5 The Present Study: 'Fairy LGBTales − Mapping Queer Fairy-Tale Retellings from the 1990s to the 2010s'

Queer fairy tales in their retold form and queer criticism of the genre have been somewhat out of step for, at least, fifteen years. This study aims to contribute to the correction of this issue: not by offering an exhaustive report of the queer fairy tale to this day, but by spotlighting several, mostly unstudied texts that have, quietly but steadily, chipped away at the monolithic, cisheterocentric image of the fairy tale, carving out a space for queer identities, sensibilities and bodies.[4]

Although an increasing number of individual academic articles offer suggestive readings of queer retellings, such as Orme's 'Mouth to Mouth: Queer Desires in Emma Donoghue's *Kissing the Witch*,' and Jon Michael Wargo's 'Sexual Slipstreams and the Limits of Magic Realism: Why a Bisexual Cinderella May Not Be All That Queer,' this

[4] My focus on texts that have received little-to-no scholarly attention entails that notable, well-known queer fairy-tale retellings are excluded from my analyses, such as Emma Donoghue's *Kissing the Witch* (1997).

project aims to be the first study dedicated to mapping out the evolution of the queer, retold fairy tale in English, understood in this case to mean retellings which consciously inscribe explicit LGBTQI+ identities and desires. This would set it apart from other mentioned book-length studies, like Greenhill and Turner's, which had a section on rewritings, but mostly focused on ways to read the traditional Grimm tales queerly, or Duggan's, which focuses on the films of a single creator, queer French director Jacques Demy.

Contemporary reimaginings of fairy tales have received a number of names. Bacchilega has indeed called them 're-visions' ('Cracking the Mirror,' 2), and Vanessa Joosen has compiled a useful list of other common terms, which includes 'transformation, anti-fairy tale, postmodern fairy tale, fractured fairy tale and recycled fairy tales' (9). I think all of these terms are equally valid, if somewhat vague at times, but throughout this study I will refer to them as 'retellings' like Joosen for the sake of simplicity and neutrality, but also to account for the fact that the continued popularity of the genre hinges on a constant re/telling that binds the tales to one another in a narrative chain. Retelling, in fact, stands at the heart of the fairy-tale genre: as we will see in chapter two, even fairy tales we consider classics nowadays are the product of retelling, either based on other written sources (fairy tales or not) or untraceable oral ones. We might agree or not on whether all writing is rewriting, but all fairy-tale telling is, after a fashion, retelling.

In this study, however, I primarily concentrate on contemporary queer retellings, rather than on classical fairy tales which can be read queerly, or fairy-tale-inflected original contemporary fiction. This is due to the fact that I consider them to be a significant site for representing, reconstructing and 'disidentifying' cultural images of sexual and gender identity. I use the term 'disidentification' following José Esteban Muñoz's definition:

> Disidentification is about recycling and rethinking encoded meaning. The process of disidentification scrambles and reconstructs the encoded message of a cultural text in a fashion that both exposes the encoded message's universalizing and exclusionary machinations and re-circuits its workings to account for, include, and empower minority identities and identifications. Thus disidentification is a step farther than cracking open the code of the majority; it proceeds to use this code as raw material for representing a disempowered politics or positionality that has been rendered unthinkable by dominant culture. (Muñoz 31)

Even though fairy tales, as suggested, do contain possibilities for queer identifications, they have been largely appropriated by a dominant, cisheterocentric culture. The fairy tale, thus, is a prime site for queer disidentification, not despite its normative, exclusionary associations, but rather because of them. The retold queer fairy tale effectively decodes the 'exclusionary machinations' of the hegemonic fairy tale, it re-routes 'its workings' in order to include minoritarian identities, and returns an updated version of the genre in which queer identities and bodies are explicitly represented, whereas before such a thing was 'unthinkable.' Through the mechanisms of disidentification, the retold queer fairy tale offers a third option, beyond completely disavowing fairy tales or assimilating into their cisheteronormative matrix—namely 'a partial disavowal . . . that works to restructure it from within' (Muñoz 28), and eventually, to reclaim the genre for queer people.

In order to trace the different ways in which creators infiltrate the fairy tale to restructure it queerly, I will concentrate on texts in English from the 1990s to the 2010s. While some queer retellings in other languages and from other places exist (see Joosen 114), the great majority of examples I have encountered are in English and from the United States, and so these will be, with some exceptions, the main focus of my study. Furthermore, while many of the chosen retellings are novels, short stories and other written works, as noted the queer fairy tale has shown a remarkable tendency towards medial diversification, and so comic books, TV shows, paintings and even YouTube videos will be considered in this study, so as to account for the plurality, liveliness and creative possibilities of the subgenre.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis will have an important sociohistorical component, as noted. I follow Jack Zipes' enormously influential approach to the fairy tale, which, since the publication in 1979 of his book *Breaking the Magic Spell*, has shaped the way Anglophone scholars study the genre. Zipes devised a much more historically grounded method than those used by earlier scholars, who would depend on formalist methodologies, often drawing from folklore studies (for instance, inspired by Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*). In this book, Zipes urged readers to critically engage with the genre without letting themselves be fooled by its deceptive simplicity, to reach beyond its magical surface and 'grasp the socio-historical forces' (Zipes, *Breaking*

xi) at the root, so as to better understand fairy tales in light of their ideological connections to the time and place of their production. To this end, the second chapter 'Once Upon a Certain Time: The Fairy Tale Through History,' will trace the evolution of the fairy tale from its identifiable origins to the 1990s, with the intention of grounding a genre that seems unduly familiar to us, when in reality we remain ignorant of most of its historical connections, uses and influences. This approach will allow me to investigate the establishment of a fairy-tale canon, to draw attention to several fairy tales that problematize the contemporary understanding of the genre as uniformly cisheteronormative, and it will lead to a better awareness of the space queer retellings have within the fairy tale.

In keeping with this, each of the following chapters will focus on a period from the 1990s to the present, so as to read the retellings from each period against the cultural tensions that inform them. Thus, the third chapter, 'Tales for Fairies: Building Identity and Community Through Gay Fairy Tales in the Nineties,' will focus on the first three book-length texts to retell fairy tales for gay men: *Fairy Tales: Traditional Stories Retold for Gay Men* (1995) and *Gay Fairy and Folk Tales: More Traditional Stories Retold for Gay Men* (1997) by Peter Cashorali, and the erotic anthology edited by Michael Ford, *Happily Ever After: Erotic Fairy Tales for Men* (1996). I will posit that the appearance of these texts at this particular point in time answers to the convergence of different factors, such as the development of gay literature (particularly short fiction), the establishment of infrastructures and publics that would support this kind of literature, and a need to memorialise and regroup after the worst years of the AIDS crisis. These gay fairy tales, I will argue, were thus used to rebuild a coherent gay community at a moment in which wonder was acutely needed.

The fourth chapter will consider texts from the mid-2000s to the late 2010s. It will explore the tension between assimilationist and subversive queer tendencies as represented by fairy-tale heroes and monsters, in a period in which queerness was being absorbed into the mainstream after the visibility that the AIDS crisis granted LGBTQI people. Titled 'Heroes vs. Monsters: Tracing Monstrousness, Monstrosity and the Normalisation of Queerness in Fairy-Tale Retellings From the New Millennium,' it will tackle 'Bones Like Black Sugar' by Catherynne M. Valente (2006), Jim C. Hines' *The Stepsister Scheme* (2009), Lauren Beukes' *The Hidden Kingdom* (2013), Neil Gaiman's *The Sleeper and the Spindle* (2014) and the ABC show *Once Upon a Time* (2011-18).

This chapter will argue that the fairy tale, due to its strange nature and allegiance to dark desires, remains a fertile site for the endangered, potentially subversive queer monster.

The fifth chapter, 'Queer Fairy Tales 2.0: Parodying the Disney Paratext From Online Counterpublics,' will focus on the way creators who have grown up during the new millennium, and thus have experienced the normalisation of queerness, contest the cisheteronormative, disneyfied fairy tale. It will analyse several parodies originating online, namely Tim Manley's *Alice in Tumblr-Land* (2013), Brittany Ashley's *Lesbian Princess* (2015-16), Todrick Hall's music video parodies, and Jose Rodolfo Loaiza Ontiveros's paintings, and it will explore how these creators utilise camp to undermine the hegemonic discourse of disneyfied fairy tales.

The wide variety of texts used throughout this study is meant to paint a clear, if necessarily incomplete, picture of the contemporary queer fairy tale, as it emerges, advances and matures into a subgenre closely related to queer identities and discourses. Paying close attention to historical contexts, wider cultural trends and critical discussions surrounding the production of these texts, moreover, aims to broaden our understanding of what the fairy tale is, what it has been and where it is headed. But primarily, this study seeks to challenge the idea of the fairy tale as a univocal whole—to blow it open so as to reveal it as a multifaceted, contradictory and strange genre filled with queer possibilities.

2 Once Upon a Certain Time: The Fairy Tale Through History

2.1 Introduction

Queered fairy tales might look like a radical break from, or an outright rejection of, the genre's apparently conservative history. The fairy tale is, after all, a genre popularly associated with antiquated morals and clichéd plots: peasants turned kings, passive (possibly sleeping, most likely silent) princesses, magical objects, impossible quests and, at the end of it all, fairy-tale weddings that ensure a heterosexual happily-ever-after. However, I argue that the eventual emergence of queer retellings of fairy tales is linked to the fluid nature of the genre and its complex history. This chapter will thus explore the historical context of fairy tales in their western European branch,[5] their evolution and mutation, from the traceable beginnings of the genre to the present day—not to free the queer fairy tale from the genre's history but to explore the fairy tale's complexities, contradictions and ambiguities, all of which have ultimately given way to the queered fairy tales of the present.

The fairy tale is a hybrid genre that has developed throughout history by borrowing from other genres—which have, in turn, been contaminated by the fairy tale as well. It is a genre that crosses borders and encompasses centuries, which makes it remarkably diverse, even if we try to limit ourselves to the western European branch. As Marina Warner puts it: 'fairy tales migrate on soft feet, for borders are invisible to them, no matter how ferociously they are policed by cultural purists' (*Once Upon a Time* xv). Furthermore, it is a genre that is commonly thought to have its origins in the oral tradition. Both the genre's hybridity and the large scope of its influence contribute to the fairy tale's complexity, and the oral origins lay an unsteady foundation upon which everything else is built. If there is an oral origin, which is nonetheless contested by some

[5] My choice to concentrate mainly on the European branch has to do with the usual constraints and limitations of any research project, but it is also due to the current state of my object of study, the contemporary queer fairy tale in English, which is notably influenced by the aforementioned European branch. The European branch is the basis for many of the retellings that would come out of Europe and North America later on, in spite of continued efforts to open up the Western canon to multicultural versions, of which Angela Carter's fairy-tale anthologies are good examples: *The Old Wives' Fairy Tale Book* (1990) and *Strange Things Still Sometimes Happen: Fairy Tales From Around the World* (1993).

scholars, as we will see, then the origin of the fairy tale becomes virtually untraceable, since nobody would be around to, quite literally, tell the tale.

Inevitably, fairy tales were eventually written down, both by people who wanted to preserve tales they perceived as traditional, such as the Brothers Grimm, and by writers who created their own tales, like Hans Christian Andersen. The European fairy tale started branching off from genres like the lais in the tradition of Marie de France and chivalric romances between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and it established itself as a literary genre by the sixteenth century (Zipes, *Tradition* xi). From then on, there was a 'vigorous two-way traffic of oral and literary tales' (Davidson and Chaudhri 2). However, the object of this chapter is not to untangle the complex web of the genre's (or even individual tales') origins, although this is a scholarly discussion that will be outlined. The intention will be twofold: on the one hand, the chapter will examine some of the most influential fairy-tale writers, collectors and adapters so as to offer an illustrative, though not exhaustive, overview of the evolution of the fairy tale and its canon in its European branch; on the other hand, it will also bring attention to tales by these authors that, while not being necessarily queer fairy tales (that is, tales written with the intention of representing sexual and gender minorities) still present instances of queer dissonance.

This approach aims to clear up any possible misconceptions about the fairy tale, which has been largely misunderstood, in part because it has been re-constructed through the lens of contemporary ideas of fairy tales, largely shaped by Disney's hegemonic hold on the genre. The fairy tale, seemingly familiar but in reality unknown to many, manages to appear universal and timeless while it conceals 'its artistic constellations and . . . basic history and ideology' (Zipes, 'Media-Hyping of fairy tales' 213). Therefore, in order to start a conversation about the fairy tale, some historical insight is required—particularly when said conversation involves reading queerness into a genre popularly associated with heterosexual love. There are, of course, similar misconceptions about queerness, sexual and gender identity in general, all of which have become naturalized but that, as George Chauncey reminds us, are 'stunningly recent' creations (26). As Foucault outlined in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*:

> Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a

> hermaphrodism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species. (Foucault 43).

That is to say, although prior to the nineteenth century people engaged in homosexual sex acts and had homosexual relationships, 'sodomite' was not an ontological category. 'Homosexual,' a term coined by author Karl Kertbeny in 1869 (Beachy 804), on the other hand, was much like racial and ethnic typologies, a category under which people could classify themselves or others, a source of collective identity and discrimination both. Most of the texts discussed in this chapter predate the 'invention' of homosexuality, and thus develop in a different social reality in which not only sexuality, but also gender identity, were perceived in rather different terms. For instance, James Brundage writes that in Medieval Europe marriage was 'the sole setting for legitimate sex,' which would exclude all other sexual activity from being sanctioned on the same level, be it 'homosexual or heterosexual, mercenary or gratuitous, long-term or short-term, solitary or social' (Brundage 24). Furthermore, and as we will explore in following sections, women crossdressing as men was a fairly recurrent plot in literature in pre-modern times, including fairy tales, as 'it was not considered to have anything to do with [sexuality or gender identity] unlike the case in the twentieth century' (Bullough 9), and thus was much less provocative. As such, my identification of 'moments of queer dissonance' in fairy tales is somewhat anachronistic: these moments are potentially queer for the present-day reader, with her present-day understanding of gender and sexuality, but not, necessarily, for the contemporary reader or writer, even if some authors discussed here, such as Hans Christian Andersen, would probably be understood as queer by present-day standards.

Nonetheless, it needs to be noted that the complexity of the fairy tale extends to its very name. Before we can turn to the history of the genre, we have to clarify what is perhaps the most basic and yet most contentious issue pertaining to the fairy tale; that is, what, exactly, we mean when we say 'fairy tale.'

2.2 Defining the Fairy Tale

The fairy tale is one of the most popular genres in literature. After all, fairy tales are, as Steven Swann Jones notes, 'among the stories we first remember and longest retain' (S. Jones, *The Fairy Tale* 140). They are so familiar to us that when the well-known magic words 'Once upon a time' open a tale, we know 'the realm of wonder and

enchantment is about to be revealed' (Davidson and Chaudhri 5), and that the motifs, structures and happy endings will be those we know in our bones. The tales are, as well, incredibly enduring. Thanks to their ability to preserve their appeal through adaptation, they have maintained a steady presence in society for centuries. And yet, in spite of this familiarity, the discussions among scholars suggest that the fairy tale remains a decidedly elusive genre.

> Were I begged to . . . define what [the fairy tale] is, I would make answer, that I should as soon think of describing the abstract human face, or stating what must go to constitute a human being. (MacDonald 395)

George MacDonald wrote this in 1895, but this same sentiment is echoed over a century later, in 2003, by Elizabeth Wanning Harries: '[n]othing is more difficult than to try to define the fairy tale in twenty-five words or less' (6). It seems time has not unravelled the fairy-tale riddle. In fact, it has arguably twisted it further, since, over the years, increasingly disparate texts have been grouped under the term.

As many scholars have noted (Ashliman 32; Brewer 16; Harries 6; Zipes *Breaking the Magic Spell*, 32), part of the confusion stems from its name, since 'fairy tale' is a misnomer: it becomes readily apparent that plenty of texts commonly referred to as 'fairy tales' do not, in reality, contain any fairies. Furthermore, a different kind of tale, in which someone describes a personal encounter with fairies, will sometimes be described by folklorists as a memorate (a term coined by Carl Wilhelm von Sydow in 1934) and not a fairy tale. The term in English was originally a translation of 'contes des fées,' which was coined in France in 1697 by Marie Catherine d'Aulnoy. It was used to designate the tales d'Aulnoy and other *conteuses* and *conteurs* of the time penned in which donor figures would often appear in the form of fairies.

In an attempt to circumvent the problematic terminology and offer a more nuanced understanding of the genre, scholars have made use of the German term *Märchen*. This allowed for the distinction between 'Volksmärchen' and 'Kunstmärchen'—in English, folk tales and literary fairy tales, respectively. Folk tales refer to tales from the oral tradition, and literary fairy tales are defined as 'the conscious creations of a single author' (M. B. Stein). Somewhere in-between, 'Buchmärchen' could also be identified: 'book tales' would designate tales like the ones in the Grimm Brothers' collection *Kinder und Hausmärchen* (*Children and Household Tales*), which

claim to find their origins in the oral tradition but have been edited and revised before publication to fit authorial preferences.

To this day, however, it seems that no term has surpassed 'fairy tale' in popularity. It is indeed routinely used to conflate actual fairy tales with forms like folktales, fables and even legends and myths in common parlance. Perhaps influenced by this unwavering popularity, it is also used in more specialized circles as a blanket term, as exemplified by the titles of some key publications, such as Oxford University Press' *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* (first published in 2000; revised in 2015). As a result of a loose use of the term, the fairy-tale corpus contains a varied assortment of texts, which makes finding a suitable definition that would encompass them all almost impossible. In fact, the definitions offered by different scholars are so diverse that, in the words of Bengt Holbek, 'one must sometimes doubt whether the various authors have the same material in mind' (23).

Nonetheless, Jones believes that we can discern a 'strict adherence' to certain characteristics within the genre (S. Jones 3). The most important of these characteristics would be the incorporation of magical elements, since it is 'the most salient formal or stylistic feature [of fairy tales]' (S. Jones 12). According to him these elements are mandatory for a fairy tale to qualify as such: 'the story must include the protagonist's interaction with something magical' (S. Jones 10). He is not alone in believing magic to be a key defining characteristic: Ruth Bottigheimer says that fairy tales 'necessarily include magic' (*New History* 5), and Donald Haase states that the 'mode of reality in which the characters move is supernatural or fantastic' ('Fairy Tales,' 321). However, perhaps the concept most commonly associated with fairy tales is that of the happy ending, which Bottigheimer relates to things like fairy-tale weddings (*New History* 5). Swann Jones considers the happy ending a 'must' (*The Fairy Tale*, 30), much like magic, and Zipes stresses the importance and interconnection of magic and everlasting happiness when he states that, in fairy tales, a 'magical transformation . . . brings about a satisfying, happy ending' (*Happily* 1). Other often mentioned characteristics include: a structure built on motifs (Bottigheimer, *New History* 11; N. Wood 160), a formulaic style (Lüthi 100), and a timeless quality (Thompson 8; Ziolkowski 8). Finally, as Haase notes, '[l]ength is frequently used in defining . . . the fairy tale' ('Fairy Tale,' 323). All these characteristics could be used to define the genre: as stories of certain length which

include magical elements and end happily ever after, and which are propped by multiple motifs, use an easy-to-remember formulaic style, and present an indefinite temporality.

While these characteristics can undoubtedly be found in the genre, it is also true that none of them belong solely to the fairy tale, and thus they are arguably not enough to define it. For example, Ruth Bottigheimer maintains that common fairy-tale motifs such as the number three or magic rings appear in 'fifteenth and sixteenth-century Italian romances' (*New History* 11) and happy endings are often found in contemporary romance novels (*New History* 11). Regarding endings, Naomi Wood notes that Oscar Wilde's fairy tales 'culminate in strikingly beautiful, albeit often painful, climaxes' (161), instead of the apparently required happy ending – much in the way that Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid* ends on a famously bleak note. Andersen himself was not necessarily fond of opening his tales with formulaic constructions, as seen in *The Snow Queen*'s opening: 'All right, we will start the story. When we come to the end we shall know more than we know now' (Andersen 29). The matter of length, which many critics seem to agree is an important feature of the fairy tale, is not wholly uncontroversial either. Stith Thompson vaguely refers to fairy tales as being of 'some length' (8), and, in an attempt be more precise, Satu Apo maintains that a fairy tale is actually 'a long, fictitious narrative' (*Narrative* 16). However, and as Haase mentions, focusing on the concept of length is counterproductive, and 'ignores plenty of texts that should be studied by fairy-tale scholars' ('Fairy Tale,' 321). Such would be the case of texts like James Thurber's 'The Little Girl and the Wolf' (1940), which retells 'Little Red Riding Hood' in 183 words, and thus could be considered to be too short to be a fairy tale (Haase 321). The presence of magic, which for several scholars is the single most defining characteristic of fairy tales, is 'not necessarily a given' (Short, *Fairy Tale and Film* 4), particularly in 'many modern updates' (Short, *Fairy Tale and Film* 4) – such is the case of most tales in Emma Donoghue's *Kissing the Witch* (1997). Finally, Zipes disputes the perception of fairy tales as being removed from their spatiotemporal context: 'They are historical prescriptions, internalized, potent, explosive' (Zipes, *Subversion* 1983, 11). In short, all these characteristics *could* be used to define the fairy tale, but the resulting definition would not be exhaustive, and it would be far from universally accepted.

For the purpose of this research project, I will be following the example of other scholars and, excluding some instances where nuance might be required, I will use the

term ‘fairy tale’ as an umbrella category, ‘under which a variety . . . of forms might be grouped’ (Haase, ‘Fairy Tale’ 319) without necessarily having to share a distinct, rigid set of characteristics. The retellings used as an object of study here are the product of an intense process of remediation, as fairy-tale narratives have moved through various media: oral to print, print to film, film to video game, et cetera, rendering terminology that focuses on the division between oral and literary tales rather ineffectual. They are tied to the genre and to each other by a re/combination of familiar characters, plots and images, either by means of explicit or implicit reference to their fairy-tale pre-texts. The use of an umbrella term accounts for the fact that fairy tales are in a constant state of flux: after all, one of the least contentious position to take with regards to the fairy tale is to consider it an ‘ever-varying phenomenon’ (S. Jones 5).

2.3 Origins

The matter of the relationship between the oral and the literary fairy-tale traditions is one that often elicits polarizing responses among scholars, an ongoing discussion for which there still is not consensus. Researchers tend to take one of three stances: (1) fairy tales are the oral creations of the folk; (2) the tales were actually created by a literary élite and later disseminated to other sectors of society; and (3) both oral and literary traditions have always influenced each other in complex ways that obfuscate any attempt at disentangling them.

The Brothers Grimm made distinction between oral and literary fairy tales, and claimed that the tales they collected in *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* were spontaneous creations, relayed to them by ‘illiterate or semi-literate peasants’ (M. B. Stein). Their intention was to capture the true national spirit of the German folk via the preservation of traditional tales, and the distinction between oral tales (such as theirs) and literary fairy tales was made to set their collection apart from other, less authentic contemporary collections (M. B. Stein). Folklore was thus equated with authenticity, authenticity with orality, and orality with the purest forms of fairy tales. Quite ironically, during the process of collection, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm subjected their collection to an intense editing process: instead of just transcribing the tales, they would often make modifications in content and style. This is the reason behind the use of *Buchmärchen*, book tales, to refer to their collected tales, as they effectively blur the line between oral and literary fairy tale.

It can be argued that the Brothers Grimm had a vested interest in claiming that the authentic fairy tale belonged to the oral tradition (and in positioning themselves as their sole preservers); after all, it was common in nineteenth-century nationalist rhetoric to idealize orality and the 'unspoilt' peasantry, and *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* was, at least partly, a nationalist project. However, other folklorists also identify the oral fairy tale as a primary text originating in the lower classes. Most notably, Propp, in his seminal work *Morphology of the Folktale*, maintained folklorists should be concerned with studying the 'uncorrupted tale . . . peculiar only to the peasantry - to a peasantry, moreover, little touched by civilization' (100). This relationship between 'folk,' 'illiteracy' and 'rural,' characteristic of nineteenth century conceptualizations, has been amply challenged by contemporary folklorist Alan Dundes (*Interpreting Folklore* 6). Nonetheless, he still highlights the primacy of orality in fairy tales in quite emphatic terms:

> The first thing to say about fairy tales is that they are an oral form . . . Once a fairy tale . . . is reduced to written language, one does not have a true fairy tale but only a pale and inadequate reflection of what was originally an oral performance complete with raconteur and audience. From this folkloristic perspective, one cannot possibly read fairy tales; one can only properly hear them told. ('Folkloristic Perspective,' 259)

He is therefore completely dismissing literary versions. Dundes refers to figures such as Charles Perrault or the Brothers Grimm as retellers, 'men of letters, often with a nationalistic and romantic axe to grind' (Dundes, 'Folkloristic Perspective' 261) whose contributions are undoubtedly influential, but not genuine fairy tales. His main claim is not only that the fairy tale has oral origins, but also that the oral fairy tale is the only true kind of fairy tale there is. He goes on to bemoan that the written versions often dominate discussions about the genre, when, in his view, these versions stifle the multiplicity and variation inherent to the fairy tale (Dundes, 'Folkloristic Perspective' 261). Some written versions have certainly received ample academic attention and have reached the status of classics, but Zipes argues that this 'does not make them static for they are constantly re-created and reformed' (*Irresistible,* 20). It is, of course, fair to point out that literary versions of fairy tales are less flexible than their oral counterparts, but nowadays many children are introduced to the world of the fairy tale through Disney filmic renditions, to the point that they could be considered to constitute the new fairy-tale canon, which goes to show that the written versions are not necessarily the definitive versions in everyone's

minds. Fairy tales are still being written and filmed, drawn and variously adapted, and the genre lives on, unfixed and mutable as ever.

In diametrical opposition to Dundes and Propp (and the Brothers Grimm), stand those who would place the emphasis on the written forms of fairy tales. Satu Apo and David Hackston explain that during the first half of the twentieth century critics like Hans Naumann or Jan de Vries defended elitist ideas of the genre's genesis, echoing an existing fear of popular culture, which could threaten 'high culture and the position of creative individuals' (Apo and Hackson 22). In more recent years the discussion has been revitalised by people like Elizabeth Wanning Harries in *Twice Upon a Time: Women Writers and the History of the Fairy Tale*, although her position is not nearly as radical, or as controversial, as Bottigheimer's, who contends:

> It has been said so often that the folk invented and disseminated fairy tales that this assumption has become an unquestioned proposition. It may therefore surprise readers that folk invention and transmission of fairy tales has no basis in verifiable fact. (*New History* 1)

Bottigheimer posits that the genre was invented by sixteenth-century writer Giovanni Francesco Straparola (*New History* 24), and later disseminated orally. Her work thus goes against one of the fundamental tenets of folklore by dismissing the role of orality Moreover, the singular specificity of her claims has not sat well with many fairy-tale scholars and folklorists; in fact, a special issue of the *Journal of American Folklore* (Vol. 123, No. 490, 2010) was entirely dedicated to disputing Bottigheimer's claims advanced in her *Fairy Godfather: Straparola, Venice, and the Fairy Tale Tradition* (2002). Her following monograph, *Fairy Tale: A New History* (2010), elicited similarly incensed criticisms. Zipes writes, responding to the quotation above:

> Bottigheimer rarely cites sources or offers references. Who has said so often that the folk invented and disseminated fairy tales, and is she speaking about oral or literary fairy tales? . . . She does not mention that in the last forty or fifty years, folklorists, literary critics, historians, and scholars of folklore and fairy tale . . . have been more interested in the intersections between the oral and literary traditions than trying to privilege one over the other. (Zipes, *Irresistible* 164)

Zipes is among a majority of contemporary scholars who have acknowledged the probable primacy of the oral fairy tale while not being dismissive of other forms to which fairy-tale narratives might have migrated to, such as literature or cinema. They recognise the complexity of the genre and the fact that there is no 'clear-cut division'

between the oral and the literary traditions (Davidson and Chaudhri 1), thus making it difficult, if not impossible, to unravel them. There have been of course studies on one particular tale or tale-type. For example, in the past few decades there have been a number of books analysing 'Little Red Riding Hood' in its many versions, such as Zipes' *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood: Versions of the Tale in Sociocultural Context* (1983). Beyond traditional textual analyses, computational methods have been employed to trace the origins of the tale in 'Oral Fairy Tale or Literary Fake? Investigating the Origins of Little Red Riding Hood Using Phylogenetic Network Analysis' (Tehrani, Nguyen and Roos), which concluded the tale finds its origins in the oral tradition. For many scholars working with fairy tales, however, the origins of the fairy tale lie far beyond the periods we have evidence for, and, like Marina Warner, consider an 'inextricable and fruitful entanglement' (*Once Upon a Time* xvii) between traditions a key element in understanding the genre. The multiple ways in which the fairy tale has travelled and continues travelling are thus embraced, even if this means accepting a degree of mystery, of unknowability, surrounding its genesis.

2.4 The Fairy Tale's Italian Forefathers: Straparola and Basile

As established, the origins of the fairy tale are nebulous at best. However, fairy-tale narratives had been present in literature previous to the emergence of the fairy tale as a recognisable genre. Andrew Teverson points out that we can find these narratives under 'other generic guises: . . . as animal fables, as episodes in long chivalric romances, as passages in epics,' among others (75). In the European tradition, fairy tales began appearing sporadically in Italian collections from the fourteenth century onwards (Zipes, *Tradition* 507) but it was not until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that the genre 'reached full literary autonomy' (Canepa, *Birth of the Literary Fairy Tale* 16). This was due to two important early modern Italian works that will be discussed in this section: Giovanni Francesco Straparola's *Piacevoli Notti* (1550-52) and Gianbattista Basile's *Lo Cunto de li Cunti* (1634).

Despite Basile's *Lo Cunto de li Cunti* being the first collection containing only fairy tales, Straparola was the first author 'to write numerous fairy tales in the vernacular and cultivate a form and function for this . . . narrative to make it an acceptable genre among the educated classes' (Zipes, *Happily* 17-18). Straparola's *Piacevoli Notti* (*The Pleasant Night*s) was published in two volumes, the first one in 1550 and the second one

in 1552. It contained 73 *novelle*, or novellas, of which 13 can be said to be fairy tales. Among them, we can find some of the first written versions of fairy tales that are still well known in our days, such as 'Donkeyskin'/'All Fur' ('Tebaldo and Doralice' in Straparola's collection), and 'Puss in Boots' ('Constantino Fortunato'). In Straparola's version of the tale, the cat is actually female, a fairy in disguise, and she does not wear the recognisable boots, which would be added by Perrault in his *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* over a century later, in 1697. The cat is still female in Basile's 1634's retelling ('Cagliuso'), and it is, once more, Perrault who will make the change, which will establish the famously sly character as male for centuries to come, and thus influence expectations with regards to the representation of gender in the genre.[6] Straparola's tale still presents the familiar rags-to-riches structure, in which the donor figure (the cat) helps a third son climb up the social ladder by means of cunning and deceit, until the third son eventually becomes king.

Little is known about Straparola himself. Scholars often locate his place of birth in Caravaggio (Pirovano 1; Zipes, 'Straparola'), and it is argued that his last name could have been a penname, or a nickname, since it can be roughly translated as 'garrulous' (Zipes, 'Straparola'). This mysterious author published a poetry collection years before writing *Piacevoli Notti*, but it was his *novelle* collection that made him famous among his contemporaries. The collection follows the structure of Boccaccio's *Decameron*: there is a frame narrative in which a number of people are isolated for one reason or another, and they take turns telling tales of generic diversity in order to pass the time. In *Piacevoli Notti*, a group of nobles gather in the Venetian isle of Murano during the Carnival and tell each other stories over the course of thirteen nights.

As previously explained, it is difficult to ascertain whether the fairy tale was circulating orally among the folk in Italy, or elsewhere in Europe, before the sixteenth century, but at the very least we know that oral renditions were a popular pastime among learned groups during Straparola's time. In a letter translated by Nancy Canepa, Straparola's contemporary Andrea Calmo discusses it:

[6] Retellings of classical tales will sometimes draw from lesser-known versions in order to innovate and destabilise the familiar narratives. Similarly, some contemporary retellers of 'Puss in Boots' will make use of Straparola's and Basile's versions, but, perhaps owing to the cultural weight of Perrault's version, the cat's gender will remain invariably male, regardless of whether these retellings are mainstream of counter-culture. Some examples would be Angela Carter's 'Puss-in-Boots' in her collection *The Bloody Chamber* (1979), Japanese animation film *Nagagutsu o Haita Neko* (1964), or the character of Puss in Boots in the *Shrek* franchise, who has two dedicated spin-offs, *Puss in Boots* (2011 film) and *The Adventures of Puss in Boots* (Netflix 2015 show).

> And everyone sits around swapping the most stupendous tall tales, nonsense, and fanciful stories in the world: they tell of Mother Goose, of the piper, of the green bird, of the wooden statue, of the fairies' chest, of the little pigs, of the hermit donkey, of the wandering mouse, of the wolf who became a doctor, and so many fantastic stories that I can't even begin to tell you. (Calmo qtd. in Canepa, *Birth of the Literary Fairy Tale* 55)

Straparola's use of the popular genre in a literary context was likely due to a voracious need for innovation in the Venetian book market. In fact, Donato Pirovano maintains that the 'publication of the first book was . . . nothing but an action aimed at the book market' (283), released with the intention of gauging the reception of this particular brand of novelty. Canepa also points out that the shift towards magic and the supernatural coincides with a growing disenchantment with Boccaccian realism, which, according to sociohistorical interpretations, reflects a 'social reality in which mobility was ever more restricted, and active *virtù* seemed to count for less and less' (Canepa, *Birth of the Literary Fairy Tale* 58). The first volume, with its mix of high and low styles, its derivative frame tale and innovative use of fairy tales, made for a combination that proved to be incredibly popular, allowing thus for the publication of a second volume three years later, and multiple reprints of both over the years.

Undoubtedly popular at the time, evident from its translation into several languages, and influential for several major fairy-tale writers including Basile, Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy, Henriette Julie de Murat, Perrault, and the Brothers Grimm, Straparola's tales are largely unknown to present-day audiences. Interestingly, some of Straparola's tales challenge our notion of the fairy tale as a cisheteronormative genre. Of particular interest to this project is the tale 'Constanza / Constanzo' (or 'Constanza, the Girl-Knight'), a tale that contains several queer elements. The title already foreshadows some of them: a princess named Constanza disguises herself as a knight and flees her kingdom in order to escape an arranged marriage she feels is below her station. Constanza, now responding to the name Constanzo, travels to a neighbouring kingdom, where the king, 'finding himself greatly pleased by the appearance of the youth' (Straparola 508) enlists his services as an attendant. The queen is also moved by his looks and falls in love with him immediately. However, Constanzo spurns her advances. No insight is provided about how Constanza/Constanzo feels about this predicament, but the reason behind the rejection is a supposed inability to satisfy the queen rather than the knight's personal lack of desire, which points to somewhat more fluid boundaries between heterosexuality and queerness: 'being a woman like herself, she could not

possibly satisfy the [queen's] unbridled lust' (Straparola 509). Soon after, the queen manipulates the king into sending Constanzo to capture a dangerous satyr, expecting Constanzo to die. Against all odds, Constanzo manages to capture the magical creature, who eventually reveals, not only Costanzo's true identity, but also that many of the queen's ladies-in-waiting are actually young men. All instances of queerness are unveiled and ultimately eradicated as the king orders the queen and her crossdressing lovers burned, and he fixes Constanza's fluctuating gender by marrying her.

Crossdressing maiden-knight narratives that ultimately reassert heteropatriarchal order are not uncommon in the medieval and early modern period,[7] and in fact this very tale was later rewritten by Basile ('The Three Crowns') and d'Aulnoy ('Belle-Belle ou Le Chevalier Fortuné'). Furthermore, two contemporaries of d'Aulnoy, Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier and Henriette-Julie de Murat, also penned maiden-knight tales in which gender and sexuality are at least momentarily troubled. However, this tale-type has failed to infiltrate the present-day fairy-tale canon, which has remained largely cis/heteronormative.[8] This might be due to the fact that present-day readers will likely relate matters of crossdressing with queerness, with non-normative gender or sexuality. As Catherine Craft-Fairchild notes, acceptance of crossdressing plots 'dwindled as the eighteenth century drew to a close' (177). This coincides with what Thomas Laqueur has identified as the evolution from the 'one-sex model' to that of the 'two-sex model' (6). That is, women were not seen as a lesser version of men anymore, but as an opposite category of human. In Craft-Fairchild words, this would mean that crossdressing women would be seen as 'violating the boundaries between separate spheres' (177), and thus as a threat, rather than as attempting to climb up the 'chain-of-being' (Craft-Fairchild 177).

Similarly to Straparola's *Piacevoli Notti*, Gianbattista Basile's work is fairly unknown among contemporary audiences,[9] even though *Lo Cunto de li Cunti* contains the first literary examples of some of the best-loved tale types, such as 'Sleeping Beauty,' 'Rapunzel,' 'Cinderella' and 'Hansel and Gretel.' Published posthumously in

[7] There are numerous examples: Thirteenth-century French romance *Silence* has a similar plot to 'Constanza / Constanzo,' only the princess is raised as a boy. Two *chansons de geste*, *Yde et Olive* (thirteenth century) and *Tristan de Nanteuil* (fourteenth century), also feature crossdressing heroines, but they are magically transformed into men by the end of the story—a plot point reminiscent of Ovid's transformation of Iphys. The list goes on.

[8] Unless we consider Disney as a new fairy-tale canon-maker through means of their filmic adaptations. In this case, it could be argued that the adaptation of the legend of Hua Mulan (*Mulan* 1998) reincorporates the motif of the crossdressing maiden-knight to the fairy-tale genre.

[9] Matteo Garrone's 2015 film, *Tale of Tales*, did nonetheless bring some new attention to Italian tales.

five volumes between 1634 and 1636 and written in the local Neapolitan dialect instead of the learned Tuscan, its intended audience most likely was 'the small courts in which [Basile] served' (Canepa, 'Itineraries' 291). Therefore, and contrary to Straparola's *Piacevoli Notti*, which was a publishing experiment of sorts, Basile's *Lo Cunto* was a collection intended for a small linguistic community. The decision of writing this collection in Neapolitan could be linked to the orality of fairy tales: if these types of tales were usually relayed orally as courtly entertainment, as Calmo suggests above, then, in Basile's context, people would have told them in Neapolitan rather than Tuscan. Moreover, the tales in *Lo Cunto* are narrated by old women (and the young heroine posing as one), which would have furthered the illusion of orality, since old women were seen as the traditional fairy-tale storytellers.

Basile was born in Giugliano sometime in the second half of the sixteenth century. His life was, in Canepa's estimation, typical of a seventeenth-century courtier: as a soldier, administrator and man of letters, he led a fairly itinerant lifestyle ('Basile' 25). The most remarkable aspect of his life is possibly the coexistence between the 'public' Basile, a learned man, 'champion of the Tuscan tradition' (Canepa, 'Itineraries' 291), and a more 'private,' local Basile, who would favour popular culture and the Neapolitan dialect, which contested Tuscan dominance. His writings, too, reflect this division. He wrote a number of Italian works—poems, madrigals, dramas, et cetera, which were generally well-received, but nowadays he is better remembered for his Neapolitan works. The first of these was a poetry collection that depicted popular culture in Naples, and, later, he would write his best-known work, the provocative *Lo Cunto de li Cunti, overo lo Trattenemiento de Peccerille* (*Tale of Tales, or Entertainment for Little Ones*). Basile went further than Straparola by writing a collection integrally composed of fairy tales, but he still stuck to popular Decameronian devices. Most notably, the structure is fairly recognisable: *Lo Cunt*o has a frame tale and is divided into five days, which gives the collection its alternative name, *Il Pentamerone*—five days to Boccaccio's ten. Much like other collections of Boccaccian inspiration, in *Lo Cunto* people will be gathered to tell stories, ten each day until fifty stories are told, and the end will bring about the resolution of the frame tale.

This frame tale is in itself a fairy tale, in which an unsmiling princess, Zoza, is cursed to marry prince Tadeo, who lies in a tomb under a fairy spell. Zoza seeks magical help and learns she must fill a pail with her tears in order to revive Tadeo. However, she

falls asleep just before she is able to complete her task, and a slave girl finishes the job and thus awakens the prince. As a reward for reviving him, the slave girl marries the newly-awoken prince and becomes queen instead of Zoza. When the queen becomes pregnant, Zoza enchants her to desperately crave stories, and, to please her, Tadeo hires ten storytellers, among which is Zoza in disguise. On the last day, Zoza gets her turn and she tells the story of the deceiving slave girl, and Tadeo, predictably, marries Zoza, and has the queen killed by burying her from the neck down. This tale is an amalgamation of several tale-types, such as ATU 425, 'The Search for the Lost Husband,' and ATU 559, 'The Princess' Laugh,' and it also contains elements of *The Arabian Nights*. Present-day readers could see it as a gender-bending 'Sleeping Beauty,' since Zoza, a particularly active princess who takes on a semi-Sheherezadian role, goes on a quest to revive a passively-awaiting prince.

Overall, and in spite of the violent end of the slave girl-turned-queen, the frame tale is relatively tame compared to others in the collection. Teverson identifies the at times brutal, at times sexually charged nature of most of the tales as the main reason why *Lo Cunto* has 'become relatively unknown in an era when fairy tales have increasingly been associated with children's literature' (Teverson 83).[10] This is certainly not a far-fetched assumption. As mentioned, we can find the first literary examples of some contemporary favourites in *Lo Cunto*, but Basile's versions are quite different from what most people today have come to associate with these fairy tales. For example, the Cinderella character in 'The Cinderella Cat' (sixth entertainment of the first day) murders her stepmother by breaking her neck with the lid of a chest—for which she seems to feel little to no remorse. Similarly, the tale 'Sun, Moon and Talia' (fifth entertainment of the fifth day) is a version of 'Sleeping Beauty,' but the eponymous Talia falls 'dead to the ground' (Basile 414), and not just merely asleep, when a piece of flax gets under her fingernail. Her father, distraught, abandons her body in a locked-up palace, where she is found by another king. The king thinks her asleep and tries to wake her up. She does not respond, but the king is so inflamed by her beauty that he carries her to bed and picks 'the fruits of love' (Basile 414)); in other words, he rapes her. As a result, Talia gives birth to twins who will eventually revive her and, after some trials and tribulations, she will end up marrying the king who raped her. This nechrophiliac rape is

[10] Canepa believes the subtitle *Entertainment for Little Ones* is 'blatantly tongue-in-cheek' (14, *Birth of the Literary Fairy Tale*).

omitted in both Perrault's tale penned for a courtly audience and the Grimms' versions produced for a bourgeois readership, which, perhaps not coincidentally, are notably better-known in our times, when sanitized versions for children are generally favoured.

Despite the current general lack of familiarity with *Lo Cunto*, the collection had numerous Neapolitan editions, it was translated into several languages, particularly during the nineteenth century, and the Grimms themselves regarded the stories as 'the basis of many others' (Grimm, *Household Tales* 482). Nonetheless, by the time *Lo Cunto* was published, the following stage in the development of the genre was nearing, and the fairy tale was about to flourish in the literary salons of France.

2.5 *Conteuses et Conteuses*: Fairy Tales in Seventeenth-Century French Salons

Following in the footsteps of Straparola and Basile, some French writers turned their attention to the fairy tale towards the end of the seventeenth century, which launched a trend that would endure through the eighteenth century. These writers borrowed plots and themes from popular genres that had come before, like epic poems and *lais*, and drew heavily from Straparola and Basile's tales. The resulting works defined and established a fairy-tale model that bears significant influence on present-day understandings of the genre.

Seifert identifies two separate stages or 'vogues' (Seifert, *Sexuality* 5) in this period, the first of which begins in 1690 and ends with the death of Louis XIV, in 1715, and the second one, which would cover the second half of the eighteenth century until the French Revolution in 1789. Anne Duggan and Patricia Hannon, on the other hand, divide the different waves thematically (Hannon and A. Duggan 379-83), and thus identify three instead: the first, from 1690 to 1705, when aristocratic tales bloomed in literary salons; the second one, from 1705 to 1730, in which Oriental tales gained substantial traction; and a third wave, from 1730 to 1756, which is 'less homogeneous' (Hannon and A. Duggan 382), but in which '[l]ibertine tales . . . [s]entimental tales [and] [m]oral tales' can be found (Hannon and A. Duggan 382-83).

This section will focus on the first years of the salon period, in which aristocratic and upper-class men and women would gather in literary salons to discuss manners, ideas, literature and, most relevantly, to swap tales for entertainment and as way of

enhancing 'their conversational arts' (Hannon and A. Duggan 379). Of the *conteurs*, only Charles Perrault had any lasting significance, and his name 'has become practically synonymous with the term *conte de fée*' (Zipes, *Spells of Enchantment* 13). Similarly to their male counterparts, and even though they were popular during their lifetimes, most of the *conteuses* fell into obscurity after their deaths, or their works became overshadowed by the celebrity of Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy, to whom their tales were sometimes attributed.[11] This chapter will, however, explore d'Aulnoy, the most notable *conteuse* to escape this fate, the most prolific and best-known one, who was still being published and read well into the nineteenth century, and who was the one to actually coin the term *conte de fée*.

It is important to note that, although Perrault and the other male *conteurs* frequented these literary salons, they were eminently female spaces. The first generation of *précieuses*[12] would gather in the Marquise de Rambouillet's Parisian salon in the 1630s, where highly educated aristocratic women could discuss intellectual matters away from widespread political and social unrest. However, the need for such spaces became even more pressing during the second half of the century. All-male societies were proliferating, such as the *Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres* and the *Académie des Sciences*. Excluding women from important intellectual networks became the norm, and one that was sanctioned by the King himself. Louis XIV had become progressively more despotic, and he turned to religious conservatism under the influence of his second wife, Madame de Maintenon, who, alongside François Fénelon, argued that the restoration of an aristocracy fallen into moral decline was in the hands of women—for which women would need to 'turn away from the pleasures of *mondain* life . . . to take on instead the duties of domesticity' (Seifert, *Sexuality* 902). The literary salons thus offered an intellectually enriching haven for women banished from the public sphere, and the fairy tale provided a suitable medium to express their dreams and frustrations.

The *conteuses*' fairy-tale production reflects their affinity to the genre: they penned 'two-thirds of all the fairy tales in this period' (Seifert, 'Marvelous in Context' 922). This is particularly interesting since, as Seifert notes, 'the proportion of female-

[11] That is, until they were rediscovered in the twentieth century. Their works were subsequently unearthed, translated, and republished by a number of feminist scholars (see Harries 19-72).

[12] The *preciosité* was a movement that championed aesthetic and moral reforms, particularly with regards to the purification of manners and language, but which also supported women's access to education. There were male precious (*précieux*), and there were men who agreed with the goals of the *précieuses*, but, as a whole, the movement appealed especially to women.

authored tales within the corpus is even higher than the . . . large number of novels written by women in roughly the same period' (Seifert, 'Marvelous in Context' 922). This phenomenon might have to do with the fact that the fairy tale was believed to be a prominently female genre. For example, the Abbot of Villiers contemptuously referred to it as 'women's province' (qtd. in Bottigheimer, *Framed* 76), and Perrault's collection, *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* (*Histories or Tales of Times Past*, 1697), had the alternative title *Contes de ma Mère l'Oye* (*Mother Goose Tales*). Nadine Jasmin also points out that a large proportion of the tales penned by the *conteuses* were 'put under the protection of eminent women' ('Sophistication and Modernization' 42),[13] which, in her eyes, confirms that the fairy tale was seen as feminine or feminized at the time.

At first glance, many of the tales written by women contain elements that would not surprise present-day audiences, like the eponymous fairies, beautiful princes and princesses, or plots that champion true love. However, the tales are very much a product of their time. Beneath the innocuous surface of the fairy tale, seventeenth-century writers would insert surreptitious criticism of court life. As Teverson explains:

> . . . the degree of licence provided by the fairy tale's status as a marvellous form of writing that can be passed off as fundamentally non-serious . . . allows writers of fairy tales to use them as a covert, but also suitably transparent, means of commenting upon, and even in some cases criticising, elements of court culture. (Teverson 88)

At the same time, these tales would continuously validate and encourage aristocratic modes of conduct. Contrary to, for example, Straparola's tales, in which lower-class protagonists were commonplace, the majority of characters in French *contes de fées* are 'of noble birth' (Seifert, 'Marvelous in Context' 921). It is their noble nature, 'their physical, emotional, and intellectual superiority' (Seifert, 'Marvelous in Context' 921), which will ultimately get rewarded and will ensure their success. Such is the case of d'Aulnoy's tales. Marcy Farrell notes that 'no peasants rise to power in these tales' (29) even though her writings do contain subversive undercurrents that challenge certain social norms. An aristocrat writing for an upper-class audience, d'Aulnoy does not seek the complete upending of the status quo, but rather the individual happiness of women like herself—most certainly influenced, as we will see, as much by her sociohistorical context as by her own personal circumstances.

[13] D'Aulnoy, for instance, dedicated her 1697 collection *Les contes des fées* to Charlotte-Elisabeth d'Orleans, Princess Palatine and sister-in-law to Louis XIV.

Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy was born in 1650 or 1651 in an aristocratic family from Normandy (Jasmin, 'd'Aulnoy' 61). Much of her life is surrounded by speculation, but it is known that she was married to a significantly older man, François de la Motte, Baron d'Aulnoy, when she was barely fifteen. The marriage was reportedly an unhappy one, which possibly coloured some of her later writing. A dramatic turn saw d'Aulnoy involved in a plot to accuse her husband of *lese majesté*, a crime against the dignity of the King 'which carried the death penalty' (A. Duggan, 'd'Aulnoy' 80). Although she is known to have fled France, the period between 1669 and 1685 is a blurry one: as Jasmin points out, there is scattered information about her whereabouts, 'but hard evidence is notably absent' (Jasmin, 'd'Aulnoy' 63). It is possible that d'Aulnoy lived in several places, including Flanders, Spain and England, and she finally settled in Paris by 1690 (A. Duggan, 'd'Aulnoy' 80; Jasmin, 'd'Aulnoy' 63). Once in Paris, d'Aulnoy entered the salon scene and she eventually opened her own, which was frequented by 'hundreds of people' according to fellow *conteuse* Henriette-Julie de Murat (quoted in Storer, 24). All previous misdeeds apparently forgiven, over the next few years d'Aulnoy launched a successful literary career, and she wrote memoirs, historical novels, and, of course, fairy tales.

The first fairy tale she ever wrote is also the first literary fairy tale to be published in France, in 1690, therefore predating Perrault's first tale by three years (A. Duggan, 'd'Aulnoy' 80). 'L'Île de la Felicité' ('The Island of Happiness' or 'The Island of Felicity') was embedded in her historical novel *L'Histoire d'Hyppolite, comte de Douglas*. The tale features a proto-feminist, all-female island that remains untouched by men until Russian prince Adolphe convinces the gentle wind, Zephyr, to carry him over to the hidden world.[14] The island presents several characteristics reminiscent of Versailles, such as the castle's opulence, the unparalleled beauty of its gardens and fountains, and the multiple works of art peppering every corner. In Ruth Carver Carpasso's words, 'the imagined utopia retains the material features of the contemporary society' (46). Furthermore, the women in the island spend their days pursuing art and science, much like *conteuses* would in their salons. There is, of course, a clear absence in this picture: men, and especially the most recognisable symbol of seventeenth-century patriarchal control, Louis XIV. In his place is the fairy princess Felicité, who exercises

[14] A similar plot point can be found in fourteenth-century romance *Perceforest*. Zephyr carries the protagonist into the tower where a princess awaits under a sleeping spell. *Perceforest* is one of the main precursors to the 'Sleeping Beauty' tale.

peaceful rule over her subjects until Adolphe's male influence brings about the end of the Island of Happiness. Felicité and Adolphe fall instantly in love, and he becomes entranced by her for three hundred years. He then realises he has not accomplished anything in his life in the way of heroic deeds and he leaves the Island searching for military glory, only to be caught and killed by Father Time. When she learns of his death, Felicité, heartbroken, closes the doors of her palace forever. The tale ends on a bleak note that suggests that happiness is never eternal, nor perfect, particularly as long as the desire for glory and power vanquishes the desire for true love.

After 'L'Île de la Felicité,' d'Aulnoy seemingly found a taste for fairy tales, and she went on to publish many more: *Les contes de fées* (*Tales of the Fairies*, 1697) contained four volumes of fairy tales, and so did her second collection, *Contes nouveaux ou les fées à la mode* (*New Tales, or the Fashionable Fairies*, 1698). D'Aulnoy revisits the idea of the utopian, all-female island in 'Le Prince Lutin,' this time giving the lovers a happy ending, and other tales like 'La Chatte Blanche' will also feature all-female (if perhaps less idyllic) societies. Generally speaking, her stories are characterised by the pursuit of true love, which might seem conservative to present-day readers, but, as Warner notes, women were often forced into loveless marriages, and the fact that some of the *conteuses'* tales championed the freedom to choose a lover demonstrates that 'the French wonder tale was fighting for social emancipation and change' (M. Warner, *Wonder Tales* 9). Nonetheless, d'Aulnoy also tends to place relatively complex female characters at the centre of the action: fairies that resemble powerful courtiers and thus can use their powers for good or evil, cruel or benevolent queens, and beautiful princesses who are not always submissively virtuous. For example, in her tale 'Finette Cendron' d'Aulnoy mixes two tale-types: ATU 327 'The Children and the Ogre' (to which tales like Perrault's 'Little Thumbling' or Brothers Grimm's 'Hansel and Gretel' would belong), and ATU 510 'Cinderella and Cap o' Rushes.' The Cinderella character plays the part of the resourceful protagonist who manages to save herself and her abusive sisters when their parents, disgraced monarchs, abandon them in the forest. Like in subsequent Cinderella stories, the princess is passive and patient when it comes to her mistreatment. However, when she and her sisters are captured by a couple of ogres, Finette does not hesitate in pushing the ogre into the oven, and later she tricks the ogress so she can cut her head off: 'Finette took a hatchet and stuck her from behind with such a blow that her head was sliced clean off her shoulders. Never was there such a delight!'

(D'Aulnoy, 'Finette Cendron' 463). Violent protagonists are antithetical to many Cinderella tales, such as Perrault's, but d'Aulnoy could be drawing inspiration from Basile's murderous Cinderella in his 'Cinderella Cat.'

D'Aulnoy was indeed familiar with Basile, and possibly with Straparola as well. She was a well-read woman who often inserted classical references in her work, and she embedded her tales in frame narratives much like the Italian writers, although she could be just drawing from the long-standing novella tradition (A. Duggan, 'd'Aulnoy' 81). According to Zipes, nevertheless, her crossdressing maiden-knight tale, 'Belle-Belle ou le chevalier Fortuné' ('Belle-Belle or the Knight Fortuné') was a retelling of Straparola's 'Constanza / Constanzo' (Zipes, *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition* 159). D'Aulnoy's version has the same basic structure but it is considerably longer, which allows for more complexity. Unlike 'Constanza / Constanzo,' 'Belle-Belle' features three extraordinary noblewomen, rather than just the one, who in this case crossdress in order to fill in for their elderly father before the king. Each sister is more virtuous and skilled in traditionally male areas than the last, but the two elder sisters refuse to help a fairy in disguise on their way to the castle. The fairy shouts out to them 'Good-bye, disguised beauty!' (D'Aulnoy, 'Belle-Belle' 175), thus making them think they are not able to pass for men, which forces them to turn around. The youngest sister thinks herself better suited for the task since she is taller, better at riding and she goes 'hunting every day' (D'Aulnoy, 'Belle-Belle' 176), but it is her kindness to the fairy which will ultimately allow her to succeed. The fairy rewards her good deed with magical gifts: an enchanted talking horse that can see the future and a disappearing chest filled with beautiful garments, swords, and gold. It is interesting to note that the clothes do make the man in this tale, since it is by donning the appropriate clothes that Belle-Belle, now Fortuné, is able to not only pass for a man, but is also allowed to become the most exceptional knight in the realm. He proves himself to be the bravest, the most loyal, the best at jousting and hunting, and the best-looking: '"Have you ever seen a cavalier more handsome, better built or more handsomely dressed?" they cried out' (D'Aulnoy, 'Belle-Belle' 178). Fortuné is only revealed to be a woman at the very end, when he is falsely accused of raping the queen and swiftly sentenced to death: the guards tear open his beautiful robe and, without the protective layers of well-chosen clothing, Belle-Belle's 'alabaster bosom' is uncovered (D'Aulnoy, 'Belle-Belle' 204). Gender is as fluid as in 'Constanza / Constanzo,' but 'Belle-Belle' delves deeper into the psychological depths

of the crossdressing protagonist. The tale shows Fortuné growing uncomfortable with the amount of female attention he gets, both from ladies at court and from the queen herself, but he does not mind it when he becomes the king's 'beloved favourite' (D'Aulnoy, 'Belle-Belle' 204):

> He had become very appreciative of the king's merits and became more attached to him than he had wanted. "What's my fate" he said. "I love a great king without any hope of his loving me. Nor will he ever know what I'm suffering." (D'Aulnoy, 'Belle-Belle' 185)

Pronouns and names stay male while the protagonist is wearing his male attire, and thus the above excerpt could read like the love confession of a gay man, including the angst over sexual incompatibility. There is room for reading Belle-Belle/Fortuné as a transman, although a genderfluid interpretation might fit better here: after all, the protagonist is comfortable living as a woman, but also willing to remain a man forever, and Belle-Belle/Fortuné performs both genders with equal dexterity and ease. At the end of this particularly queer journey, Belle-Belle/Fortuné marries the king, like Constanza/Constanzo, which fixes Belle-Belle's gender identity presumably for good.

If d'Aulnoy and other women writers used the realm of the fairy tale as a metaphorical extension of their salons, in which they could explore power fantasies where aristocratic women like themselves had more agency,[15] Charles Perrault had quite a different approach to the genre. As we will see, Perrault imbued his tales with bourgeois sensibility, and he used the fairy tale as a way to settle literary, political and ideological disputes.

Born in 1628 in a bourgeois family, Perrault grew up surrounded by like-minded people. In his youth, he co-wrote burlesque satires with his brothers, and once he was introduced to the *précieux* salon scene he started composing 'verse in praise of hostesses and their guests' (Saupé and Collinet 48). However, he only became well known as a poet when he composed odes to Louis XIV and his reign. Soon after, he started working for Jean-Baptiste Colbert, 'the most powerful minister under Louis XIV' (A. Duggan, 'Perrault' 738), and he was involved in the planning of Versailles and an expansion of the Louvre (Saupé and Collinet 49). In 1671 he was elected to the French Academy and,

[15] As Duggan further explains: 'the fairy tale provides a place, or rather, a no-place (*ou topos*), in which the traditional nobility and salon women can resolve the contradiction of their very existence in a pre-capitalist, patriarchal monarchy. These fairy tale resolutions take the form of idealized feudal and matriarchal worlds, based on reciprocal relations between all nobles' (A. Duggan, 'Feminine Genealogy' 200).

upon Colbert's death in 1683, Perrault left behind his bureaucratic duties to focus on literary pursuits.

Perrault was directly involved in one of the most intense literary debates of his time. The *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* (*Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns*) pitted the Ancients, who contended writers should imitate classical authors, against the Moderns, who on the contrary praised the writers of the century of Louis XIV. The Moderns were led by Perrault, who kicked off the debate with his poem 'Le siècle de Louis le Grand' ('The century of Louis the Great,' 1687). He followed it up with his *Parallele des anciens et des moderns* (*Parallel of Ancients and Moderns*, 1688-97), where he detailed the two positions more explicitly. He questioned the necessity to imitate classical authors and their genres following two main strategies: first, he 'conflated scientific progress with literary and artistic progress to argue for the superiority of the Moderns' (A. Duggan, 'Perrault' 739), and second, he saw in women the gauge for literary judgement. Perrault maintained that women possessed an innate good taste that allowed for the recognition of artistic quality, and that the Ancients' insistence on erudition was 'a form of exclusion, a self-interest on the control of literary judgements' (Seifert, 'Storyteller's Voice' 16).

This brings us to the fairy tale. Perrault's fairy tales can often be seen as conscious, modern reworkings of fables, which Ancients like La Fontaine valued for its classical and 'immutable superiority' (Seifert, 'Storyteller's Voice' 15). While *conteuses* like d'Aulnoy wrote long, novella-like tales, Perrault wrote concise tales closed by morals, thus structurally likening them to the fable. One of the first tales he published, 'Les souhaits ridicules' ('The Foolish Wishes,' 1693) in fact resembles La Fontaine's fable 'La mort et le bûcheron' ('Death and the Woodsman,' 1668), and according to Duggan it constitutes 'Perrault's attempt to promote the modernist cause through the genre of the fairy tale' (A. Duggan, 'Perrault,' 739). Perrault believed his fairy tales were morally superior to fables because '[r]ather than adhering to a . . . model from Greek or Roman antiquity' they were polished versions of the peasant's old wives' tales (Seifert, 'Storyteller's Voice' 14). Indeed, the fairy tale seems like the natural choice of genre for a Modern like Perrault. After all, women, able to recognise artistic value through some non-erudite quality, were seen as the primary storytellers in the form of old wives and governesses, and also as the main audience for the fairy tale. When Perrault published his famous collection *Histoires ou contes du temps passé, avec des moralités* (*Stories or*

Tales of Times Past, With Morals, 1697) he disguised his voice by attributing the collection to his youngest son, but also by identifying the source as 'Mother Goose.' As Seifert notes: 'The women storytellers whom Perrault's tales give as [the] source assure the subversion of the *Anciens*' authority over literary and philosophical judgements' ('Storyteller's Voice' 16).

Perrault's use of the fairy tale had other effects beyond furthering a literary feud. He wrote eleven different fairy tales in his life: 'Sleeping Beauty,' 'Little Red Riding Hood,' 'Bluebeard,' 'Puss in Boots,' 'Cinderella,' 'Riquet with the Tuft,' 'Little Thumbling,' 'Griselidis,' 'The Ridiculous Wishes,' 'Donkeyskin' and 'The Fairies.' Since at least half of them have entered the contemporary fairy-tale canon, albeit with some modifications, thanks in part to Disney's early adaptations of his tales, it is perhaps not surprising that Perrault's take on gender roles has come to be seen as intrinsic to the fairy tale. However, his representations of gender are personal and highly context-dependent, much like d'Aulnoy's, although as a staunch Catholic, a man and part of the *haute bourgeoisie*, Perrault's sensibilities were quite different from those of the *conteuse*. For example, when it came to his male characters, Perrault favoured representations of men inspired by the *bourgeoisie*: intrepid male characters were the heroes of tales such as 'Little Thumbling' or 'Puss in Boots,' and they often succeeded due to their superior intellect, their eloquence and their diligent spirit. These characteristics are nowhere to be found among Perrault's female characters. As Seifert maintains, it is important to note that 'Perrault's appropriation of the peasant and the salon female communities in his tales does not affirm the status of women in society' (Seifert, 'Storyteller's Voice' 17). Quite the opposite: Perrault constructs his ideal woman through his tales, and it becomes readily apparent this ideal woman should be beautiful, gracious, helpless, submissive and exceedingly passive. Perrault often writes heroines whose saint-like patience is eventually rewarded within the narrative, and later lauded in the paternalistic moral. Moreover, his version of some tale-types are almost totally stripped of female agency, such as his Cinderella character who, unlike Basile's or d'Aulnoy's, does not indulge in violent rebellion. There are some heroines who stray from the narrow moral path Perrault delineates, but they are swiftly punished: Little Red Riding Hood is devoured by the wolf, and Bluebeard's wife's curiosity proves to be almost fatal—were it not for her brothers, who save her at the last minute.

Perrault's authorial footprint is perhaps most evident in his morals, where he lets the mask of 'times past' fall to comment on contemporary social matters, and where 'the heroine's morally illustrious example is used as means of pointing out the immoral behaviour of contemporary women' (Seifert, 'The Storyteller's Voice' 17). To cite an example, there is the moral to 'Sleeping Beauty':

> To wait so long
> And want a man refined and strong
> is not at all uncommon.
> And yet to wait one hundred years
> Without a tear, without a care,
> Makes for a very rare woman. (Perrault, 'Sleeping Beauty' 695)

Nevertheless, morals are not always used to stress a misogynistic point. Although, by definition, they offer a moral interpretation of the tale, Perrault's sometimes go against the tale's apparent message. For example, in 'The Fairies,' a girl's kindness is rewarded by a fairy so that when she speaks, 'roses . . . pearls and . . . large diamonds' fall from her mouth (Perrault, 'The Fairies' 566). This extraordinary gift is what makes a prince fall in love with her, and not what she says, but the moral reads: 'Diamonds and gold/can do wonders for one's soul/Yet, kind words, I am told/Are worth more on the whole' (Perrault, 'The Fairies' 657). In other cases, Perrault offers two different morals to one story, and these will sometimes contradict each other. 'Cinderella' placed great emphasis on her dresses—fairy gifts that allowed her to charm the prince, much like Belle-Belle's superior garments had charmed the women at court. However, the first moral seems to contradict the fairy tale: 'it's kindness more than dress/That can win a man's heart with greater success' (Perrault, 'Cinderella' 454). In turn, this first moral is contradicted by a second one: 'It is undoubtedly a great advantage/To have wit . . . and other worthwhile talents . . . but all of these might prove useless . . . without godfathers or godmothers' (Perrault, 'Cinderella' 454). These multivocal messages can complicate interpretation, and they open the tales up to irony and ambiguity.[16]

Perrault's tales, and in fact his very fairy-tale model, continued to be enormously popular in the centuries to come, with multiple reprints and countless adaptations, even if the potential for ambiguity was often downplayed as they were adapted into different formats, or edited upon reissue or translation. The Grimms regarded his stories as the

[16] Queerness can thus be identified in the resulting gaps, even in otherwise quite heterosexist tales, as Seifert's article 'Queer Time in Charles Perrault's "Sleeping Beauty"' (2015) indicates.

most beautiful among the French tales, and, quite unfairly, referred to d'Aulnoy as Perrault's 'inferior imitator' (Grimm, qtd. in Harries 22). From a contemporary perspective, d'Aulnoy can certainly be seen as having lived in Perrault's shadow, since she is considerably less well-known, but her tales were still translated and reprinted for a long time after her death. Besides enduring popularity in France,[17] many of her writings were extremely popular during the eighteenth century in England (see M. Palmer 237-40), and in the nineteenth century d'Aulnoy was still known for her fairy tales (M. Palmer 250), which circulated in different formats, such as chapbooks or individual tales, but often under different names and stripped of their historical context. As it were, during the eighteenth century the genre's 'aristocratic roots' were progressively forgotten, as the fairy tale was already shifting towards the 'complex of bourgeois Christian values' (Seifert, 'France' 181) that was to be at the centre of nineteenth-century literature for children.

2.6 Institutionalisation of a Genre: Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen, and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination

The nineteenth century marked the beginning of a golden age for fairy tales across Europe. With increased urbanisation, industrialisation, and literacy, it was believed that the oral culture belonging to an illiterate populace was in danger of disappearing (Ostry 9-15). This encouraged a number of scholars to collect all sorts of folklore, among them fairy tales, sometimes driven at the same time by some regions' nationalist and regionalist projects. For example, Alexander Afanasyev collected 600 Russian folktales and fairy tales, Petre Ispirescu published *Romanian Fairy Tales* in 1862, and Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe collected their *Norwegian Folktales* in the wake of Norway's independence. These fairy-tale collectors and many others were directly influenced by the Brothers Grimm, however, whose *Children and Household Tales*, published in 1812, sought to provide fragmented German-speaking states with a common linguistic and cultural heritage, in hopes of furthering the cause of a unified German republic.

[17] D'Aulnoy retained her popularity in France, often having her tales printed alongside those by Perrault or Leprince de Beaumont (A. Duggan, 'Reception of the Grimms' 264). In fact, the enduring popularity of the French writers might have contributed to an initial lukewarm reception of the Grimms' fairy tales in France, which only gained traction by the end of the nineteenth century (A. Duggan, 'Reception of the Grimms' 264).

Nevertheless, fairy tales would not only appear in (apparently) folkloristic collections in the 1800s. Since the genre was so popular, many writers offered their own interpretations—sometimes drawing from old folktales, to be sure, but also making use of fairy-tale motifs to fashion new tales. Such is the case of writers like George MacDonald, Lewis Carroll, Oscar Wilde, and, of course, Hans Christian Andersen, a prolific writer we will be discussing in this section alongside the Brothers Grimm.

Born in Hanau within a year of each other, in 1785 and 1786, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm had a fairly idyllic childhood (Zipes, *Enchanted Forests* 1). They were both bright and hardworking, and their training in the Reform Calvinist Church ensured they would remain 'deeply religious' and that they would 'set high moral standards for themselves' (Zipes, *Enchanted Forests* 2). A privileged country life would come abruptly to an end when their father died shortly after Jacob's eleventh birthday. Jacob and Wilhelm began their studies in the high school in Kassel, where most other students were of aristocratic extraction. The brothers were often reminded of their lower status, which both strengthened their bond and made them 'acutely aware of class injustice and exploitation' (Zipes, *Enchanted Forests* 3). The memory of a pleasant childhood in the countryside, as well as the middle-class ideals of labour and betterment they were raised with, will later inform their fairy tales.

Once at the University of Marburg, the Grimms, now law students, were taken under the wing of Professor Friedrich Karl von Savigny, whose approach to law would considerably influence the brothers:

> Savigny argued that the spirit of a law can be comprehended only by tracing its origins to the development of the customs of language of a people who share them . . . [I]t was Savigny's emphasis on the philological-historical aspect of law that would eventually lead Jacob and Wilhelm to dedicate themselves to the study of ancient German literature and folklore. (Zipes, *Enchanted Forests* 4)

Savigny also facilitated one of the most significant connections in the Grimms' life: by introducing them to his circle of artist friends, the Grimms met Clemens Brentano and Achim von Arnim. Brentano and Arnim were involved in a burgeoning Romantic movement that campaigned for a unified German nation. The most prominent spokesman of this movement, poet Johann Gottfried von Herder, argued that 'the recovery of an ancient national heritage was a vital prerequisite to the establishment of a coherent idea of the German nation' (Teverson 62). Arnim and Brentano were inspired by Herder to

publish *Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Alte Deutsche Lieder* (*The Boy's Magic Horn: Old German Songs*, 1805-08), a collection of folksongs from all over the German territory. Brentano and Arnim were, in this way, using cultural production to do what political discourse could not: to put together a Germany of sorts. The brothers, firm believers in a Germanic project, contributed some songs, and their younger brother Ludwig Emil Grimm would even design the frontispiece for the final volume. Since this was such a fruitful collaboration, Brentano and Arnim asked Jacob and Wilhelm to start collecting some folktales, a project the two established Romantics had entertained but eventually had lost interest in (Teverson 102). This was, of course, the initial catalyst for the Grimms' *Children and Household Tales*, the collection of fairy tales that will secure the brothers' place in history.

Whereas Wilhelm struggled with health issues and remained unemployed until after the end of the Napoleonic occupation, Jacob had a varied professional trajectory: he worked as an assistant to Savigny, later as a war secretary, and, after the French invasion in 1806, he became private librarian to King Jérôme of Westphalia. During this time he had a distinct lack of official duties, which allowed him to pursue his true interests, among them the collection of 'authentic German tales and legends' (Hettinga 138) with Wilhelm. By 1809 the brothers had given up on the idea of being lawyers, and they would use a period of relative financial stability to publish some of their literary research. As Zipes notes, 'the major publication at this time was the first volume of the *Kinder– und Hausmärchen* (*Children and Household Tales*)' (Zipes, *Enchanted Forests* 6) which was published in 1812.

This first volume went to press under the complete title *Kinder– und Hausmärchen, gesammelt durch die Brüder Grimm* (*Children and Household Tales, Collected by the Brothers Grimm*). The title already anticipates some of the anxieties that would plague the brothers as to who the intended audience was: the fairy tales were supposed to appeal to such disparate groups as adults of all classes, children, and scholars. The first volume contained 86 numbered stories and was replete with academic annotations. For Brentano it was 'dull and under-worked' (Teverson 106), and, on the other hand, far too scholarly to appeal to children, according to Arnim (Luke 29). Albert Ludwig Grimm, who was a collector of fairy tales with no relation to the brothers, went so far as to say that it was 'impossible to think of that collection as a book that can be put in the hands of children' (qtd. in Tatar, *Hard Facts* 17). Despite these criticisms and the

limited number of copies that were printed, the Grimms put together an additional 70 stories for a second volume published in 1814, thus completing the first edition.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the collection had a lukewarm reception, which clearly did not deter the brothers if we consider the many subsequent editions they would work on throughout their lives. Furthermore, as Tatar points out, while looking for a publisher, Jacob stated that 'the main purpose of the [collection] was not so much to earn royalties as to salvage what was left of the priceless national resources still in the hands of the German folk' (Tatar, *Hard Facts* 11). The goal was thus much more idealistic: the Grimms sought to preserve tales of an oral tradition they thought was about to disappear. This intention, clearly stated in their prefaces, has worked to perpetuate a misconception about *Children and Household Tales* that still lasts to this day− namely, that the tales were taken down word for word from an unspoilt German peasantry. However, as might be expected from a couple of well-educated brothers from a middle-class family who mostly frequented artistic and intellectual circles, most of their informants were people very much like themselves (Hettinga 139). Some stories did come from lower-class people, such as some female oral storytellers they interviewed, or a soldier who told them stories in exchange for clothes (Hettinga 139; Zipes, *Enchanted Forests* 11), but most tales came from middle-class or aristocratic friends. The brothers would invite storytellers to their house, such as the Wild sisters or the Hassenpflug sisters, and record their tales − but these were all educated young women who had often read the tales they were telling.[18] 'The Juniper Tree' and 'The Fisherman and His Wife' were sent to the Grimms by artist Philip Otto Runge, and a group of well-educated young people (the Haxthausen and the Droste-Hülfshoff) provided some tales for Jacob. The only source named in the introduction was, however, Dorothea Viehmann. Viehmann was characterised 'as a peasant woman' (Hettinga 139) who would often sell fruit in Kassel. Recent scholarship, such as John Ellis' *One Fairy Story Too Many: The Brothers Grimm and Their Tales* (1985) and Tatar's *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales* (1987), has questioned the status of Viehmann as an uneducated woman. She was probably literate, and closer to middle-class (her husband was a tailor), and, it turns out, had grown up in a French-speaking, exiled Huguenot family. The many tales she contributed,

[18] Although beyond the scope of this chapter, it must be noted that German-speaking women were not only oral relayers of fairy tales but also writers. See Shawn C. Jarvis and Jeannine Blackwell's 2001 anthology *The Queen's Mirror: Fairy Tales by German Women, 1780-1900*.

therefore, came not from the German oral tradition, but were rather a result of a mix of French literary fairy tales and the regional narrative tradition.

The Grimms' intentional or unintentional construction of Viehmann as an old peasant storyteller worked, in any case, to advance the Grimms' idea of fairy tales as 'Naturpoesie,' or 'natural poetry that evolved from a pure folk source' (Hettinga 139). Folktales and fairy tales were seen as suitable vehicles to express the genuine character of a group: not only were they pure, but they were also almost incorruptible, able to retain their essence through multiple years of re/tellings. It is not a stretch to assume they were somehow above contamination in the Grimms' eyes, given that they subjected their collection to an intense process of editing: from 1812 to 1857 there were seven editions of *Children and Household Tales*, 'each one different from the last, until the final, best-known version barely resembled the first' (Zipes, 'Saved'). As Zipes remarks, the Grimms were not 'merely collectors,' but would continuously incorporate thematic, formal and stylistic changes in order to 'create the ideal type for the literary fairy tale that sought to be as close to the oral tradition as possible' (Zipes, *Enchanted Forests* 12). Thus, by editing stories they had presumably recorded from oral storytellers, they felt they were bringing these tales closer to the true oral tales. This paradoxical stance has not gone unnoticed by scholars,[19] and nowadays the Grimm tales are regarded less as the product of oral tradition and more as 'a historical phenomenon that documents the appropriation of oral tradition' by middle-class, literary men (Haase, 'Framing' 61) for the sake of constructing a coherent nationalist myth.

Jacob favoured academic pursuits, particularly in the form of philological and linguistic projects, but Wilhelm was more interested in literary endeavours. Therefore, while both brothers were involved in several projects at the same time, Jacob would often turn to his volume on historical grammar of the German language and later to the brothers' *German Dictionary*,[20] whereas Wilhelm would edit their fairy-tale collection. Over the years, he would add and remove tales according to several factors: for example, tales like 'Puss in Boots' and 'Bluebeard' would be eventually taken out of the collection because they were derived from Perrault's versions and were thus considered to be too French (Teverson 107; Zipes, 'Saved'). Some other tales in the first edition were also

[19] For an overview of the debate on the Grimms' characterization of their tales, see Donald Ward's 'New Misconceptions about Old Folktales: The Brothers Grimm' (1988), or Jack Zipes' *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* (1983) 45-70.

[20] To this day, this is the largest German dictionary in existence. The brothers died before completing the herculean task, so it was only finished in the 1960s through the collaboration of several scholars. The Grimms would probably expect to be remembered for this work rather than for their fairy-tale collection.

removed in subsequent editions because they were exceedingly gruesome, such as 'The Children of Famine,' in which a mother threatens to eat her own daughters, or 'How Some Children Played at Slaughtering,' a tale with two different versions in which children 'butcher a playmate' (Hettinga 144). This is not to say that tales that were violent were systematically taken out. On the contrary, as has been noted sometimes the violence was increased or made more explicit:

> Their Rumpelstiltskin becomes ever more infuriated by the queen's discovery of his name; in the second edition . . . he is so beside himself with rage that he tears himself in two. Briar Rose sleeps for a hundred years while the hedge peacefully grows around the castle in the first recorded version [but in later editions we] learn the grisly particulars about Briar Rose's unsuccessful suitors. They fail because 'the briar bushes clung together as though they had hands so that the young princes were caught in them and died a pitiful death.' (Tatar, *Hard Facts* 6)

Judging by these changes, nineteenth-century sensibilities would have had a higher tolerance for violent tales, especially in the form of rightful revenge or if the violence was punitive in nature. Presumably trying to fit the contemporary tastes of his readership, Wilhelm had villains in 'Cinderella' and 'Snow White' brutally punished—the evil stepsisters had their eyes pecked out by birds, and the evil queen was made to dance to death in red-hot iron shoes. Who the villains were in a story is also not incidental. Generally speaking, the editing process worked to progressively exculpate father figures, shifting the blame onto female characters. An example of this is 'Hansel and Gretel.' The 1810 manuscript of the story had the mother convincing the father to abandon their children in the forest in order to avoid starvation, and, in subsequent editions, the *step*mother is increasingly cruel and the father increasingly reluctant and caring. These later versions would thus preserve 'sentimental nineteenth-century ideals about the nurturing birth-mother and the just patriarchal authority of the father' (Teverson 109). More egregious still are the collection's anti-Semitic representations. In the story 'The Jew in the Brambles,' for instance, the protagonist uses a magic violin to torture a Jew, making him dance in a thorny underbrush. This attack is completely unprovoked, but it is later legitimised by the narrative when the Jew is found to be a thief and is hanged for it. Shockingly, the Grimms (or perhaps Wilhelm) thought this tale to be so relevant that it was included in the small edition of 1825, which contained only 50 tales and was intended for children.

Some of Wilhelm's choices would perhaps be less appalling to present-day audiences, or would at least line up with what many people consider to be characteristic of, and appropriate in, fairy tales. He cultivated a distinct literary style that would sound more universal, to remove the specifics of time, place and narrator, he turned cruel mothers into more palatable evil stepmothers, and misbehaving fairies became witches instead. He would also consistently weed out the sexual elements in the tales, often in ways that would alter the original meaning or present the characters in a different light. For example, 'The Master Hunter,' which was relayed to the Grimms by Viehmann, featured a princess sleeping naked in a tower, and a protagonist who rapes her and gets her pregnant. Reminiscent of Basile's 'Sun, Moon and Talia,' this story was relegated to the notes in the second edition, and the tale that substituted it had 'a fully clothed princess and a young man who stands as a model of restraint and decorum' instead (Tatar, *Hard Facts* 7). Similarly, incestuous desire was either suppressed or textually condemned, so for instance 'All-Kinds-of-Fur,' related to Perrault's 'Donkeyskin,' has a king who wants to marry his daughter, to which the councillors reply: 'God has forbidden that a father should marry his daughter' (Grimm qtd. in Ashliman, 'All-Kinds-of-Fur'). This condemnation would happen even at the expense of the tale's internal logic (see discussion on 'The Maiden Without Hands' in Tatar, *Hard Facts* 8-10; and Ellis 77-78), and women's sexuality was methodically downplayed to the same effect. The tale of 'Rapunzel' is a commonly-cited example: in the first edition, Rapunzel and the prince meet daily in her tower behind the witch's back. As a result of their secret affair, Rapunzel gets pregnant, and she naïvely asks the witch why her clothes are getting so tight, suggesting pregnancy and prompting the witch to cut her hair and banish her from the tower. In the following editions, however, Rapunzel is appropriately desexualised and dim. She does not say: 'Frau Gothel, tell me why it is that my clothes are all too tight. They no longer fit me,' but rather: 'Frau Gothel, tell me why it is that you are more difficult to pull up than the young prince, who will be arriving any moment now?'(Grimm, qtd. in Ashliman, 'Comparison').

Reading different versions of the tales reveals that the constant editing had a homogenising effect: the mark of their tellers, sometimes still present in the disparate first recorded versions, faded away under Wilhelm's careful quill. The earlier versions tended to be shorter, less polished, and considerably more ambiguous (and strange) as a result, but, in spite of this, even later editions contain some tales that invite queer

readings.[21] For instance, 'The Frog King or Iron Heinrich,' contains, beyond the well-known plot of the transformed frog, a coda-like section in which the king's faithful servant is given surprising importance. He is not just the only character with a name, but also the one whose feelings are described with the most intensity: he is said to have placed iron bands around his heart when the king was transformed 'to keep it from bursting in grief and sorrow' (Grimm qtd. in Ashliman, 'The Frog King or Iron Heinrich'). Heinrich's attachment to the king far surpasses that of his wife the princess, of which there is little mention. In fact, the tale closes insisting on the depth of Heinrich's queer devotion:

> the prince heard a cracking sound and thought that the carriage was breaking apart, but it was the bands springing from faithful Heinrich's heart because his master was now redeemed and happy. (Grimm qtd. in Ashliman, 'The Frog King or Iron Heinrich')

Thus, heterosexual love, which presumably stands at the centre of the tale, is secondary in intensity to Heinrich's queer affections in this significant tale, which the Grimms chose to be first in their collection across all editions. Moreover, ending the tale by placing the focus on Heinrich's love for the king suggests that this reunion is the true 'happy ending,' rather than the (mentioned just in passing) heterosexual union. The tale ultimately challenges genre-specific, heterocentric expectations.

We can also find crossdressing tales in the Grimms' collection even though, by the nineteenth century, as previously noted, crossdressing narratives were less well-received, as ideas about gender categorisation shifted and female transvestites elicited increasing unease due to their 'sexual and social ambiguity' (Craft-Fairchild 178). An example is tale number 67 of the seventh edition, 'The King with the Lion,' also called 'The Twelve Huntsmen,' which, just like other tales discussed in this chapter, involves crossdressing women—twelve of them, to be precise. The tale begins, interestingly, where so many other fairy tales would end: a prince and a princess are in love and about to get married. Before that can happen, the prince's father calls for him in his deathbed and makes him promise that he will marry a different princess of his liking. When the

[21] Joosen notes that 'in a few rare instances, critics have attributed Jacob Grimm's lifelong bachelor status to suppressed homosexuality' (111), but this has not significantly impacted readings of the Grimms' fairy tales. This might be due to the collaborative aspect of the collection and Wilhelm's heavy editing hand, which could be thought to have obscured any personal, queer traces inserted by Jacob. At the time of writing, however, this remains at the level of conjecture, and Jacob's possible queerness (which would also include asexuality, not just homo or bisexuality) is not as transparently inserted in the brothers' collection as, for instance, Andersen's is in his tales, as will be detailed below.

prince becomes king, he summons the princess his father wanted him to marry. His first fiancée, waiting for him in her kingdom with only a ring to remember him by, hears the news and asks her father for eleven maidens who look exactly like herself. All twelve women then dress as huntsmen and ride to the palace, where the princess asks her former bridegroom for a position for all of them. The king does not recognise her, but 'because they were such handsome people, he gladly granted the request and welcomed them to his court' (Grimm, *Household Tales* 223). Just like in Straparola's 'Constanza / Constanzo,' the king is swayed by the crossdressers' looks, which could indicate queer desire. Also like in Straparola's tale, there is a truth-telling magical creature, in this case a lion, who alerts the king of the women's deception: 'You believe you've employed twelve hunters, but they're actually twelve young women' (Grimm, *Household Tales* 224). The lion then instructs the king in devising foolproof tests that will reveal their true identities: he tells him to spread peas on the floor (for women's steps would be too light to crush them), and later to display spinning wheels in the room (since women would clearly find that irresistible). Both tests fail because a servant overhears and tells the hunters, who step firmly on the peas and manage to stop themselves from inspecting the spinning wheels. The princess is only found out because she faints when she hears her beloved's new fiancée is on her way, and the tale ends appropriately with the crossdressing princess and her king in happy heteronormative marriage. However, it must be noted that the women in the tale, much like in d'Aulnoy's 'Belle-Belle or the Knight Fortuné,' perform extraordinarily well as men—so much so that only a magical creature is able to see through them. Thus, such representations reveal male/female and man/woman as permeable rather than hermetic categories, and these categories as performatively constructed, following Butler's understanding of gender as something we do, 'something that one becomes—but can never be' (*Gender Trouble* 112). In other words, this tale, as well as the other crossdressing tales analysed in this chapter, understands gender as verb, rather than as noun or ontological category, and these maiden knights are particularly apt at acting out their variable genders.

The brothers were increasingly recognised and valued for their scholarship, both within Germany and abroad. A fair amount of recognition came however through the translation of their *Children and Household Tales*. Particularly successful was Edgar Taylor's English translation, which wildly outsold the German editions and generated £15,000 in sales for its publishers (Bottigheimer, 'The Publishing History of the Grimms' 84). Taylor's translation was it was considerably shorter than the German

editions, came intricately illustrated, and it could be considered more a bowdlerised adaptation than a faithful translation of the tales. The collection was clearly intended for children, and it prompted the Grimms to release the *Kleine Ausgabe*, or Small Edition: a selection of 50 stories illustrated by Ludwig Grimm which was designed to be more marketable, stripped of all scholarly notes. This smaller version was cheaper, would go on to have nine different editions, and, even though the seventh and last version of the Large Edition is considered to be the 'definitive' one (Teverson 107), the Grimm fairy-tale canon is more or less made up of tales compiled in the Small Edition (Tatar, *Hard Facts* 20).

The Small Edition was not as incredible a success as Taylor's translation, but its value as a Christian tool for the socialization of children paved the way for fairy tales to enter 'the middle-class nursery as sanctioned texts' (Teverson 113). After three hundred years of development, the fairy tale had finally completed its transformation into a genre for children. It is around the same period when Hans Christian Andersen began writing fairy tales: in 1835 he would publish his first collection *Eventyr, fortalte for Boern* (*Fairy Tales, told for Children*). His oeuvre ranged from novels, to travel writing, poetry and plays, but nothing would be as well-remembered, or as instrumental to the advancement of children's literature, as his four fairy-tale collections.

Andersen would always intimately identify with fairy-tale characters.[22] He was born to a poor family in Odense, Denmark, in 1805, and his life would follow a rags-to-riches structure. Given the limited opportunities he had in his hometown, he decided to travel to Copenhagen as an adolescent. He tried his hand at acting, singing and dancing. Despite multiple setbacks, Andersen was tireless in his pursuit of fame and success, and his determination 'eventually did make an impression on various philanthropic gentlemen' (Zipes, *The Misunderstood Storyteller* 6). Thanks to their patronage he was able to attend ballet school and he received singing lessons, but it would soon be obvious to everyone that he was not cut for the stage. Even his first attempts at writing were very much a failure—one of his patrons, Jonas Collin, who would become a father figure for him, insisted Andersen required further schooling (Zipes, *The Misunderstood Storyteller* 6). Andersen, seventeen at the time, was thus sent to a school in Slagelse and put in a class of eleven-year-olds. His schooling was a pre-condition to be welcomed into the Collin family, and, although he finally managed to pass his final examinations and even

[22] He would write three memoirs, the second of which was titled *Mit Livs Eventyr* (*The Fairy Tale of My Life*, 1855).

the university admission test, he would remember his school years as some of the darkest of his life (Soerense 167).

When he first started writing fairy tales, in 1835, Andersen would often rework traditional folk tales adding his own artistic flair. Such is the case of 'Little Claus and Big Claus' or 'The Princess and the Pea,' which he had heard 'from his grandmother in the spinning room at the Odense asylum' (Wullschlager 144). Even when he moved on to write original fairy tales, his debt to the oral tradition could still be felt. As he wrote to Henriette Hank in 1835: 'I have started some "Fairy Tales Told for Children" and I feel I have succeeded . . . [I] have written them exactly the way I would tell them to a *child*' (qtd. in Wullschlager, emphasis in original 144). His style is markedly different from, for example, that of the Grimms'. Whereas the Grimms would regularly make use of conventional Once-Upon-a-Time-like structures, Andersen's style was much more direct and spontaneous, as in the opening of 'The Tinderbox:' 'A soldier came marching down the road: Left… right! Left… right!' (Andersen, *The Annotated* 1). To present-day readers, this might not seem in any way extraordinary, but that is because children's literature has followed in Andersen's trail:

> We accept imaginative, anarchist stories as the basis of all good children's books, from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* . . . to *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* . . . But when Andersen wrote his first fairy tales, children's books were not expected to be about enjoyment: they were usually formal, improving texts which highlighted a moral and were meant to educate, not amuse, young readers. (Wullschlager 145)

Understandably, at the time of publication, Andersen faced considerable criticism. Reviewers deemed his tales to be unacceptably informal and borderline immoral for children.[23] However, readers seemed to have had no such qualms: the collection sold well and was soon translated into several languages, expanding its reach well beyond Denmark's borders (Teverson 121). His international popularity and a penchant for travelling ensured Andersen met with some of the most important people of his time: Victor Hugo, Honoré de Balzac, Alexandre Dumas, and Charles Dickens were among his acquaintances. He even visited the Grimms' home in 1844, only to find, to his embarrassment, that Jacob had never heard of him. Wilhelm was out at the time, but he in fact knew who Andersen was, and the two stayed in touch afterwards (Hettinga 147).

[23] In *Hans Christian Andersen, the Fan Dancer* (1998), Alison Prince maintains that the 'Princess and the Pea' is more suggestive in the original Danish (163-4).

Andersen seemed to personify the modern narrative of upward social mobility, a fact he was keenly aware of. In 1844, he wrote to Edvard Collins: 'Twenty-five years ago . . . I arrived with my small parcel in Copenhagen, a poor stranger of a boy, and today I have drank chocolate with the Queen' (qtd. in Wullschlager 1). That being said, Andersen would remain forever ambivalent when it came to his somewhat split identity, and would never grow to feel quite at ease in his own skin. The feeling of being an outsider is a recurring theme that emerges in his fairy tales, which are often told through the eyes of the dispossessed, the neglected and the innocent, usually children. Andersen did not seek to surround himself with children, and he remained unmarried and childless his whole life, so this focus could stem from his own childish disposition. As contemporary critic Georg Brandes remarked: 'Indeed, he did become a great man. But he did not become a man. There was not the slightest glimmer of manliness in the soul of this child' (Brandes 104). Andersen would exorcise other personal demons through his tales: for example, in his semi-autobiographical animal fable 'The Ugly Duckling' Andersen poured his many insecurities about his physical appearance.[24] Furthermore, Maria Nikolajeva notes that the tale is 'a poignant account of the road from humiliation through suffering to well-deserved bliss,' which echoes Andersen's famous quote: 'First you must endure a lot, then you get famous' (Nikolajeva, 'Andersen' 14). Scholars, nonetheless, tend to get embrangled on another issue that colours Andersen's writing and which caused him much anguish: his sexuality.

This is an ongoing discussion that academics have been engaging in since 1901, when 'a Danish writer . . . broached the subject in a German magazine' (D.C. Frank and J. Frank 11), yet there is no consensus. In *The Life of a Storyteller*, Wullschlager details his (very likely not consummated) love for different men and women. Zipes considers that Wullschlager spends too much time 'trying to prove his homosexuality' (Zipes, *The Misunderstood Storyteller* 143) and notes that biographers such as Bredsdorff or the Franks deny he was gay. The Franks write that 'the only evidence [for his homosexuality] comes from a literal reading of the . . . overheated language of the nineteenth century' (D.C. Frank and J. Frank 11), only to later add: 'As an older man, [Andersen] was occasionally infatuated with men as well as women . . . but Andersen's virginity . . . remained intact' (D.C. Frank and J. Frank 11). In my view, this back and

[24] His issues with self-image (and more) are well-documented, since Andersen's personal diaries and much of his correspondence have been preserved. For example, Jackie Wullschlager's biography, *Hans Christian Andersen: The Life of a Storyteller* (2001), makes extensive use of them.

forth is only sustained because of a binary understanding of sexuality, and by the misconception that, if physically unacted upon, desires are not indicative of sexuality. Particularly, of course, when that sexuality is non-normative, which brings to mind Sedgwick's sarcastic enumeration of reasons why queerness is elided or discounted when discussing historical figures, and which includes the highly relevant points:

> 1. Passionate language of same-sex attraction was extremely common during whatever period is under discussion—and therefore must have been completely meaningless. Or . . .
>
> 7. There is no actual proof of homosexuality, such as sperm taken from the body of another man or a nude photograph with another woman—so the author may be assumed to have been ardently and exclusively heterosexual. (Sedgwick, *Epistemology* 52-53)

In spite of the heated conversation around Andersen's sexuality, one of his tales has consistently been read in relation to queerness: 'The Little Mermaid.' A sentimental tale about unrequited love written in 1837, 'the Little Mermaid' is perhaps one of the best-known tales for children, which was further canonised by Disney's 1989 adaptation. The eponymous mermaid is fascinated with the human world, but must wait until she is fifteen to go to the surface. Once she is of age, she instantly falls in love with a prince and she saves his life after a storm. She then learns about the concept of immortal souls. As her grandmother tells her, mermaids live up to three hundred years, but 'when we die, we shall never rise again' (Andersen 66). In contrast, humans have souls that live eternally. Since the only way for mermaids to gain a soul is by marrying a human, the mermaid becomes fixated on marrying the prince. The motif of the pagan mermaid versus the Christian prince had already been used by writers like Fouqué and Goethe, but Andersen toned down religious themes and highlighted the mermaid's self-sacrifice and suffering instead. This is particularly evident when the mermaid visits the sea witch in order to get her legs:

> I will mix you a potion . . . Your tail will divide and shrink, until it becomes what human beings call 'pretty legs.' It will hurt; it will feel as if a sword were going through your body. All who see you will say that you are the most beautiful child they have ever seen. You will walk more gracefully than any dancer; but every time your foot touches the ground, it will feel as though you were walking on knives so sharp that your blood must flow. If you are willing to suffer all this, then I can help you. (Andersen 68)

As payment, the sea witch cuts out the mermaid's tongue, and so she enters the human world: desperate, disabled, in excruciating pain. This story, generally considered to have several autobiographical elements, has been read as a tale detailing the sacrifices a lower-class person must endure to access close-knit upper-class circles (Zipes, *Misunderstood Storyteller* 36-38). It has also been argued that it is a misogynistic tale that demonstrates Andersen's fear of female sexuality, 'and a desire to counteract that fear by promoting self-sacrifice and silent suffering as ideals for female behaviour' (Teverson 126). While this reading certainly fits, it must be noted that Andersen would often identify with his female characters, and Wullschlager reads 'The Little Mermaid' as a response to the wedding of Henriette Thyberg to Edvard Collin, with whom Andersen was in love. Edvard Collin would thus be cast as the selfish prince who marries another in spite of the mermaid's adoration. 'This is surely how Andersen identified with the tale,' Wullschlager writes, 'allying himself in his bisexuality to the mermaid's sense of being a different species to humankind' (167). Wullschlager also notes that the Little Mermaid has long been regarded as a homoerotic character (167). It is certainly a tale that resonated with Oscar Wilde, who wrote 'The Fisherman and his Soul' in 1891 as a response. The tale ends sadly, with the mermaid sacrificing herself rather than killing her prince, which reflects the self-punishing attitude Andersen had towards himself and his sexuality. Beyond purely autobiographical interpretations, the tale's ambiguity allows for a multiplicity of readings. For example, Leland Spencer finds parallels between the trans-species fairy tale and the performance of transgender identity. His interpretation is particularly suggestive when it comes to the mermaid's body-related dysphoria: 'Despite the cost and the pain, the mermaid chooses to change her body to enable the identity performance she desires,' further underscored at the end, when the mermaid gives up her life 'rather than returning to a body that feels wrong to her' (Spencer 117-18). Even though this analysis might seem provocative to some, trans people, particularly children, have often identified with the trans-species mermaid. As a testament to this, the leading organisation in the United Kingdom for trans and gender-diverse children and teens is called *Mermaids UK*.

Andersen would write many other fairy tales that have become children's classics, such as 'The Emperor's New Clothes' or 'The Snow Queen,'[25] but, by 1843, he was

[25] This is another fairy tale with considerable queer potential. For example, Greenhill has investigated how 'The Snow Queen's underlying queerness has been translated to the screen (see Greenhill '"The Snow Queen": Queer Coding in Male Directors' Films, and 'Team Snow Queen'). Furthermore, *Frozen*'s (2013)

writing for a mixed audience, 'remembering the Father and Mother often listen, and you must also give them something for their own minds' (Andersen, qtd. in Wullschlager 228). This approach was imitated by authors like Carroll or Wilde, and, well into the twentieth century, by C. S. Lewis or Philip Pullman, whose book *Northern Lights* clearly echoes 'The Snow Queen' (Teverson 124). Nonetheless, Andersen's later fairy-tale oeuvre is often overlooked, since it is quite different from his earlier works and anticipates 'surrealist and existentialist literature' (Zipes, *Misunderstood Storyteller* 40). Tales like 'Auntie Toothache' are fragmentary, experimental, and depict human anguish with such clarity that Angela Carter claimed that Arthur Rackham's illustrations looked out of place, and that '[Edvard] Munch would have been far more suitable' (*Shaking a Leg*, 451).

Both the Grimms and Andersen have left an indelible mark on the fairy tale, and they have certainly shaped present-day perceptions of the genre, particularly across Europe and North America. Their fairy tales are still being translated and printed in collections for children, although often with numerous amendments, so that the resulting product is an adapted, sanitised version that often omits the context, and forgoes the nuances, of the pre-texts. Filmic adaptations, and especially those by Disney, have played a big role in the re/construction of the fairy-tale genre:

> [T]he film adaptations of the classical tales by Andersen as well as those by Brothers Grimm and Charles Perrault have become better known than the classical texts, which, in comparison, have virtually lost their meanings due to the fact that the films have replaced them (Zipes, *Misunderstood Storyteller* 104).

However popular these adaptations are, and however many misconceptions they may have spread about the genre, it would be a mistake to think that they completely annul their pre-texts. As we will see, many twentieth and twenty-first century readers and writers will find in these films a gateway, and through that, a that fairy-tale path back to Andersen, the Grimms, Perrault, and beyond.

---

equivalent to the eponymous Snow Queen, Elsa, has been read as queer, and her song, 'Let it Go,' has been understood as a coming out anthem, both by conservative detractors and by LGBTQI supporters (Petersen). More recently still, T. Kingfisher's 2016 novel *The Raven and the Reindeer* offered a lesbian retelling of the fairy tale.

2.7 Fairy Tales for Modern Times: Disney, Feminist Retellings and the Advent of Queer Fairy Tales

The twentieth century was an incredibly prolific period for fairy tales. It is comparable in that regard to previous 'golden ages,' such as the ones that took place in seventeenth-century France or in nineteenth-century Germany. Technological developments, especially cinema, but also the Internet, only contributed to the spread, globalisation and institutionalisation of fairy tales, particularly as a genre for children. As Seifert notes, '[b]eyond the continued production of . . . tales for children, without doubt the most important development was the appearance of the Walt Disney Company's fairy-tale film, which reshaped cultural expectations for the genre' (Seifert, 'Sex, Sexuality' 851). These Disney-inflected 'cultural expectations' have to do, to this day, with form, content and ideology. In other words: Disney's fairy-tale films have greatly contributed to notions about what a fairy tale looks like, how it should develop, and what moral must underlie each story.

During the 1970s, when Disney had already released three of their fairy-tale films to international success, this underlying ideology came under scrutiny. In 1970, Alison Lurie wrote 'Fairy Tale Liberation,' in which she claimed that fairy tales were the source of strong female characters that could serve as role models for children. This elicited a 'forceful rebuttal' (Haase, 'Feminist Fairy-Tale Scholarship' 15) from Marcia R. Lieberman. Her article, 'Some Day my Prince Will come: Female Acculturation through the Fairy Tale' (1972) referred directly to the influence Disney had on popularising a fairy-tale corpus that perpetuated harmful stereotypes for women (Lieberman 283-84). According to Haase, this debate worked as the seed for modern-day fairy-tale studies (Haase 'Feminist Fairy-Tale Scholarship' 15-16). In the space between the publication of Lurie's and Lieberman's texts, Anne Sexton's *Transformations* (1971) was also published. Sexton's collection, which contained Grimm tales rewritten as poetry, kick-started a trend to retell fairy tales from a feminist perspective. This practice blossomed at the fringes of mainstream culture and it inspired contemporary writers such as Angela Carter and Margaret Atwood, it influenced following generations of fairy-tale creators, and further shaped the emerging field of fairy-tale studies. At the same time as feminist retellings appeared, so did, more discreetly, queer retellings. They did not immediately gain the same degree of traction as feminist retellings, however, neither among writers nor among scholars, and they became significant in number and relevance only in the

mid-1990s, a phenomenon that will be explored in chapter three. This section will nonetheless explore early queer retellings as they are an appropriate bookend to a twentieth century filled with saccharine, conservative fairy tales—and counterculture reactions to them.

In 'Hypertextual Gutenberg' (2006), Haase explains that creators used folktales and fairy tales in order to navigate the transition from a culture dominated by the written word to an emergent visual one. '[J]ust as editors assembled and edited folktales in the early nineteenth century to negotiate the shift from orality to literacy,' Haase writes, 'scholars, cultural critics, and filmmakers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries [turned] to the fairy tale to work through the transition from print to film' (Haase, 'Hypertextual Gutenberg' 222). The familiar, action-packed and simple plots found in fairy tales had already been successfully translated into visual formats such as 'theatre, opera, dance, the musical and pantomime' (Tiffin, 'Film' 342), and their use in early films proved to be just as fruitful. Silent fairy-tale films proliferated all over the world—the compact stories lent themselves to short formats, and the fantastic nature of the tales allowed for technical experimentation. Of particular note are Georges Méliès' live-action adaptations *Cendrillon* (*Cinderella*, 1899) and *Barbe-Bleue* (*Bluebeard*, 1901), and Lotte Reiniger's animated fairy tale, *Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed (The Adventures of Prince Achmed*, 1926), which was inspired on the *Arabian Nights*. Reigniger's film is, incidentally, the first surviving animated film, and it ushered in a lasting connection between fairy tales and animation.

When talking about animated fairy tales, however, Walt Disney is more likely to come to mind than Reigniger. Named the 'modern Hans Andersen' in a 1937 interview (Schallert), to some he might in fact have come to replace classic fairy-tale authors and collectors. As Zipes puts it:

> If children or adults think of the great, classic fairy tales today . . . they will think of Walt Disney. Their first and perhaps lasting impression of these tales and others will have emanated from a Disney film, book, or artifact. (Zipes, 'Breaking the Disney Spell' 21)

In 1937, Disney released *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, which was based on the Grimms' version of the tale. This early success marked the beginning of a lifelong love story between the company and fairy tales. To this day, the Walt Disney Company has released a total of nine animated films directly inspired on fairy tales: *Snow White* (1937), *Cinderella* (1950), *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *Beauty*

and the Beast (1991), *Aladdin* (1992), *The Princess and the Frog* (2009), *Tangled* (2010) and *Frozen* (2013). A number of other Disney films are based on fairy-tale-like narratives, such as *Pinocchio* (1940) or *Peter Pan* (1953), and, perhaps more interestingly, some stories, myths and legends, have come to be regarded as fairy tales due to Disney's magic touch. In this way, the legends of King Arthur and Hua Mulan[26] are routinely referred to as fairy tales, and revisions of both are often included in collections of fairy-tale retellings.[27]

Apart from the connection between Disney (the man, the company) and fairy tales, there is also an undeniable connection between Disney and childhood, which has, indirectly, furthered the association between childhood and fairy tales. Known popularly as 'Uncle Walt,' Disney 'provided a father-like, protective role to people living in uncertain times during the mid-twentieth century' (Wills 27). Interestingly, his intention was not to create products for children at the beginning. As Gabler explains:

> Walt had always pointedly insisted that his films were not made primarily for children or even primarily for profit, and few critics had treated them that way, at least until the post-war period. (Gabler 586)

Indeed, *Snow White*, in which the Evil Queen is a memorably sinister figure, caused a slight controversy in the United Kingdom. The film was deemed too scary for British children, and an age-sixteen rating was initially suggested (Wills 11), but this was just a small bump in an otherwise smooth road towards global takeover. The company's Americanised versions of European classics received almost unanimous acclaim among the public and critics alike. Disney himself was recognised for his artistry —both Yale and Harvard bestowed the honour of Master of Arts on him in 1938 (Wills 32)— and his first films were recognised as innovative, carefully-crafted productions that made unique use of music and animation to tell engaging stories (Wills 21). However, the development of early films such as *Snow White* (1937) and *Fantasia* (1940) proved to be too time-consuming and, as a result, unprofitable, so from the 1940s onwards the company experienced a 'lasting shift . . . from artistic experimentation to commercialism' (Wills 33). Due to this new philosophy, Disney fell from grace in the eyes of the cultural elite. Disney, who post-World War II had diversified his company so

[26] Disney released animated films about both legends: *The Sword in the Stone* (1963) and *Mulan* (1998).
[27] For example, Tim Manley's *Alice in Tumblr-land: Fairy Tales for a New Generation* (2013) offers retellings of both, Cameron Dokey's *Once Upon a Time* series includes a retelling Hua Mulan (*The Wild Orchid: A Retelling of The Ballad of Mulan*, 2009), and Michael Buckley's *The Fairy-Tale Detectives* (2005) has King Arthur as a character.

that it covered live-action films, TV shows, all sort of merchandising, tie-in products and even theme parks, soon was regarded as a businessman rather than an artist, having abandoned artistic experimentation in the name of money-making, the innovative for 'the safe, the bland, and—to a large extent—the mindlessly comforting' (Schwarz). A company with such ambitious commercial plans needed to nurture a brand under which all these disparate products could exist cohesively, which in this case meant focusing on marketing them all for children. As Gabler puts it, from then on 'the name 'Walt Disney' was synonymous with wholesome family entertainment that no one could possibly mistake for art, folk or otherwise' (Gabler 586).

Disney products thus easily entered millions of households. Shrouded as they were in their trademark innocence, they often went unquestioned by consumers—after all, a spoonful of sugar *does* help the medicine go down—but Disney products have never been ideology-free. As Wills points out, Disney pushed a number of conservative social values, such as absolute morality, a Protestant-like work ethic and traditional gender roles (Wills 104-5), and his products championed a 'particular and historical form of white, capitalist society' as the ideal form of society (Rojek 122). The studio's first feature film, *Snow White*, serves as a good example. The Evil Queen is the antithesis to passive Snow White: she presumably rules her kingdom, she is proactive and independent, and she has incredible magical powers that she uses for nefarious purposes. Snow White, on the other hand, only possesses the considerably more harmless ability of communicating with forest creatures, and of singing wistfully of the day her prince will come to rescue her from her lacklustre life—which he of course does, kissing her awake and saving her from sleeping eternity away inside her glass coffin. She also behaves like the ideal Angel in the House, taking care of seven infantilised dwarves who live in a homosocial environment but who lead distinctly desexualised lives. With time, Disney's monopoly on childhood entertainment led to increased mistrust among critics (see Bell, Haas and Sells, 1995; Giroux 1995; Jackson 1996; Kasturi 2002), and, since Disney had laid the foundations of his Mouse Empire upon European fairy tales, the scrutiny sometimes extended to the genre as a whole.[28] The representation of gender in fairy tales,

[28] The popularity of Disney was not the only reason why fairy tales as a whole were scrutinised. Fairy tales had been popular in nurseries and schools for over a century, and had been used both to convey subversive messages, as is the case of Soviet fairy tales under Communist rule (see Nikolajeva, 'Fairy Tales in Society's Service'), and to serve dominant ideologies, as was the case in Nazi Germany (see Zipes, 'The Battle over Fairy-Tale Discourse: Family, Friction, and Socialization in the Weimar Republic and Nazi Germany,' in *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, second edition, 2006). As such, they were regarded as powerful socialisation tools.

both by Disney and otherwise, was a particularly contentious point in the 1970s, when second-wave feminists committed to critically assessing representations of gender in culture.

The 1960s had given way to a number of social movements, such as the civil rights' movement, the student insurrection of 1968, the gay and lesbian liberation movement and, of course, the women's liberation movement. It was against this backdrop of social vindication and change that the conversation about representations of gender in fairy tales really took hold.[29] It started when Lieberman responded to Lurie's wildly inaccurate assertion that fairy tales were 'one of the few sorts of classic children's literature of which a radical feminist would approve' (42). As mentioned, Lieberman reacted strongly to Lurie's 'Fairy Tale Liberation' (1970) and the follow-up, 'Witches and Fairies' (1971). Lurie had defended the position that little girls could easily find referents of active and resourceful women in the genre, and, while Lieberman shared the view that fairy tales were powerful tools of socialisation for girls, she believed they socialised them into passivity instead:

> Only the best-known stories, those that everyone has read or heard, indeed, those that Disney has popularized, have affected masses of children in our culture. Cinderella, the Sleeping Beauty, and Snow White are mythic figures who have replaced the old . . . gods, goddesses, and heroes for most children. The 'folk tales recorded in the field by scholars,' to which Ms. Lurie refers . . . are so relatively unknown that they cannot seriously be considered in a study of the meaning of fairy tales to women. (Lieberman 383-84)

Lieberman here takes issue with the specific corpus of fairy tales that most people had access to at the time. As seen in previous sections, Lurie was right to point out that some fairy tales do deviate from normative or traditional representations of gender, but Lieberman was also right in emphasizing that those tales were not well-known, especially in the 1970s, and thus had very limited influence over children. In modern fairy-tale scholarship, questioning the process of canonisation of certain fairy tales over others is now commonplace, as is the focus on sociohistorical context and the recovery of lesser-known tales, especially those by women writers (Haase, 'Feminist Fairy-Tale Scholarship' 16).

[29] Although Simone de Beauvoir had anticipated feminist critique of fairy tales back in 1949, when she wrote in *The Second Sex* that '[w]oman is the Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, Snow White, she who receives and submits. In song and story the young man is seen departing adventurously in search of a woman; he slays the dragon, he battles the giants; she is locked in a tower, a palace . . . a captive, sound asleep; she waits' (271-72).

Fairy tales beg for retelling, insofar as their continued survival hinges on their ability to be adapted, rearranged and reimagined to fit different contexts, mediums and popular (or even personal) tastes. Even though, as seen in previous sections, each telling of a fairy tale is very much a product of its time, the genre still retains a timeless and mythical quality about it. As Zipes contends, 'they appear to be universal and natural stories of the way life should be while concealing their artistic constellations and their basic history and ideology' (Zipes, 'Media-Hyping of fairy tales' 213). This might still be true in many ways, but the 1970s proved to be a turning point for fairy tales, which came to be seen as a legitimate genre that warranted close examination. After the Lurie-Lieberman exchange took place, many other feminists joined the conversation, often echoing Lieberman's arguments and similarly overstating the power that fairy tales (or any other literary genre, for that matter) could have over society. People like Andrea Dworkin (*Woman Hating*, 1974) and Susan Brownmiller (*Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*, 1975) used fairy tales 'as evidence to demonstrate the sociocultural myths and mechanisms that oppress women' (Haase, 'Feminist Fairy-Tale Scholarship' 17), but offered oversimplifications of the genre rather than in-depth analyses. The ball was rolling, however, and by the end of the decade, critics were offering more nuanced, if disparate, analyses: 'from the literary. . . the psychological and the sociological, to the philosophical and spiritual' (Haase, 'Feminist Fairy-Tale Scholarship' 21). In 1979, Carolyn Heilbrun proposed that fairy tales 'must be transformed by bold acts of reinterpretation' (155)—and, as if conjured, Angela Carter published *The Bloody Chamber* that same year. In fact, Carter's collection so transformed fairy tales and the field of fairy-tale studies that Bacchilega speaks of a 'post-Angela Carter . . . culture' in which 'the fairy tale's gender and sexual politics are investigated rather than universalized or simplified' (Bacchilega, *Transformed* 81).

The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories contains ten fairy-tale retellings, or, as Carter put it, 'stories about fairy stories' ('Notes,' 38). She claimed to be in the 'demythologising business' (Carter, 'Notes' 38), and she indeed worked with myths in earlier novels such as *The Passion of New Eve* (1977), but she found more enjoyment in fairy tales, which were in comparison 'a much more straightforward set of devices [and] much easier to infiltrate with other kinds of consciousness' (Carter, 'Notes' 38). And infiltrate the genre she did: she wrote violent, dark, sexually-charged fairy tales for adults, decidedly against, and far away from, disneyfied interpretations of the genre. Her revisions of classical stories such as 'Bluebeard,' 'Little Red Riding Hood,' and 'Beauty

and the Beast' are complicated, intertextual, full of symbolism, and seem to follow a wide-ranging feminist agenda that is sometimes difficult to pin down. However, if anything is consistent across Carter's retellings is the sustained exploration of female subjectivity.

The first retelling in the collection, 'The Bloody Chamber,' follows the structure of Perrault's 'Bluebeard' fairly closely, only it is told from the heroine's point of view rather than by a detached third-person narrator. Having a voice does not save her from being victimised, however. Much like in Perrault's tale, the protagonist is married to a sadistic, rich man who, unbeknownst to her, has killed a number of his previous wives. Perrault's tale was famously gruesome, but Carter's gothic language adds to the horror and brings the underlying eroticism of the tale to the surface. For example, the Marquis gives the protagonist 'a choker of rubies, two inches wide, like an extraordinarily precious slit throat' (Carter, *Bloody Chamber* 6), which foreshadows the macabre end the Marquis has envisioned for the protagonist. The Marquis kisses the rubies before he kisses her mouth when he takes her virginity, and the many mirrors in their room reflect a suggestive image that brings sexuality and violence against women to the fore: 'A dozen husbands impaled a dozen brides while the mewing gulls swung on invisible trapezes in the empty air outside' (Carter, *Bloody Chamber* 14).

Carter's retellings were accused by early critics, such as Duncker, of not being revisionist enough, of merely 'rewriting the tales within the strait-jacket of their original structures' (Duncker 73). Similarly, the seductive way in which abuse and violence are described made some critics, like Avis Lewallen, feel uneasiness 'at being manipulated by the narrative to sympathise with masochism' (Lewallen 151). To be sure, most of Carter's retellings deal with the seemingly intertwined themes of female sexuality and violence against women in ways that could read almost as fetishistic, and 'The Bloody Chamber' deals extensively with the objectification of women. However, her project is multifaceted, and she approaches gender and sexuality in varied ways, thus confronting universalising understandings of fairy tales. For example, one of Carter's retellings of 'Red Riding Hood,' 'In The Company of Wolves,' has a Red Riding Hood who carries a knife and thus is 'afraid of nothing' (Carter, *Bloody Chamber* 114). Or perhaps she is unafraid because she is still a virgin, sealed off to the world of men and violence, 'a closed system' (Carter, *Bloody Chamber* 114). However, while being 'whole as an egg' (Carter, *Bloody Chamber* 114) could suggest untarnished naïveté, when Little Red Riding Hood sees the wolf in her grandmother's cottage, and he responds that his big

teeth are better to eat her with, she laughs because 'she knew she was nobody's meat' (Carter, *The Bloody Chamber* 118). This self-assured Little Red Riding Hood strips down, like Perrault's, only she is aware of the connotations:

> She laughed at him full in the face, ripped off his shirt for him and flung it into the fire, in the fiery wake of her own discarded clothing. The flames danced like dead souls on Walpurgisnacht and the old bones under the bed set up a terrible clattering, but she did not pay them any heed. (Carter, *Bloody Chamber* 118)

The problematic sexual undertones in Perrault's tale are, again, made explicit in Carter's retelling. This protagonist is a willing participant in the wolf's scheme, to the point of overlooking the clattering of her grandmother's bones under the bed. In the end, instead of reenacting the role of passive victim that fairy-tale tradition has routinely casted her in, the girl acts out her sexual desires, and thus she 'offers herself as flesh, not meat' (Bacchilega, *Postmodern* 63).

Retellings seem to fuel retellings, as if filling in the gaps of classical narratives only uncovered new unexplored gaps. Thus, the sensuous and confronting retellings by Carter drew many other writers to fairy tales. Feminist writers in particular questioned the limited and limiting closures of the happily-ever-afters, the marriage as ideal ending, and the timeless and enchanted quality of classical fairy tales. Revisionists often anchor their tales to a specific moment in time, and often write, as Harries notes, 'sequels and prequels' (Harries 102). Maxine Kumin's 'The Archaeology of a Marriage' (1978) is a 'Sleeping Beauty' sequel in which she wakes up when she is 'almost fifty' (Kumin 3) only to find that disenchantment follows her happily-ever-after:

> Was it her fault he took so long
> to hack his way through the brambles?
> Why didn't he carry a chainsaw
> like any sensible woodsman?
> Why, for that matter, should any
> twentieth-century woman
> have to lie down at the prick of
> a spindle etcetera etcetera. (Kumin 3)

Feminist retellings also continued to dismantle representations of 'patriarchy's ideal woman' (Gilbert and Gubar, 41), that is, the sleeping princess in distress, displayed in a glass coffin like a beautiful object suspended in time. Sometimes, this was achieved by doing a simple role-reversal, swapping the princess for the prince and sending her off to

kill the dragon, which is the case of Robert Munsch's *The Paper Bag Princess* (1980). Other times, the swapping was of a different nature: in Tanith Lee's *Red as Blood* (originally published in 1979), the Snow White figure is a bloodthirsty vampire the Queen, her stepmother, seeks to kill. Many of the earlier retellings were simple role-reversals like these, which elicited some criticism, even in retellings like Sara Maitland's 'The Stepmother's Lament:'

> There's this thing going on at the moment where women tell all the old stories again and turn them all inside-out and back-to-front – so the characters you always thought were the goodies turn out to be the baddies, and vice-versa, and a whole lot of guilt is laid to rest: or at least this is the theory. I'm not sure myself that guilt isn't just passed on to the next person, *in tacta*, so to speak. (Maitland, 222)

Some stories went further, of course, so as to not just shift the blame but add nuance to famously polarised narratives. Such is the case of Maitland's own short tale, quoted above, which is told from Cinderella's stepmother's point of view. The tale is sympathetic to the stepmother, but it does not attempt to rewrite or underplay the abuse the stepmother subjected Cinderella to: 'I was not innocent, and I have grown out of innocence now and even out of wanting to be thought innocent. Living is a harsh business' (Maitland 222). Indeed, the fascination with villains and heroines, and with the distance between the two, is fairly recurrent in retellings. For example, Margaret Atwood's 'Bluebeard's Egg' (first published in 1983) blurs the line between antithetical character types, playing with perspective and ambiguity so that by the end of the short story the reader cannot be sure of who the Bluebeard figure is: the protagonist, or her husband, or perhaps neither. Retellings in the post-Carter years therefore demonstrated a readiness to challenge the whole basis of fairy tales, and feminist retellings were a sustained effort to reveal gender roles as culturally-specific constructions, rather than natural occurrences—both inside and outside of fiction.

Emergent during the 1970s, popular during the 1980s, and ubiquitous by the 1990s, feminist retellings and feminist critique of fairy tales had lasting effects, even outside of literary circles. In the 1990s, Disney was experiencing a 'Disney Renaissance,' a golden age of 'movie hits . . . that combined fresh characters with classic Disney animation' (Wills 20) and which marked the company's return to fairy-tale narratives after a break of thirty years. This Renaissance produced some (comparatively) active fairy-tale heroines, such as Belle in *Beauty and The Beast* (1991), a curious social

outcast who loves reading, and Jasmine in *Aladdin* (1992), who rejects arranged marriages and escapes to explore the world. Disney is a company that seeks to capture and hold the imagination of the world, and as such it must appeal to shifting views and values in society, which in this case meant acknowledging the feminist criticism that previous heroines like Cinderella or Snow White had received. As markers of further, if slow-moving, progress, in the 2010s the company revealed its first African-American princess, Tiana (*The Princess and the Frog*, 2009) and the widely popular *Frozen* (2013) was released. In particular, *Frozen* is a film that shows remarkable self-awareness: when the youngest sister, Anna, falls instantly in love with a prince whom she wishes to marry, her sister, Queen Elsa, herself unmarried and often read as queer by fans (Petersen), responds that she cannot marry a man she has just met. The 'unlike every other Disney princess before you' goes unsaid, but it is implied. Furthermore, at the end of the film, the spell-breaking love characteristic of fairy tales is revealed to be the love between the two sisters. However, if Disney is lagging behind in one area, arguably far behind all others, it is in non-heterosexual representation. Love is a central theme for the company, and it is shown to take all kinds of forms, from friendship, to romantic love to love among family members, but explicit homosexual love is conspicuously absent from all major Disney products.[30]

Perhaps not coincidentally, queerness is virtually absent from feminist retellings of fairy tales as well. This was actually one of Duncker's criticisms, who contended that Carter 'still leaves the central taboos unspoken. She could never imagine Cinderella in bed with the Fairy Godmother' (75). Indeed, feminist writers exposed the gender constructions entrenched in the genre, but constructions about (hetero)sexuality often went unexamined. Marriage was questioned, happily-ever-afters deconstructed, and eternal love dethroned, but it was rarely recognised that marriage, happily-ever-afters and eternal loves were almost always heterosexual in nature. Even in the 1980s, when feminists had acknowledged the failure of the movement to include 'issues of race and class, and of sexual inclination' (Joosen 111), queer fairy tales were thin on the ground. Some exceptions from the 1970s and 1980s were texts by feminist writers who had some personal experience with queerness, such as Anne Sexton, Suniti Namjoshi, Olga Broumas or Jeanette Winterson.

[30] An exception is the character of LeFou in *Beauty and The Beast*'s 2017 live-action remake.

Anne Sexton's *Transformations* was published in 1971. This was possibly the first collection of fairy tales published in the style of feminist retellings, and one of its poems, 'Rapunzel,' 'offers a literary precedent for lesbian readings of the fairy tale' (Kapurch 438). The poem opens with a contemporary scenario, like all tales in the collection: 'Many a girl / had an old aunt / who locked her in the study / to keep the boys away. / They would play rummy / or lie on the couch / and touch and touch. / Old breast against young breast' (Sexton 35).[31] The incestuous undertones carry over to the retelling proper, in which Mother Gothel keeps Rapunzel captive and develops a sexual relationship with her: 'As she grew older Mother Gothel thought: None but I will see her or touch her' (Sexton 40). The relationship is doomed to fail, however, as soon as the prince appears. Rapunzel falls in love and marries him:

> They lived happily as you might expect
> proving that mother-me-do
> can be outgrown,
> just as the fish on Friday,
> just as a tricycle.
> The world, some say,
> is made up of couples.
> A rose must have a stem. (Sexton 42)

The poem thus preserves the heterosexual happy ending of the pre-text and underscores the compulsory heterosexuality of fairy tales ('A rose must have a stem'). It also perpetuates the narrative of fleeting lesbianism, presented here as a phase that can be outgrown by young girls—but that must be endured by lovelorn older women, witches all, whose hearts just shrink 'to the size of a pin' (Sexton 42). Marilyn Farwell characterised this poem as a 'radical retelling' whose conclusion 'appears to be that the lesbian story is ultimately unimaginable' (Farwell 44). However, as Stephen Burt points out, Sexton routinely 'ruins the happy endings' and shows that 'heterosexual fulfilment is always a poor, guilty and tainted goal' (Burt 136).

Unhappy endings are thus the norm in Sexton's retellings, but they are also the norm across the few queer retellings published during the 1970s and 1980s, and in many cases even beyond. As such, it might be more productive to regard this phenomenon not in relation to feminist fairy-tale revisionism or even to Sexton's oeuvre, but rather to

[31] The very first lines are 'A woman / who loves a woman / is forever young' (Sexton 35), which is echoed (perhaps by chance) in Disney's 2010 adaptation of 'Rapunzel,' *Tangled*. Mother Gothel in the animated film keeps herself young using Rapunzel's magical hair.

queer literature at large. As Jeff Nunokawa points out, 'the dominant media has always pictured gay people as "deathbed victims"' (371), so that there always was a 'requisite unhappy ending' (Bronski 155), and, even before AIDS, a 'veritable epidemic of gay deaths' in literature (Pearl 9). Another early writer of queer fairy-tale retellings, Suniti Namjoshi, certainly contributed to the body count in her *Feminist Fables* (first published in 1981). For example, her retelling of 'The Beauty and The Beast,'[32] appropriately titled 'A Moral Tale,' has a lesbian protagonist who has grown up reading stories which, much like traditional fairy tales, 'made it clear that men loved women, and women loved men' (Namjoshi 23). Faced with such an absolute lack of queer representation, the protagonist aligns her identity with marginalised non-humans: 'The only story that fits me at all is the one about the Beast' (Namjoshi 23). The girl's parents, presumably brought up on the same stories, are not pleased, not because they 'disapprove of homosexuals as such' but because society does, which in turn is the cause of unhappiness for homosexuals (Namjoshi 23). As Joosen points out, the tale shares Lieberman's 'conviction that children's literature has an enormous impact' in shaping women's self-image (115). The protagonist imagines that the Beast does not turn into a human as a consequence of being loved by the Beauty, but rather that its monstrous, queer love for the Beauty is what makes him a beast. The only possible ending for a Beast so completely Othered is death, and since the protagonist considers herself to be a beast in her own right, she ends up dying, too. At the very end, the narrator blames the victim in the moral of the tale: 'she had been warned and she hadn't listened' (Namjoshi 23).

Problematic, narrow morals like the ones Namjoshi criticises in her fables are further deconstructed in in the brief retellings Jeanette Winterson inscribes in her novel *Sexing the Cherry* (1989). She uses the Grimms' tale 'The Twelve Dancing Princesses' to imagine twelve different endings for different kinds of fairy-tale women, thus democratising closed-off, exclusionary endings, particularly those that treat heterosexual marriage as the ultimate achievement: as the eldest sister mentions, if they all eventually find fulfilment in their lives it is 'not with their husbands' (Winterson 48). It is actually

[32] 'The Beauty and the Beast' is a tale that easily lends itself to queering—after all, the homosexual figure has long been associated with monstrosity, vilified and pushed to the margins of society. Jean Cocteau's 1946 film *La Belle et la Bête* is an early example of a retelling that subtextually explores the tale's queer potential, particularly through the solitary and demonised Beast, which was played by Cocteau's male lover. As we will see in following chapters, in the nineties the relationship between Beast and homosexual will be further explored, explicitly in, for example, Peter Cashorali's *Fairy Tales: Traditional Stories Retold for Gay Men* (1995), and implicitly in other cases, such as Disney's *The Beauty and the Beast* (1991).

with other women that some of the sisters find happiness, at least of the temporary kind. For example, one of the princesses lives happily with her husband, who turns out to be a woman, in an isolated drafty castle until they are found out. Another sister finds a better ending for herself: she falls in love with a beautiful mermaid, a testament to the lasting queer appeal of Andersen's tale, and moves to the bottom of a well, where they live 'in perfect salty bliss' (Winterson 48). Yet another of the dancing princesses, perhaps in conversation with Sexton's retelling, falls in love with Rapunzel. She is not an old witch and Rapunzel is not a child, but Rapunzel's family twists their story and reimagines them as such, angered by Rapunzel's refusal to marry a prince. This prince is unconventional in his own right, and 'had always liked to borrow his mother's frocks' (Winterson 52). His crossdressing abilities in fact allow him to infiltrate their tower and cruelly put an end to their story: 'he carried Rapunzel down the rope he had brought with him and forced her to watch while he blinded her broken lover in a field of thorns' (Winterson 52).

Winterson therefore imagines a somewhat wider range of outcomings for her queer characters, but out of all the early retellings of fairy tales that offer queer reinterpretations, the poetic renditions by Olga Broumas in *Beginning with O* (1977) are certainly the most engaged and also the most optimistic. The collection is entirely dedicated to the articulation of lesbian subjectivity through the retelling of classic myths, legends, and fairy tales, employing a 'curviform alphabet' that consists 'of vowels, beginning with O' (Broumas 23).' It is, as well, in direct dialogue with Anne Sexton's *Transformations*, in that it both imitates and rewrites it. For example, her poem 'Snow White' blurs the line between mother and lesbian lover in continuity with Sexton's 'Rapunzel:' 'All through the war we slept / like this, grand- / mother, mother, daughter. Each night / between you, you pushed and pulled / me, willing / from warmth to warmth' (Broumas 59). More explicitly referential still is her own take on Rapunzel, which opens with the lines from Sexton's poem: 'A woman / who loves a woman / is forever young.' In this double retelling (of both the Grimms' and Sexton's versions) Rapunzel presumably addresses Sexton's Mother Gothel, and urges her to 'Climb / through my hair, climb in / to me, love' (Broumas 59). In contrast with Sexton's tale, which presented lesbian love as something to outgrow, Broumas defends it as something not only normal, but coveted, desirable:

> How many women
> have yearned for our lush perennial,
> found themselves pregnant, and had
> to subdue their heat, drown out their appetite. (Broumas 59)

Writing back to Sexton, and to fairy tales at large, Broumas's retelling argues that the happily-ever-after, this 'lush perennial,' is not reached through heteronormative unions, that in fact that sort of ending just inhibits women's appetite, which remains drowned out but perhaps not wholly gone. Broumas's Rapunzel, contrary to Sexton's, manages to avoid the trappings of tradition and so she salvages her hunger. The ending verses are celebratory: 'I'll break the hush / of our cloistered garden, our harvest continuous / as a moan' (Broumas 60). As Harries explains, Broumas is thus shattering the cloistered hush of Sexton's version, and I would add, of the fairy-tale canon, rewriting as natural what 'has been written off as "unnatural" or perverse' (Harries 150).

However, the defiant and optimistic tone of Broumas's collection was far from the norm among queer fairy-tale retellings, which, as we have seen, more often than not adhered to popular representations of queerness, regularly ending in tragedy. Outside of the genre, the imaginary connection between perversity, unnaturalness and homosexuality was hardly banished during the twentieth century. It is perhaps due to this enduring connection that queer retellings of fairy tales have been slow to become popular, and so scarce when compared to feminist retellings: the genre, after an intense process of disneyfication, is largely considered to be only for children, for whom 'perverse' storylines would not be suitable. Tellingly, the queerest characters in the most mainstream fairy-tale products, namely Disney films, have often been villains. Gender-nonconformity has consistently been exploited in the animated films to subtextually indicate monstrosity and alterity in the villains, from *Aladdin*'s theatrical, kohl-wearing Jafar, to *The Princess and the Frog*'s Freddie Mercury-like Dr. Facilier, although the most overt example might be *The Little Mermaid*'s Ursula. As Sells explains, 'Ursula was modelled on the drag queen Divine, while the voice and ethos belong to Pat Carroll [and] both of these character actors are known for their crossdressing roles' (Sells 182). This was thus the final layer that fairy-tale revisionists and critics had to peel off: not only to question the apparently heteronormative texts, but also to make space for diverse narratives of sexual and gender minorities, much in the way that feminists revisionists strived to represent a truly diverse range of female identities in a genre where active female characters, if present, were mostly unknown.

The following chapters will explore queer retellings of fairy tales from the mid-1990s onwards, at which point they became more numerous and varied and received comparatively more scholarly attention as queer texts in their own right, rather than as isolated examples within the feminist fairy-tale tradition. Although slow, the advent of queer retellings was for some inevitable, since the genre readily lends itself to it. As Seifert notes, the fairy tale works well with 'the camp aesthetic that is exploited in many gay and lesbian circles' ('Gay and Lesbian Tales' 401). After all, fairy tales, in their many forms, routinely make use of recognisable stock characters, such as brave princes, beautiful princesses or evil old hags, which are excessively gendered, stereotypical, exaggerated and theatrical, often following predictable scripts to such an extent that they border on the self-referential and parodic. While such obviously manufactured representations will not on their own bring attention to gender/sexuality constructions or defy the status quo, they have the potential to resonate with queer audiences used to finding, and creatively reimagining, the fabrications of a dominant cisheterocentric culture.[33] Furthermore, the fairy-tale world, at once fantastic and mundane, 'creates a paradox that opens the door . . . to an unsettling of what is normal' (Seifert, 'Introduction' 19). The marvellous condition of the fairy-tale world throws together everyday elements with the magical, and in the intersection of the two a queer space emerges in which they can coexist; an indefinite 'never-never land,' in Thompson's words (8). More significantly still, the term 'queer,' much like the term 'fairy tale,' resists stable definition and 'insists on keeping its meanings open' (Seifert, 'Introduction' 16). Indeed, as shown in this chapter, the shifty fairy-tale genre is historically less 'straight' forward (Jay and Glasgow 5) than it might seem from a present-day perspective. But queer retellings, working from that same contemporary perspective, will have to dig into the pre-texts in order to expose pervasive myths, to unsettle the grasp heterosexism has over the genre, and, ultimately, to breathe new life into the old stories.

[33] The intersection of camp and fairy tales will be further explored in chapter five.

3 Tales for Fairies: Building Identity and Community Through Gay Fairy Tales in the Nineties

> *We stand in the middle of an uncharted, uninhabited country. That there have been other unions like ours is obvious, but we are unable to draw on their experience. We must create everything for ourselves. And creation is never easy*
>
> F. O. Matthiessen in a letter to his lover, Russell Cheney

> *[A]s the infected population grew, it became clear that gay men were everywhere—in politics, in Congress, on Wall Street, in Hollywood, in far-right organizations . . . Part of the shock of AIDS was thus the shock of identity*
>
> Paula Treichler in 'AIDS, Gender, and Biomedical Discourse'

3.1 Introduction

In the nineties, fairy tales appeared to be everywhere. The Disney Company had regained its position as primary provider of children's entertainment with its official return to fairy tales in the form of *The Little Mermaid* (1989) and *Beauty and the Beast* (1991). The genre was used in advertisements for major brands, like Cheerio's or Levi's (Wittwer). It had also gained ground in the literary field with the feminist retellings of Tanith Lee, Kelly Link and Catherynne M. Valente, and imaginative contributions inspired by the genre, such as Neil Gaiman's *Stardust* (1998) and Philip Pullman's *Northern Lights* (1995). All around, moreover, fairy-tale figures, symbols and themes were often used as an easy shortcut for evoking wonder and romantic love. For instance, the following exchange between Vivian and her friend Kit in the quintessentially nineties film *Pretty Woman* makes reference to the classic fairy tale whose plot indeed structures the film:

> KIT: Maybe you guys could, like, get a house together and buy some diamonds and a horse; I don't know - it could work, it *happens*!
> VIVIAN: When does it happen, Kit? When does it happen? Who does it really work out for? . . . You give me one example of someone we know that it happened for . . .

> KIT: You want me to, like, give you a *name*, or something?
> VIVIAN: Yeah, I'd like a name.
> KIT: Oh, *God*, the pressure of a name… Cinde-fucking-rella! (*Pretty Woman*, 1990)

Fairy-tale love in popular culture was, like in the example above, idealised, viewed as unattainable and sometimes almost ridiculous. At the same time, it was aspirational, the epitome of romance—and invariably heterocentric. Heterocentric portrayals of desire were hardly unique to popular representations of fairy tales, but tireless repetition reinforced the connection between the genre and heterosexuality. Mention of a 'fairy-tale wedding,' for example, or a 'love story worthy of a fairy tale,' would most likely only bring heteronormative images to mind. By the time the nineties rolled around this was nothing new, but in the decade in which the AIDS crisis had pushed people out of the closet and into the streets, or at the very least into the mainstream, the love that dare not speak its name demanded to, finally, be spoken about—even in fairy tales.

This chapter will explore three works that tested the boundaries of the fairy-tale genre, which for so long had excluded queer identities,[34] by unapologetically articulating the gay male experience through fairy-tale retellings: Peter Cashorali's *Fairy Tales: Traditional Stories Retold for Gay Men* (1995) and *Gay Fairy and Folk Tales: More Traditional Stories Retold for Gay Men* (1997), and the erotic anthology edited by Michael Ford, *Happily Ever After: Erotic Fairy Tales for Men* (1996). As the first works to explicitly acknowledge and explore gay desires through the fairy tale, we will see how they challenged deeply entrenched heterocentric lessons in an effort to reclaim the genre for the gay community, as well as how they employed the fairy-tale model to contribute to the very constitution of this gay community, a group whose identity greatly depended on reading practices.

As seen in the previous chapter, queer retellings of classical fairy tales appeared sporadically before the nineties, beginning in 1971 with a queer retelling of 'Rapunzel' in Anne Sexton's *Transformations*, which also kick-started feminist retellings of fairy tales. However, whereas feminist retellings exploded in popularity in the 1970s and influenced all kinds of mainstream fairy tales, interest in queering fairy tales remained remarkably sparse. The reason might lie within the different political and critical currents

[34] This is not to say that queerness was completely absent from classical fairy tales, as seen in the previous chapter. Charlotte-Rose Caumont de La Force, Hans Christian Andersen and Oscar Wilde are some of the queer writers who included likely intentional, if definitely veiled, references to queerness in their fairy tales.

that gave way, or at least facilitated, the appearance of both kinds of retellings. By the seventies, the second wave of feminism was underway, and it was indeed the second wave, the first having taken place some seventy years before. In other words: there was already a feminist tradition to inform the ideology behind feminist retellings, a thriving political community of feminists to whom this sort of retelling could be of interest, and female identities being questioned, reconsidered and variously articulated, including in literature.

By contrast, the gay and lesbian liberation movements (and gay and lesbian studies) were comparatively young, having emerged in the late sixties, following second-wave feminism and the black power movement, as part of the New Left social movements that 'culminated in the social unrest of May 1968 in cities throughout the urban West' (Podmore and Tremblay 121). Gay liberation is understood to have started in 1969, with the Stonewall Riots (see Adam 75-76) which symbolised a change in the way LGBTQI people related to the establishment and to each other, unified by an increased feeling of shared identity. In the years surrounding the riots, gay writing and publishing 'began to flourish' (Pearl 6). As Seifert rightly points out, 'it is this context that explains the fairly recent appearance of gay and lesbian fairy tales' ('Gay and Lesbian Fairy Tales' 401). The dates certainly fit for the first queer retellings by Sexton and Broumas, both published in the seventies, but this explanation does not account for the significant slump in production of queer fairy tales from then until the mid-nineties. Winterson and Namjoshi published their queer retellings in the eighties, but these remained isolated outliers, and it was not until the last decade of the century that there seemed to be noteworthy interest in writing queer fairy tales, both as retellings and as original stories.[35] As we will see, queer retellings emerged when queer writing had evolved enough to make space for them, and queer writing (and publishing) was contingent on the level of LGBTQI political organisation, cultural representation and social acceptance, particularly in the U.S., where the texts analysed were published.

[35] Joosen lists some of the decade's noteworthy publications: 'Priscilla Galloway's 'The Prince' (1995), Jan Vander Laenen's 'De Schone Slaper' (1998, Sleeping Handsome), Michael Ford's *Happily Ever After: Erotic Fairy Tales for Queer Men* (1996), and Peter Cashorali's *Fairy Tales: Traditional Stories Retold for Gay Men* (1995) and *Gay Folk and Fairy Tales* (1997)' (Joosen 114). There is also Michael Ford's *Once Upon a Time: Erotic Fairy Tales for Women* (1996), and, of course, Emma Donoghue's *Kissing the Witch* (1997).

3.2 Early Years of the Gay Community and the Significance of an Emergent Gay Literature

Pro-homosexual organisation did not start with the Stonewall Riots, nor did it begin, globally speaking, in the U.S., despite the primacy of North America in narratives of contemporary LGBTQI history. The first organisation of this type to be recognised in the U.S. was the Society for Human Rights, founded by Henry Gerber in 1924, and it was inspired by the remarkably advanced and rich German gay movement, which had emerged in the late nineteenth century (Rupp, Roth and Taylor, 665).[36] This organisation was short-lived, however, and it would not be until the 1950s that the first homophile societies would emerge: namely, the Mattachine Society (gay men, founded in Los Angeles in 1950) and Daughters of Bilitis (lesbians, founded in San Francisco in 1955). These early examples of LGBTQI organisations took place in difficult post-war years. McCarthy's anti-communist campaign was targeting homosexuals or suspected homosexuals, leading to extensive firings and confinement in prisons and mental institutions (Adam 60)—a 'Lavender Scare' that rivalled the better-known 'Red Scare' in scale (Rupp, Roth and Taylor, 665; Simpson and McDaniel, x). The homophile groups thus adopted an assimilationist strategy, by which 'gay identity, culture, and values would be disavowed (or at least concealed) in return for the *promise* of equal treatment' (Adam 64, emphasis in original).[37] Though cautious in their approach, homophile groups still cultivated an identity centred on same-sex desire and pioneered efforts at reform: they signalled, effectively, the beginnings of an organised gay community in the U.S. The gay and lesbian liberation movements of the sixties and seventies both continued their labour and were the radical answer to the homophiles' (real or perceived) conservatism, whose 'patterns of recruitment, organizational goals, and . . . the assumption that women and men are fundamentally different' (Rupp, Roth and Taylor, 665) had prevented achieving true diversity in the movement.

A shift towards radical activism was already taking place by the mid-sixties, informed by the New Left ideals of egalitarian, participatory democracy, as well as the

[36] For more information about early gay and lesbian organisation around the world, see Barry Adam's 'Early Movements and Aspirations' in *The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement* (1983). For an overview of the early movement in Germany, see for example Ralph Dose's *Magnus Hirschfeld and the Origins of the Gay Liberation Movement* (2014).

[37] The homophiles' assimilationist approach was replicated by similar groups throughout western Europe. This was done out of necessity during the post-war years which, for many gay people, proved to be worse than the war itself (see Adam 64-68).

anti-establishment characteristics that would attempt to give back some measure of control to the chronically powerless and oppressed. Particularly, many feminists and gay liberation activists, radicalised in black and student organisations, stepped away from the civil rights' movement, less interested in being accepted by a system which they regarded as profoundly, structurally heterosexist, racist and militarist. Both formations established consciousness-raising groups (see Adam 76-77), which would draw attention to the commonality of their struggles through personal storytelling, as explained in this excerpt from the New York Gay Liberation Front journal, *Come Out!*:

> A consciousness raising group is a group of gay people who have regular sessions together. By consensus a topic is selected for each session. Each member of the group contributes her personal experiences relating to the chosen topic. When all of the testimony is heard, the group locks into the similarity in the experiences related by all the members . . . A gay person begins to see that his personal hang-ups . . . are indeed the same . . . that other gays were also afraid to divulge. (Gavin 19)

Construction of a unifying identity through storytelling practices was thus central to the mobilisation of gays and lesbians in the seventies. So was, however, their oppositional relationship with authority and normative society, and their fraught relationship with authority was exacerbated by mounting tensions with the police, who would routinely harass queer people and raid gay bars. It all came to a symbolic climax with the Stonewall Riots. Although not the first of their kind, the events at Stonewall Inn received unparalleled attention from the media, possibly having been tipped off by gay activists (Crage and Armstrong, 737). It is notable that the riots were spearheaded by factions of the community which would normally be pushed to the margins, but who were often targets of police abuse, such as street queens, transgender women of colour, and butch lesbians.[38] The riots lasted for several days and precipitated the creation of the Gay Liberation Front in New York and other equally radical groups across the country. These groups promoted coming out, sexual freedom, the creation of alternative and underground institutions, and 'direct action in the form of public protest as a means of transforming U.S. society' (Rupp, Roth and Taylor, 669).

A new openness in homosexual life followed the events at Stonewall, and it

[38] The gay and lesbian liberation movements were more diverse in terms of class and race than the homophile groups, and women played a more prominent role. However, there was no shortage of friction between men and women, and some groups were consistently marginalised, like bisexual or transgender people, which led to the formation of alternative groups. At the core of the gay liberation movement remained the interests of white gay men (Armstrong 199; Rupp, Roth and Taylor, 669).

allowed for a small industry of gay writing and publishing to thrive in the seventies, which coincided with the first queer retellings of fairy tales by Sexton and Broumas. This is not to say that gay writing began in the seventies, or even that gay writing in America did. As Katz notes, it was in the 1880s when 'a number of fictional works with major or minor male homosexual themes began to be published in the U.S.' (Katz 657). Some notable gay and lesbian fiction was published in the years prior to Stonewall, during what Evert Van der Veen has called the 'hiding' period of gay publishing, which comprised the war and post-war years (15-21). Examples of works published in this period are Patricia Highsmith's *The Price of Salt* (1952), James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room* (1956) and Christopher Isherwood's *A Single Man* (1964). However, it is in 1978 where some scholars place the emergence of the new gay novel (Bergman 9-10, *Gaiety*; Gambone 3). This year saw the publication of Larry Kramer's *Faggots* and Andrew Holleran's *Dancer From the Dance*, and for Edmund White both novels 'documented the new gay culture that had been spawned by liberation, prosperity and societal tolerance' (White). The seventies and early eighties were indeed years of comparative prosperity: gay and lesbian groups were proliferating, as were gay neighbourhoods, and institutional presence and visibility increased exponentially (Rupp, Roth and Taylor, 672). Broumas' *Beginning with O* (1977), with its remarkably sanguine tone, is a natural product of this new era. It is also clearly a direct response to Anne Sexton's darker *Transformations* (1971). Either work, recognised for their literary quality,[39] could have inspired further queer approaches to the fairy-tale genre, but did not. One contributing factor for this is the confessional, poetic nature of both collections, which has never been the most popular mode of fairy-tale storytelling. Another factor is that both collections were somewhat shy in their attempts to queer the fairy tale—that is, perhaps neither provided a clear enough stylistic model for other writers who could be interested in queering the genre. After all, *Beginning With O* included numerous revisions of Greek myths alongside some retellings of fairy tales, which could have muddled the focus of the collection, and *Transformations* included only one retelling which could be considered queer. Comparatively, Carter's *The Bloody Chamber* laid down a stylistic roadmap for future writers who would question the fairy tale from a feminist perspective, and the influence of her work can be found in fairy-tale retellings to this day.

[39] Broumas' *Beginning with O* received the Yale Younger Poets Prize, and Sexton, who years before had won the Pulitzer for Poetry, published *Transformations* to considerable popular acclaim (Trinidad).

It must also be noted that short fiction, a format traditionally favoured by fairy-tale writers and revisionists, was still developing in the gay and lesbian publishing scene in the seventies, which likely stalled the appearance of queer retellings in prose. Once gay short fiction began to develop, however, it grew rapidly, encouraged by the creation of specifically gay and lesbian literary journals like *Christopher Street* (1976-95) and gay and lesbian literary anthologies, which reached new publics and reaffirmed an existing interest on homosexual narratives (Gambone 3-4). As gay writer Christopher Bram put it, it was when his first story was picked up by *Christopher Street* that he thought: 'I can write about being gay and get published. I can write about what's important to me and succeed as a writer' (qtd. in Gambone, 95).

The increasing popularity of gay literature, buoyed by local, specialised press and bookstores, and even by mainstream publishers (see Gambone 3-5), affected the formation of an emerging gay community. The community differs from other minorities in that gay people are not necessarily born to gay parents, or even have gay relatives, so people often grow up in isolation from other members of the group, and thus disconnected from a shared history and culture.[40] For this reason, a number of critics (N. Miller 476; Bergman *Gaiety*, 10; Dyer 1) have identified reading practices as the bridge between individual and community, and some have even characterised gay people as an imagined community of readers, structured through relevant literature and the imagined social space it generates (Pearl 7; Rodríguez 397).[41] Literature, cheaply produced, easily hidden and transported, even to remote rural areas where a young gay boy might feel like the only gay person to ever exist, could thus 'assist in the construction of gay identities where other socializing influences are absent' (Rodríguez 409). Bergman highlights the dependence of gay youth on literature as a source for identity when he remarks homosexuality was 'a literary construct to many gay people' (*Gaiety*, 6), a sentiment echoed by Dyer, who maintains that, because gay people 'grew up isolated not only from our heterosexual peers but also from each other, we turned to the mass media for information and ideas about ourselves' (Dyer 1).

[40] Furthermore, both the Nazis' efforts, and later the communist and capitalist elites' 'willful forgetting' (Adam 54), had done a lot to sever the gay community from its own early history, making it seem like the gay and lesbian liberation movements of the seventies were uniquely contemporary occurrences.

[41] I refer here chiefly to a gay male community, and mostly to white members, at that. Other members of a broader LGBTQI community might not, historically, have found the same amount of solace and sense of community anywhere, not even in literature.

However, gay representation in mass media was mostly negative, which for Creekmur and Doty meant that 'gays and lesbians often found their cultural experience and participation constrained and proscribed by a dominant culture in which they are generally ignored or oppressed' (1). In this sense, literature produced by gay authors was often the only site for subversive images of homosexuality, and thus key to piecing together a communal identity. Both the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis, for example, included queer book review columns in their political magazines (*Out* and *The Ladder*, respectively) alongside discussions of the rights of sexual minorities, which points to the importance of literature for the constitution of an emergent LGBTQI community. Bergman goes so far to as to say literature 'has been of greater importance for gay communities than for any other ethnic, national, or religious group' (Bergman, *Gaiety* 10), given the particular atomism of gay people. However, racial, class and ability differences, among other factors, would have limited the effectiveness of gay literature as an intersectional tool of identity-formation for all gay people. Perhaps Bergman's statement should be qualified to say that, at least for middle-class, able-bodied white gay men (and, to a lesser degree, lesbians),[42] literature has offered a respite, however rare, from the constant drone of heterocentric representations in other forms of culture, providing images upon which to model their identity. Thus, during the seventies, increasingly available and varied literature played a central part in producing and maintaining a somewhat stable gay identity, if not a perfectly inclusive one. As the decade came to a close, literature and culture remained crucial for the transmission of a gay history and identity, particularly as the shadow of AIDS loomed above.

3.3 The AIDS Crisis and its Effects on Gay Identity and Gay Literature

As early as 1981, young men in U.S. urban areas were coming down with an unknown disease and dying quickly from it. Most of these men identified as gay, and so the disease was unofficially called 'gay pneumonia,' 'gay cancer' and, foreshadowing the intense moral rhetoric that would accompany the epidemic, WOGS—the Wrath of

[42] Sheila Liming claims that literature 'has long served as a vessel by which lesbian women might come to terms with their identity and has helped to contextualize lesbianism more broadly [but] it has done so through a rather meager ration of lesbian texts and authors' (Liming 86).

God Syndrome (Treichler 198). The official name would eventually settle on the somewhat less problematic (but still inaccurate) GRID, or Gay-Related Immune Deficiency. This only changed when the growing number of infections made it impossible to ignore it was affecting other groups, such as haemophiliacs, heroin addicts or Haitian immigrants. However, despite increasing evidence the disease was affecting all kinds of people (including large numbers of heterosexual men and women in Asia, Africa and Latin America), the public, and even medical researchers, often clung to early assumptions about the disease, which severely pathologized gay men (Wald 219). This has been understood in the context of the rise of a New Right countermovement that attempted to mobilise followers against social change and sexual liberation (Capitanio and Herek 1130-40; Rupp, Roth and Taylor 672). Years after homosexuality had been declassified as a mental illness by the American Psychiatric Association, conservative sectors finally had a new tangible way of demonising a group whose 'disordered' lifestyle would 'endanger' the heterosexual majority—their rhetoric would, at best, consider HIV/AIDS a natural consequence of queer people's moral corruption, and at worst would imbue HIV carriers with a perverse intentionality to spread the disease (Wald 230).

During this period anti-gay stigma and discrimination certainly increased, but the AIDS crisis galvanised the LGBTQI community, when it could have destroyed it. After all, all kinds of LGBTQI people were dying in large numbers—upper class, lower class, artists, writers, politicians, black, white, famous and anonymous people alike—but the community had seen its networks strengthened during the days of gay and lesbian liberation, and it responded with an unprecedented, unified rise of civic engagement to address the multifaceted challenges that ensued. For instance, lesbians, who were less directly affected by the disease, were instrumental in the provision of services to people with HIV/AIDS, and in mobilising the community when the government failed to provide proper care or to recognise the severity of the epidemic (Roth and Taylor 672).[43] Many of the early battles fought by the community were on seemingly ordinary issues, such as hospital visitation rights, 'taking time off to be with loved ones who were sick and dying [and] claiming insurance benefits' (Picard). Eventually, organised efforts

[43] President Reagan did not address the matter publicly until 1985, five years and thousands of deaths (in the U.S. only) after the first cases were diagnosed. The inaction and in many cases overt hostility of the government encouraged LGBTQI political mobilisation. For more information, see for example Jennifer Brier's *Infections Ideas: U.S. Political Responses to the AIDS Crisis* (2009) and Deborah B. Gould's *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight against AIDS* (2009).

materialised in further HIV/AIDS research, treatment, and anti-discrimination policies. AIDS changed the landscape of LGBTQI life (and death) irreversibly, and it possibly stalled the fight for equality, but, as the crisis advanced, LGBTQI activists were forced to develop more sophisticated and efficient ways of effecting change. AIDS activism also set the stage for queer theories by radically challenging understandings of identity, power and community. Furthermore, AIDS activists' direct-action tactics, resistance to complacency[44] and coalitional (as opposed to separatist) politics would be replicated by queer activists in the nineties. Ultimately, the visibility granted by disease and activism had the somewhat ironic consequence of making LGBTQI people a familiar (if not necessarily accepted) fixture of public American life.

AIDS also had a grotesquely ironic effect on gay literature. At the same time as AIDS was claiming the lives of numerous gay writers, gay literature was blossoming like never before, during what Neil Miller has described as 'The Gay Fiction Boom of the 1980s' (444). White offers a poignant personal account of this time:

> I left [the Violet Quill, a gay writing group] in 1983, when I moved to Paris. When I came back to the States in 1990 this literary map had been erased. George Whitmore, Michael Grumley, Robert Ferro and Chris Cox were dead; Vito Russo was soon to die . . . Many younger writers had also died; . . . Tim Dlugos, Richard Umans, Gregory Kolovakos, the translator Matthew Ward and the novelist John Fox (who'd been my student at Columbia). My two closest friends, the literary critic David Kalstone and my editor, Bill Whitehead, had also died . . . For me these losses were definitive. The witnesses to my life . . . were gone. The loss of all the books they might have written remains incalculable. (White)

Still, and in spite of this huge human and creative loss, literature flourished. Maybe it was due to increased visibility and interest, even from straight audiences, or perhaps it was that AIDS had forced queer people to confront matters of love, life, death and identity, 'the very preoccupations that have always animated serious fiction and poetry' (White). Even nonfiction gay literature was being urgently produced and consumed, often proving to be the only reliable source of information for the community during the crisis (Pearl 3).

The sheer amount of AIDS fiction (which was often, but not always, gay) can be daunting, but Monica Pearl offers a useful periodisation to understand the general trends. She divides it into pre-1988 literature, which produced novels concerned 'with

[44] Consider Queer Nation's slogan 'We're here, we're queer, get used to it!'

instruction [rather than] with aesthetics' (Pearl 4) and which are mostly out of print; 1988 to 1995 literature, which was characterised by the publication of novels 'formative to the canon of AIDS literature' (Pearl 4), in which the disease had become an everyday reality for may in the community; 1995 to 2001 literature, after the 'pharmaceutical threshold' made AIDS into a chronic illness rather than a death sentence (Pearl 1-2); and post-9/11 literature, marked by a change in what 'America conceives of as the enemy, which shifted to some extent from internal nemeses . . . to external ones' (Pearl 211). The books used in this chapter, Cashorali's *Fairy Tales* and *Gay Fairy and Folk Tales*, and Ford's anthology *Happily Ever After*, were all published after this 'pharmaceutical threshold' in rapid succession, and, while as a whole they would not qualify as AIDS literature, HIV/AIDS (and mortality) is one of the most recurrent themes in these stories, even the erotic ones. This fact both ties the texts to a particular historical moment and evidences how deeply the trauma of AIDS had permeated, not only the everyday reality, but also the imaginative spaces of gay people, that it would find its way even to largely escapist fairy tales.

3.4 Constructing Community Through Reclaimed Gay Fairy Tales

All three texts analysed here are rather different—the most obvious difference being that Cashorali's are both single-author collections and Ford's anthology has multiple authors. They have different publishing backgrounds, as well: whereas Ford's anthology was published by Masquerade, a small New York imprint that specialised on LGBTQI erotica, Cashorali's collections were published by HarperCollins and Faber & Faber. Furthermore, Cashorali's first collection was popular enough to warrant a sequel, and both of his collections were reviewed in mainstream magazines, like *Publisher's Weekly*. The appeal of *Happily Ever After* is understandably narrower, since it contains explicit gay erotica. It nonetheless has a companion anthology of lesbian fairy tales: *Once Upon a Time: Erotic Fairy Tales for Women*, also edited by Michael Ford, which was published on the same year. In spite of these differences, there are more elements tying these works to each other than setting them apart. Particularly, the fact that these are works written (and edited) by gay men, intended for gay men, and which are intimately related to the realities of gay men in the mid-nineties. This is noteworthy because these works indicate the first attempts to re-vise the fairy-tale genre from an openly (male) gay perspective. The Abbot of Villiers remarked that fairy tales were

'women's province' (qtd. in Bottigheimer, *Framed* 76), pointing to the feminine associations of the genre in seventeenth century France, and this notion seems to have carried over to Michael Ford's days. As he explains, his initial plan was to put together his lesbian anthology of retold fairy tales because he thought men would have little interest in engaging with the genre: 'Fairy tales have always seemed to me to appeal on a deep level more to women than to men, and the most interesting characters in the tales are women' (Ford, 'Introduction' 2). To his surprise, he found the men he asked had strong reactions to certain stories from their childhoods. So strong were they, in fact, that his anthology ended up being twenty-eight stories and over four hundred pages long, making it 'much longer than I ever expected it to be' (Ford, 'Introduction' 3). In spite of apparent interest, both within the community and without, Ford's anthology and Cashorali's collections are currently out of print, and rather difficult to come by—another point of commonality. This is likely due to the fact that most themes tackled in the stories are largely historically-specific, as are the humour and cultural references. More so than, for instance, in Emma Donoghue's *Kissing the Witch* (1997), a rather more lyrical and timeless revision of the genre from a (female) queer perspective. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Donoghue's lesbian collection is considered, to this day, to be the prime example of queer retellings of fairy tales—sometimes, it would seem hers is actually the only one. Their quality notwithstanding, in what follows I posit Cashorali's and Ford's works are enormously valuable insofar as they serve as historical documents that evidence the anxieties and desires of mid-nineties gay men, explored openly for the first time through the fantastic mode of the fairy tale.

This engagement with the genre was radical at the time, and questioned by some (as a reviewer in *Publisher's Weekly* put it, 'do we really need a 'Jack and the Penis?'). But it also is a natural development at this particular juncture. Gay literature, and specifically short stories, had developed greatly during the AIDS crisis.[45] This, together with the fact that genre fiction, such as fantasy and sci-fi, began to make space for queer identities in the eighties (Levy 395), prepared the ground for queer approaches to fairy tales. Furthermore, in the mid-nineties, after the 'pharmaceutical threshold' of AIDS, the first gay epics appeared, including Felice Picano's *Like People in History* and Ethan Mordden's *How Long Has This Been Going On?* (Pearl 5). This implies awareness of a

[45] As Sharon Oard Warner wrote in 1993: 'What I know about AIDS − about living with it and dying from it − I have learned from literature, from novels and poems and essays, and, most of all, from short stories' (S. Warner 491).

gay history, or perhaps a need to historicise gay existence: after the urgency of the first AIDS decade, there was a necessity to regroup and to memorialise, to rebuild, and it is in this context that the community-forming fairy tales of Cashorali and Ford, quite literally, came out.

Fairy tales have been used to assist in the construction of national identities, particularly in the nineteenth century, as discussed in the previous chapter, and can be considered an especially fertile genre for other community-construction efforts. Thus, in the same way that the Grimms employed fairy tales to provide the German people with a source of collective identity, so did Cashorali's and Ford's retellings, with obvious differences in reach and lasting impact, contribute to the creation of a coherent identity for gay men. The foreword of *Fairy Tales* by Robert Kopcke seems to confirm this notion, as he places Cashorali in line with the likes of Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm: 'Cashorali follows in a long line of storytellers before him [and he speaks] the truth of his community, my community, by telling the stories that follow' (Kopcke VIII). Some, as Brian Walker puts it, might regard the comparison of the gay community to a nation (such as Germany) like 'nothing more than a parodistic mimicry of 'real' [nations]' (Walker 518), but this both overestimates the depth of traditional nations and underestimates the depth of gay culture.[46] Gay people might not have a distinct cuisine or architectural style, but they do have a culture, a common history, and institutions. Since they are not concentrated territorially,[47] Walker considers gay people similar to other non-territorial diaspora nations (Walker 537-43). Walker is not advocating for the separatism of a gay and lesbian state, but merely defends queer people as a culturally-distinct group with a nation-like sense of peoplehood:

> Bit by bit an imaginary community was created through which gay people could link up their local experiences of violence and harassment with the experiences of other gay men and lesbians . . . and come to see themselves as a people set apart. (Walker 523)

Germany, much like the gay community, is also an imaginary community, or 'imagined community' as formulated by Benedict Anderson, since they are both socially-

[46] An early example of queer nationalism was the direct-action organisation, Queer Nation (formed in 1990), whose manifesto called to the creation of, indeed, a queer nation, in which a community, unified in their difference, would be able to reclaim their history, culture, and even space: 'Let's make every space a Lesbian and Gay space. Every street a part of our sexual geography . . . A city and a country where we can be safe and free and more' ('Queer Nation Manifesto').

[47] Except possibly in localised gay enclaves or neighbourhoods, like San Francisco's Castro Street.

constructed communities in which individuals will never meet most of the people of their group, but still perceive (or imagine) a kinship to them (Anderson 6). Anderson places special importance on 'print languages' when it comes to the origin of national consciousness, as they create 'unified fields of exchanges and communication' (Anderson 44). This brings us back to the Grimms' nation-building fairy tales, but also to the fact that, as established, literature has historically been central to the progressive construction of a gay community, in so many ways an imagined community of readers, by serving as a 'unified field of communication' in which isolated individuals could articulate their subjectivity and connect to a communal identity.

Naturally, Ford's and Cashorali's campy, demystifying retellings seem like a departure from the Grimms' serious approach to fairy tales. Although the Grimms edited their tales extensively, their ultimate goal was to provide a common cultural heritage for the German people. Cashorali and Ford do not attempt to unearth a cultural heritage gay people might have been severed from by, for instance, rediscovering and collecting lesser-known, non-canonical fairy tales that contain moments of queer disruption, like some of the ones explored in the previous chapter. They do, however, connect to a sort of hidden heritage by finding fissures in classic fairy tales and teasing out the queerness lurking just below their apparently heterocentric surface. In retelling these tales for gay men, they amplify their latent queerness, making it the centre of their plots, reimagining wonder, and inviting gay readers to reconsider the genre and their place in it. In fact, the paratextual comments in Cashorali's *Fairy Tales* identify the gay community as a group who 'have longed since childhood to find images of themselves in their bedtime stories,' and Cashorali as the one who has finally provided such images.

Cashorali's and Ford's works, thus, can be seen as self-aware, tongue-in-cheek, campy, but nonetheless devoted efforts to reclaim the fairy-tale genre. In doing so, they not only reclaim fairy-tale aesthetics, themes, forms and plots, but also the genre's potential for community-formation. As we will see, their tales will deploy recurring themes, like the AIDS crisis, homophobia, experiencing gay subculture, becoming part of a community and finding oneself, so as to provide a coherent narrative of gay experience, making literature once more a nodal point for the gay community.

3.5 Peter Cashorali's *Fairy Tales: Traditional Stories Retold for Gay Men* and *Gay Fairy and Folk Tales: More Traditional Stories Retold for Gay Men*

Cashorali's collections contain thirty stories in total: seventeen in *Fairy Tales* and thirteen in *Gay Fairy and Folk Tales*. He uses various sources, from Alexander Pushkin's *Bajka* to the Brothers Grimm's *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, and he is careful to note where the inspiration for each retelling lies. His scope is fairly broad. For instance, he lists collections of Arabic folktales and Chinese fairy tales among his sources. But, in keeping with the focus of this study, the only retellings analysed here will be retellings of European fairy tales, with a particular emphasis on the canonical tales. That is, to the extent that this is possible: Cashorali often cites several sources as the inspiration behind his apparently composite retellings, although these sources are always thematically linked. For instance, his story 'Rumpelstiltskin' notes the Grimms' version as a source alongside the Icelandic legend 'Who Built Reynir Church?' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 43), which also includes a trickster-like character who offers his magical help in exchange for a firstborn, a condition only reversible if the protagonist can guess the trickster's name. However, in practice, his stories usually use one, rarely two, of the many listed sources as the main model for his retellings—his 'Rumpelstinskin' follows the Grimms' version closely, to the extent that the supposed influence of other tales is negligible. His sourcing can thus be considered a scholarly exercise, extending connecting tendrils to other tales and traditions, or as a simple suggestion for further reading.

In any case, Cashorali's erudite approach to sourcing stands in stark contrast to the general tone of his retellings, which is rather casual and humorous. As previously mentioned, he focuses on the challenges of mid-nineties gay men, but instead of adapting these issues so that they blend in with a recognisable fairy-tale world (or the opposite: instead of updating fairy-tale elements so that they work in a contemporary environment) he creates a dissonant space of liminal temporality in which all elements, contemporary, wondrous and archaic, coexist. One of the blurbs in *Fairy Tales*, written by author Douglas Sadownick, points to this: 'The contemporary . . . edge of his work shows that we queers are living in a new myth, weirdly futuristic and archaic at the same time.' Cashorali's stories indeed appear weirdly, *queerly*, outside of time, neither past, nor future, nor present. Or, in Jack Halberstam's terms, they exist in a 'queer time' in which notions of past, present and future are diminished (Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and*

Place 4-10). The stories open with familiarly vague structures, like 'There was once a young man' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 13) and 'Long ago and very far from here' (Cashorali, *Gay Fairy and Folk Tales* 3), they take place in vaguely-named locations, such as the 'Endless Forest' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 1), and are replete with kings, princes and peasants, but they still somehow seem to develop in a distinctly contemporary, affluent, and urban milieu. An example of this scrambled temporality is the retelling 'Rumpelstiltskin,' in which the protagonist, Steven, works a very physical job in a medieval windmill during the day, and at night, his uncle the miller takes him to 'coffeehouses and the theatre and gallery openings, where Steven met the miller's friends' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 43). This discordant juxtaposition of elements is reminiscent of the classic fairy tale's mix of everyday elements and magic, and, although it is jarring, or perhaps because it is, it contributes to the parodic tone of his retellings.

However, Cashorali's use of jarring narrative techniques inevitably draws the reader's attention to the fact that these retellings are artificial constructions. As a result, reader immersion takes second place to the obvious didactic drive of Cashorali's narratives. Overt didacticism and artificiality are some of the most common criticisms levelled at retellings of fairy tales (Joosen 102), but in the style of queer writing, Cashorali embraces 'affectation and false creation as means in themselves' (Geczy and Karaminas 1), and he makes no attempt to conceal he is using the fairy tale as the vessel for life lessons for gay men. As Kopcke puts it in the introduction, the stories contain 'lessons that bear repeating to everyone, but especially to men in the gay community' (Kopcke VIII). For instance, as we will see, several stories deal with homophobia, internalised and otherwise, others work to contest the dominant narratives of HIV/AIDS, and others aim to help readers navigate specific pockets of gay subculture.

3.5.1 Homophobia

Internalised homophobia is particularly central to 'King Crossbill,' a retelling of the Grimms' 'King Thrushbeard.' Cashorali uses one of the most recurring queering devices in retellings and turns the heroine into a hero—a strikingly handsome young man, as arrogant as the Grimms' protagonist, who in this case has very specific motives for his behaviour:

> It happened that many young men would also sigh when he passed. Though he didn't like to admit it . . . these were the sighs that sounded sweetest to his

> ear . . . he certainly saw no reason to let anyone else bring it to his attention, and he used his fists to change the topic of conversation whenever it came up. (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 13)

The psychological angle in this story, although a departure from classical fairy tales, which are generally devoid of psychological complexity and interiority, is not surprising. Cashorali is a psychotherapist by trade who considers fairy tales valuable tools to talk about 'the psychic development of the personality' (Cashorali qtd. in Dubin), and in fact has used the fairy-tale mode to help his patients understand and work through their issues (Cashorali, 'Fairy Tales in Therapy'), possibly influenced by Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (1976). In using the fairy tale in this way, he is aligning himself with Lieberman's belief that fairy tales are essentially 'training manuals for girls' (Lieberman 395). He extends their symbolic influence to gay men and turns Lieberman's accusation on its head: fairy tales are, in Cashorali's hands, not sexist tools of oppression, but rather a means for correcting society's exclusionary lessons. In this way, the personal journey of Christopher, the protagonist, is meant to help gay men deconstruct the negative images that they might have internalised by living in a homophobic culture.

As seen in the passage above, at the beginning Christopher reacts violently every time his sexuality is at risk of being disclosed, even to himself. Unlike other gay youth, he actually has ample opportunities to explore that sexuality, with 'many young men' sighing after him, but fear and self-loathing make him lash out. That is the case even when propositions come from a powerful king, whom he rudely rejects:

> 'That's you,' he growled. 'King Crossbill.' By which he meant the bird's beak wasn't straight, and neither was the king. (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 14)

After this encounter, Christopher' is forced to work for a beggar. As his apprentice, he has to do some jobs Christopher finds demeaning and 'effeminate,' such as flower arranging. The beggar responds to his complaints by showing Christopher his biceps and asking 'Does this look effeminate for you?' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 18), to then hit him across the face, finally ordering him to make sure his bouquets are extraordinarily dainty. The beggar, transformed into Christopher's mentor, seamlessly shifts between rough masculinity, effeminacy and back, forcing Christopher's to question his deep-seated prejudices, and the very stability of a gender binary. At the end, Christopher is ordered to clean the palace ballroom before a party, but he is not done in time and he witnesses as

the palace, which up to that point had been full of people who would repeat familiar, heterocentric lessons, transforms into a gender-bending, queer space:

> Beautiful women in glittering gowns walked in arm in arm, and handsome men in tuxedos kissed one another hello; handsome women in tuxedos kissed one another hello, and beautiful men in glittering gowns walked arm in arm. (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 19)

The rules of desire and privilege are suddenly reshuffled, inverted in the mirror image of the queer space. Interestingly, the image above, which holds an asymmetrical, queer reflection within, completely banishes heteronormativity.

The ball scene as a whole cuts diagonally across the gender binary, the sexual divide and even class difference—one of the village boys, Christopher's former admirer, is invited to the ball: 'Alex, whom he'd knocked down . . . Alex, who seemed was a guest of honour here' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 20). At the end, and following the fairy-tale plot, the king appears and he reveals himself to be both the one Christopher nicknamed King Crossbill and his mentor, the beggar:

> 'I did this because I love you and because I saw how much you would need to learn before you finally came out.' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 20)

The final lesson in the Grimms' tale is humility, freely (and at times cruelly) dispatched by a king who, in the end, marries the protagonist. Here, the lesson in humility comes paired with a lesson on acceptance of oneself and others. Christopher, moreover, does not marry the king, who continues on his role as mentor, guiding Christopher as he takes his first steps into the queer world the king has opened up for him. The asymmetrical relationship of the pre-text is thus not replicated in Cashorali's version, as the story champions queer kinship and community-belonging over a more traditionally romantic fairy-tale ending.

Comparable lessons on homophobia appear in other tales, such as 'The Queer Garment' or 'Romaine.' 'Romaine' is a retelling of Basile's 'Parsley' and the Grimm's 'Rapunzel,' in which the eponymous boy is exchanged as a new-born for a head of romaine lettuce. The ogress/witch figure who raises the protagonist is here an ogre who represents hegemonic, toxic masculinity. As such, he wants to raise Romaine to be 'an ogre, like me' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 55), discouraging his effeminate tendencies and forcing him to play with 'butch' toys in his tower. There is an instance of ambiguity in the story, which otherwise does not invite dissenting readings: at some point, the ogre is

revealed to find Romaine secretly fascinating 'because he was so unlike everything the ogre knew' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 55). This queer curiosity is never again acknowledged or hinted at, but it opens a small fissure in the text: perhaps the ogre's motives are deeper than stated and indicate repressed queer desire. Inevitably, Romaine grows up, and he lets a prince climb up his hair and into his bed, eventually leading to the ogre finding them and declaring: 'That's the most disgusting thing I've ever [seen]!' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 58). When his attempts to model him in his monstrous, masculine image fail, he declares him 'no ogre' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 58) and throws Romaine out of his tower, which echoes homophobic parental rejection.

A different flavour of homophobia is explored in 'The Queer Garment,' a retelling of Andersen's 'The Emperor's New Clothes' that could almost be a prequel to 'King Crossbill,' as the kingdom's ruler must go on a similar journey to that of Christopher's. In this tale, the emperor is obsessed with appearing straight, even though, much like king Crossbill's palace, his realm is distinctly queer:

> Neither the emperor nor his ministers—nor any of his subjects, for that matter—were straight. But the emperor had gotten the idea into his head that this was the proper way to appear and act, and nothing could dissuade him from it. (Cashorali, *Gay Fairy and Folk Tales* 16)

The famously devious tailors, in this case, contrive to create an outrageously flamboyant suit for the emperor, and tell him that, to anybody who is himself straight, 'it will look entirely straight. But to anyone who isn't, it will look very queer indeed' (Cashorali, *Gay Fairy and Folk Tales* 19). This functions as a commentary on queer clothing codes. Sartorial paralanguage has long been used to resist normative, gendered expectations, and to signal sexual identity, within and without the in-group. Several codes emerged in the seventies, such as the elaborate hanky code through which gay men could convey sexual preferences (Cage 41-44), or the appropriation of ideal representations of American masculinity in the 'clone style' (Hobson 75), which favoured butch images such as the construction worker, the lumberjack or the cowboy. These identificatory markers could be worn outside of the physical confines of gay subculture, since particularly the clones could be read as straight while advertising homoerotic interest to informed readers. Similarly, the tailors in Cashorali's story promise the Emperor a magical outfit that will conceal the wearer's homosexuality to the heterosexual (or heterosexual-acting) onlooker, but reveal queer erotic possibilities to those who are willing to see them.

However, outwardly queer tendencies, and particularly effeminacy, are forbidden in the realm, so all who sees the emperor wearing his bright pink suit will remark on how straight-looking it seems: 'Sober? Why, it looks positively funereal' (Cashorali, *Gay Fairy and Folk Tales* 19), says one of the ministers. The clone style, with its exaggerated, parodying references to stereotypical masculinity, was in itself subversive, but the ability of clones to blend in with normative society imbued them with a degree of passing privilege that feminine gay men did not have. Furthermore, many of such clones reclaimed their hypermasculine style as a rejection of feminised gay stereotypes (Levine 58). Cashorali's story is thus criticising this particular brand of homophobia inside the gay community: the emperor, as mentioned, lives in a realm reminiscent of a gay enclave, with only queer subjects, so laws that force everyone to conform to normative manly appearances are strikingly out of place.

When the emperor goes out on his walk, to show everyone 'what a man should look like' (Cashorali, *Gay Fairy and Folk Tales* 21), his subjects pretend to not see the outfit as it really is for fear of being found out, except an old man, who sees the flowery embroidery and cries out: 'It's a pansy, a splendid pansy!' (Cashorali, *Gay Fairy and Folk Tales* 22). Whereas Andersen had the eyes of a child pierce through the tailors' deceit, Cashorali has the obvious observation (here doubling as a play on words) come from the mouth of an old man, and one whose 'eyesight wasn't all it had once been' (Cashorali, *Gay Fairy and Folk Tales* 22), at that. Andersen used the Romantic, pre-sexual child, who would derive wisdom from lack of experience (sexual and otherwise), but Cashorali queers the dichotomy innocence/experience by situating the ironically clear-eyed old gay man as the mouthpiece of simple truth. Just like in the pre-text, his remark breaks the spell, as it were: after this, nobody cares what anybody wears because 'every garment' is, ultimately, 'a queer one' (Cashorali, *Gay Fairy and Folk Tales* 24) as they all, including the emperor, come to embrace diverse self-expression.

3.5.2 Mortality, HIV and AIDS

Much like in 'The Queer Garment,' Cashorali tends to resolve his narratives in the inviolable happy ending that has come to be understood as fundamental to fairy tales. Strict gender and sexual boundaries thus become a thing of the past, important lessons are learned by all, and real-life conflict magically dissolves into Cashorali's queer utopias. However, there is one theme that resists these neat happy-ending tendencies in

Cashorali's tales, and that is mortality, always (explicitly or not) linked to HIV and AIDS. Many of the retellings that engage with the topic use obvious choices as their sources, such as the Grimms' 'Mary's Child' or 'Godfather Death,' which already include themes of mortality. In Cashorali's version of 'Godfather Death,' for instance, the kingdom is beset by a powerful, unnamed 'epidemic' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 128) that affects the son of the king. The Grimms had the king and princess fall merely ill, but Cashorali is clearly alluding to HIV/AIDS by mentioning a widespread epidemic, and, moreover, one that is not given a name. As Sharon Oard Warner argues, most early AIDS fiction did not 'even mention [the disease] by name' (S. Warner 491)—a disease with no name to go with the love that dare not speak its own. At the root of that avoidance was a fear of alienating the average reader (presumed heterosexual), but also the feeling that addressing such a (hopefully) transient topic would curtail that work's lasting importance (S. Warner 491-93). Cashorali, of course, introduces numerous (similarly transient) social issues in all of his tales, and he includes recognisable references to HIV/AIDS in at least six of them, but he only refers to HIV/AIDS by its name in one story, 'Rumpelstiltskin,' perhaps owing to the fairy tale's nebulous style, but also pointing to a slight reticence to refer to the disease openly.

While his retelling of 'Godfather Death' is otherwise quite similar to that of the Grimms', the protagonist in Cashorali's story becomes particularly fixated on saving the prince, to the point of defying his godfather, Death, a total of three times. Death is considerably more lenient in this version than in the pre-text, and he does not kill his godson for his repeated defiance. However, he does close the tale with an ominous send-off: 'I wash my hands of you. From now on, you're on your own' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 132). While his godson returns to his prince's bedside, the story does not end in a formulaic happy-ever-after, and rather just stops without making any promises about the lovers' future. In the context of the AIDS crisis, who would not have wanted to permanently cheat death for their loved ones? Cashorali, however, might have been reluctant to offer too magical a solution to a very real tragedy.

There are other retellings whose source's connection to the theme of mortality might be more tenuous, or even entirely absent. In this way, Cashorali inserts HIV/AIDS in retellings of the Grimms' 'Rumpelstiltskin,' Perrault's 'The Master Cat, or Puss in Boots,' and Andersen's 'The Ugly Duckling.' Cashorali's approach to HIV/AIDS in 'Rumpelstiltskin' is particularly direct, clearly determined to address and correct

ignorant narratives about the disease. In his story, the protagonist is visited by the well-known imp, just like in the Grimms' version, but the situation is quite different: the imp reveals to the protagonist a way to tame an angry prince, and the price he asks for in return is the protagonist's happiness, to be paid in a year's time. The protagonist, in his desperation, unwittingly accepts these terms, and after a year of living with the prince, the imp reappears, telling him he is HIV-positive. His happiness swiftly gone, the protagonist is offered a final way out:

> I could make you a special, one-time-only offer. If you can tell me, in these next three nights, three guesses per night, why you're positive, what that means for you as a person, I'll give you enough happiness to live a good life. (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 50)

This provides Cashorali with the perfect opportunity to voice and challenge recurring homophobic arguments, as the protagonist gets the answer wrong repeatedly: 'I'm positive because . . . God thinks I'm a bad person? Sex equals death? Too many poppers? . . . [it is] nature's way of telling me I'm not what she had in mind?' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 50). At the very end of the third night, like in the Grimms' tale, he finds the correct answer: 'It's just a virus I was exposed to. A terrible one, but just a virus' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 52). Cashorali is thus contesting the dominant, moralistic, negative, 'if not annihilative' representation of HIV and AIDS, 'to instruct in its stead a discourse of empowerment, meaning, and possibility' (Yingling 22). In line with this, he states the protagonist gets 'enough' happiness back 'to live a good life' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 52), which approximates the happy ending without promising uniform, everlasting, or utopian happiness.

The crisis is approached from the perspective of lovers and friends of people with AIDS in Cashorali's versions of 'Puss in Boots' and 'The Ugly Duckling.' In his version of 'Puss in Boots,' titled 'Penny Loafers,' AIDS is the catalyst for the disenfranchised protagonist to need the help of the resourceful Puss in Boots character:

> There was once a young man . . . who fell in love with a furniture maker . . . And for quite a long while, they were very happy. But George became ill, and after getting worse, getting better, and then getting much worse, he died. He died at ten o'clock in the morning and didn't leave a will. (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 133)

The story addresses some of the issues that gay men suddenly became very aware of during the AIDS crisis. Dying without a will in the U.S. meant that the surviving same-

sex partner had no legal right to inheritance, among other rights that heterosexual married couples did have, which accelerated the fight for marriage equality (Chauncey). The issue was only made worse, emotionally and materially, when the deceased partner's blood relatives opposed the relationship, which is the case in 'Penny Loafers:' 'At ten forty-five, his three sisters who hadn't spoken to him in many years arrived at the door . . . and by the time the sun set, George's lovely house was empty' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 133). Cashorali's story denounces the hypocrisy of relatives who would scorn gay family members in life but suddenly remember that 'blood is thicker than water' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 133) after their death—often entirely overlooking the labour and suffering of their relative's partners/caregivers.

The effects of AIDS on caregivers are similarly explored in 'The Ugly Duckling,' a retelling of the story by Andersen. The original 'The Ugly Duckling' is a tale that easily lends itself to queering: it is a tale about the Other, the outsider, the disturbingly queer, who eventually finds a community in which he fits. Cashorali, however, does not lead the story down the expected path. Although the beginning is similar enough, with a duckling who feels like an outsider until he finds he wants to be like the beautiful swans who sometimes visit his corner of the pond, the story soon turns into a tale about friendship and endurance. The duckling finds the swans the most beautiful, but when he is approached by a drab blue loon who is not 'put off by his gruffness' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 120) an unlikely and lasting friendship blossoms. The loon begins to feel increasingly tired, which is the source for immediate concern: 'Everyone knew there was an illness going round . . . that it was almost always fatal, and one of the symptoms was fatigue' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 120). As the loon's health deteriorates, the self-involved duckling, 'who had never taken care of anyone' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 120) must step into the role of caretaker.

Like many caretakers of people with AIDS, he is affected by the shadow of a shortened lifespan, with the ensuing 'pressurized perception of the world' (R. Levin, Buckingham and Hart, 74). As such, he inhabits a queer time as formulated by Halberstam, which emerges 'once one leaves the temporal frames of bourgeois reproduction and family, longevity, risk/safety, and inheritance' (Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place* 6). Blurring the boundaries of normative time also allows for a particularly surprising, genre-defying ending, which captures a moment that is 'at once indefinite and virtual but also forceful, resilient and undeniable' (Halberstam, *In a Queer*

Time and Place 11).

> Then the duck, who was neither a duckling nor ugly any longer, gathered some food . . . and brought it back to their nest.
>
> And that
>
> is where the two of them are
>
> right now. (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 123)

Past, present and future are flattened in this ending. Although the stair-like formatting could suggest movement or progression, there is no indication of time-passing, and the excerpt is devoid of any of the markers of life—including perhaps the most defining one (certainly the most universal) which is threaded through the tale: death. By disengaging the characters from normative temporality, Cashorali can also disentangle them from normative narrative expectations, eschewing both the finality of tragedies and the utopian orientation of fairy tales[48] in favour of an ephemeral instant, forever suspended in time.

3.5.3 The Margins of Gay Subculture

Even though happy endings are not as absolute in AIDS-related tales, there is in them a certain undercurrent of, if not hope, with its connotation of futurity, at least immediate, achievable contentment. In Cashorali's retellings this contentment is related, almost invariably, to community in its many forms, as previously isolated characters come to find love, friendship, and/or a general sense of belonging. Given the nature of the tales, this community is always necessarily subcultural—it is always the gay community, in some shape, what is found. In most cases, the community depicted is quite uniformly white, middle-class and homonormative, but there are some stories in which Cashorali explores some of the subcultures within the gay world that are socially positioned against hegemonic models of gay culture. This is the case of his retelling of 'Hansel and Gretel,' which features drag queens, and his retelling of 'The Beauty and the

[48] It must be noted that some German folktales end on the phrase 'if they have not died, they are still alive,' an alternative formula to 'and they lived happily ever after.' The former type of ending resembles Cashorali's and can be found in the Grimms' 'Foundling-Bird,' and also in other traditional tales like 'The Enchanted Princess' and 'The Tale of the Silver, Golden and Diamond Prince,' both of which can be found in Kurt Ranke's *Folktales of Germany* (1966). Queer temporalities are thus more common to the genre that we might initially think.

Beast,' in which there are nods to BDSM[49] and leather culture.

Cashorali's retelling of 'Hansel and Gretel' is based on the Grimms' story of the same name. It features the two siblings, who are eventually abandoned by their parents in the middle of the forest where, as prescribed by the pre-text, they find the candy house. Instead of the traditional witch, a beautiful woman emerges from inside:

> She had big bouffant hair the colour of moonlight and a wrap of white fur, and when the lights hit her long dress they broke into a thousand pieces and danced. She wasn't young at all. (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 38)

The mysterious figure invites them inside. While Gretel is reluctant and distrustful, Hansel feels an instant connection to the woman. The house, although not made of candy once they are past the door, Hansel notes, is 'much, much larger on the inside than on the outside' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 39). Such indications of magic are only further confirmed when the woman and Hansel sit down to talk:

> 'Do you like magic?' And, without waiting for an answer, she opened a jar of cream, smoothed some on her face, and wiped it off with tissue. 'Now . . . Who shall I be?' She took out pencils and brushes and . . . with just a few strokes she gave herself a completely different face. (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 39)

While Cashorali's retellings cannot be considered realistic, and have instances of unexplained and unexamined wonder, such as the talking dog in 'Penny Loafers,' traditional fairy-tale magical powers are largely absent from his stories. In fact, Cashorali approximates the idea of magic the most when addressing the transformative abilities of drag queens, such as in the example above.

In addition to the witch in 'Hansel and Gretel,' his retelling of the 'Sleeping Beauty' tale, 'The Beauty in the Mountain of Ice,' also casts the thirteen fairies as drag queens:

> Curious about what was up there, he climbed the stairs [and saw] a balding, middle-aged man . . . Now, this man was the evil thirteenth fairy, who had removed all her makeup, taken off her wig, and exchanged her lovely gown for a wrinkled seersucker suit. (Cashorali, *Gay Fairy and Folk Tales* 24)

The witch in 'Hansel and Gretel' and the evil fairy in 'The Beauty in the Mountain of Ice' are the only two characters identified as drag queens, and the fact that they are both

[49] This acronym stands for a combination of different sexual practices and activities, namely bondage/discipline, dominance/submission and sadomasochism.

villains could bring to mind Disney's tendency to convey moral deviance and monstrosity through gender nonconformity, as discussed in the previous chapter. However, it is implied that the other twelve (good) fairies in 'The Beauty in the Mountain of Ice' are also drag queens, and the journey of Hansel, who is cast as the hero and ultimately becomes a drag queen himself, somewhat undercuts this line of interpretation.

The drag queen witch in 'Hansel and Gretel' soon begins to groom him to be her successor, which raises homophobic alarm in Gretel: 'We have to escape . . . She's turning you into her' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 40). The homophobic connotations become even clearer when Gretel thinks that 'the lady was eating Hansel a bit at a time' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 40), which echoes the anthropophagy of the pre-text, but also common moral panic rhetoric that would equate homosexuality with monstrous appetite, queerness with sexual predation.[50] Gretel's homophobic anxiety about her brother being 'turned,' assimilated or ingested into the gay world, is framed within an overarching rivalry between the cisgender girl and the woman-in-performance, the biological sister and the potential chosen family. The narrative balance finally tips in Gretel's favour, who tricks the vain witch into stepping into the oven and burning to death.

This normative narrative turn, which would eliminate the gender non-conforming character, is problematized at the end, when Gretel finds her brother in the witch's dressing room, transformation complete:

> [As] he passed the triple mirror he saw her . . . and oh, she was beautiful. When Hansel smiled with joy to see her, she smiled back, and when he raised his hand to his face, the lady raised her hand in farewell. (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 42)

Ultimately, in a way, it is Hansel who effectively consumes the witch, who appears for the last time as his reflection, dissolving into the no-place, no-where space of the mirror. The drag queen/witch, furthermore, remains an ambiguous figure in this story, cast as the villain but also as a model of affirmative identity for Hansel. One can go further and say that she is not only a model, but the very embodiment of Hansel's queer future, who must be absorbed by Hansel in order for him to complete his journey of self-discovery. The witch's character is doubly ambiguous because her status as drag queen is ultimately unclear: she is said to transform into several movie stars in the style of a drag queen

[50] Themes of monstrosity/monstrousness and queerness will be further explored in chapter four.

impersonator, but at the same time there is no moment in which her gender performance breaks up, unlike the example cited earlier, in which the evil fairy of 'The Beauty in the Mountain of Ice' is surprised while out of character. As Barrett notes, a successful drag performance ideally convinces the audience of the performer's ability to pass as a woman, but the audience also 'must be occasionally reminded that the performer is indeed *performing* rather than actually claiming a female identity' (Barrett 42). Although trans people can, and indeed *do* drag,[51] the overly smooth gender performance of the witch raises questions about hers (and, by extension, Hansel's) gender identity, which would be better addressed in a trans reading of the story.

If we take drag queens to be on the most feminine end of gay culture, leathermen could be seen as being on the opposite one, as ultramasculine BDSM enthusiasts 'who wear distinctive black leather outfits, military-style leather caps . . . and leather harnesses' (Weems 480). In Cashorali's version of 'The Beauty and the Beast,' the Beast is one of such leathermen. His retelling follows Andrew Lang's *The Blue Fairy Book* version of the tale, which, in turn, is an abridged version of Madame Gabrielle de Villeneuve's 1740's romance novel (Griswold 93). Villeneuve's story provided the basis for the best-known version of the tale, which is the 1756's tale by Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont, upon which popular versions like the 1991's animated Disney film are based. Cashorali, as usual, follows a familiar script but turns the female protagonist into a son:

> His name was Buddy, but because, as even his father had to admit, he was much prettier than boys usually are, everyone called him Beauty. (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 21)

Beauty, although he is reimagined as a boy, retains the characteristics that made the female Beauty desirable: he is gentle, pure of heart, cheerful and of course, beautiful. But these are not prized masculine qualities, and he is seen as the lesser among his brothers.

Beauty, like in the pre-text, is also fond of flowers, so when his father asks him what he wants him to bring Beauty from a business trip, Beauty asks for a one. In trying to do so, the merchant stops at a beautiful penthouse where he stays the night and, finally, picks out an exquisite dark orchid that 'looks like a bruise' (Cashorali, *Fairy*

[51] A heated discussion on the boundaries of drag was sparked by television personality and famous drag queen RuPaul, who remarked that he would not allow post-transition trans women to participate in his reality show, *RuPaul's Drag Race*. He eventually reconsidered this position (see S. Levin).

Tales 25), which foreshadows the sadomasochist elements that will emerge later in the story.[52] Right then, an alarm goes off, which sounds 'like the roar of an angry animal' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 24) and a man in a leather outfit seizes the merchant:

> Now, the huge irritated someone was wearing nothing except a costume made of leather straps and steel rings. Because the merchant had seen harnesses like that only on horses and dogs, he concluded that he was in the grip of a beast. (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 24)

Interestingly, the merchant's impression of animality is what initially casts the leatherman as the Beast in the narrative. Such dehumanisation is reminiscent of attitudes to the sexually non-normative (here doubly non-normative, since the beast belongs to a kinky subset of the gay community), who would be identified with monstrous alterity (Eynat-Confino 93). Queer people, like monsters, represent the consequences of deviating from the norm. Thus, it is not surprising that many queer people have felt a sense of queer resonance in the monstrous, interspecies fairy tale, leading to many a queer revision: from Jean Cocteau's 1946 film *La Belle et la Bête* to Donoghue's 1997 short story 'The Tale of the Rose.' Even the most popular version among younger audiences, Disney's 1991's *Beauty and the Beast*, has a discernible queer undertone. Howard Ashman, who was the lyricist for the film and died before its release, greatly identified with the Beast as an HIV-positive gay man, which he reflected in his lyrics. As his partner Bill Lausch remarked:

> Gay people will always identify with someone who's on the outside, who is feared and misunderstood . . . We respond to being perceived as ugly, as a monster. People are afraid of what they don't understand—that's actually in the lyrics of one of the songs. (Lassel 77)[53]

After the first meeting with the Beast, Cashorali's story unfolds in a familiar enough manner: the father vows to send his younger son to the Beast's place in exchange for his freedom and Beauty goes willingly, knowing himself to be a disappointment to his father. Once he is at the Beast's penthouse, the Beast reveals to him what the terms of their domestic discipline arrangement will be: 'During the day . . . your only

[52] This also calls to mind Proust's image of a bee fertilizing an orchid when describing homosexual sex between two characters in *Sodom and Gomorrah* (1922), which incidentally is in keeping with the botanical/zoological theme of Cashorali's retelling.

[53] Lausch was referring to the lyrics of the appropriately named 'Mob Song,' which plays when the villagers are getting ready to kill the Beast: 'We don't like/ what we don't understand/ in fact it scares us/ And this monster is mysterious at least' (*Beauty and the Beast*).

responsibility will be to take care of my orchids . . . At night, after you've eaten, your only responsibility will be to make me happy' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 26-27). Cashorali thus brings to the surface the sexual innuendo of Beauty's captivity: in his retelling, the transaction is openly sexualised, but also framed within the ritualistic and honest approach to sex particular to BDSM culture (Bauer 147). After each sex session, Beast asks Beauty the fairy-tale question: 'Beauty . . . do you love me?' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 27). To which Beauty answers in kind: 'No, I don't love you . . . How could I? You're a Beast' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 27).

Beauty's days acquire a strange kind of rhythm: during the night, he performs his sexual ritual with Beast, which culminates with the asking and answering, but during the day he gets to explore the penthouse, he takes care of the plants and eventually finds the library, where he discovers a passion for reading and learning. The penthouse soon becomes for Beauty the site of possibility rather than a prison, where his queer curiosity gets to thrive far away from his repressive, heterocentric family home. At the end, Beauty comes back from visiting his family and sees the Beast, standing before him for the first time under the light of day:

> To his amazement, the person . . . wasn't a beast at all, but the handsomest man he had ever seen. 'Beast . . . Were you under a spell all this time?'
> 'No . . . You were. Now the spell is broken, and you're free. You can leave or stay.' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 34)

Peeking beneath the cover of heterocentric illusion, thus, Beauty breaks down ontological barriers and exercises his queer curiosity: 'I want to stay with you . . . On one condition . . . That tonight, after dinner . . . you'll be Beauty, and I'll be the Beast' (Cashorali, *Fairy Tales* 34). Beauty, ultimately, both pierces through the spell that his father's heterocentric vision had managed to cast upon him, which had taken the queer unknown and had distorted it into something ugly, monstrous and scary, and he finds the strength to step outside of a fairy-tale-given, uniformly passive identity.

3.6 Michael Ford's *Happily Ever After: Erotic Fairy Tales for Men*

Michael Ford's collection contains twenty-eight stories written by as many different authors. They are, as advertised, erotic reimaginations of fairy tales, in which the obligatory happy ending is sometimes a traditional romantic conclusion. Even when that is not the case, the sexual slant of the retellings guarantees that there is at least *one*

kind of happy ending, which jokingly fulfils the narrative 'requirements' of the genre. There is no careful annotation of interconnected sources, unlike in Cashorali's books, but each story is prefaced by a short epigraph in which each author introduces their retellings. Through them an ample range of sources and traditions are laid out, from Native American myths to Middle-Eastern folklore, but, as with Cashorali's works, this section will only analyse stories that work within the western European tradition.

Ford writes in the introduction that fairy tales are not only entertaining stories for children, but 'treasure chests of information that taught us, knowingly or not, about love, life and what was expected of us' (Ford 1). His understanding of fairy tales thus mirrors Cashorali's, as he takes them to be teaching tools that would, among other things, prime little boys and girls for their insertion into an exclusively heterosexual society. He however highlights the fact that these little boys and girls have the capacity of being dissenting readers:

> What more beautiful image is there than of a father reading his son the same stories his father read to him as a boy. Little does he know that . . . his little man is dreaming of the prince who will take him in his arms, wondering exactly what the Big Bad Wolf would do if he ever caught the naughty little pigs, or learning that the forbidden desires of the darkened woods can bring all kinds of pleasures. (Ford 2)

Thus, the authoritative, didactic and prescriptive role of fairy tales is somewhat diminished in this understanding, and fairy tales are conceived as the landscape in which the spectre of (sexually non-normative) desire first takes hazy shape. The very acknowledgement of sexuality of any kind in children goes against childhood's 'freshly scrubbed face' image (Ford 4), which Ford urges readers and writers to question primarily by reaching 'beneath the deceptively simple' (Ford 3) stories told to children, in order to find 'the hidden truths flowing below' (Ford 3).[54] In his examination of the relationship between nostalgia and children's literature, Robert Hemmings notes that childhood is often depicted as an 'impossibly sanitised and Edenic time and space' (Hemmings 55), and is not actually childhood as lived. For their part, Steven Bruhm and Natasha Hurley define nostalgia as a 'fantasy of a preferred past' (xiii). Arguably, Ford is also incurring in some degree of nostalgia, a kind of re/construction of childhood as a preferred, enlightened past seen through the lens of adult experience and self-knowledge.

[54] It must be noted that almost all stories told to children, from the completely sanitised to those that retain darker undercurrents, are equally adult-made.

According to Tribunella, rediscovering childhood texts through the lens of sexual adult experience taps precisely into the 'carnivalesque pleasure [of] adult nostalgia, revelry in the taboo, and exertion of adult agency over the artifacts of childhood' (Tribunella, 'Kiddie Lit' 136). Since, as outlined in the previous chapter, the relationship between fairy tales and childhood has acquired strong cultural recognition, the practice of eroticising fairy tales can be seen as having a unique, illicit appeal, in that it targets the ultimate 'artifact of childhood.' This is not an exclusively postmodern practice,[55] and heterosexuality is still the more common configuration of erotic retellings, but the retellings in Ford's collection go a step further in revelling in the taboo by being exclusively and explicitly queer. Therefore, and much like Cashorali's stories, Ford's collection works as an antidote to normative society's oppressive narratives. But, perhaps even more so than Cashorali's, it is also framed as an attempt to retroactively reclaim childhood—not for other queer children, but for the readers' and writers' child-selves. That is to say, these sexualised stories turn back to that remembered (perhaps partly imagined) past, a period of solitude, invisibility and confusion, and overwrite it with the promise of what the authors know lies beyond. In Tribunella's words, it is a kind of 'cultural therapy' ('Older Children' 629).

Ford's 'cultural therapy' tackles similar themes found in Cashorali's collections, revealing a common thread of experience for mid-nineties gay men, and so this section will analyse a number of retellings in relation to their representation of identity within gay subcultures, the HIV/AIDS crisis, and the journey to queer belonging.

3.6.1 Unfolding Identities Within Gay Subcultures

As Simon Sheppard writes in the epigraph to his retelling 'The Ugly Duckling,' queer people learn early that 'identity is complex' (Sheppard 91), with many layers and intersections that might require understanding 'coming out' as 'a succession of self-defining moments,' and not a single event (Sheppard 91). One might also come out in increments, at different points of their life, to different groups of people, narratively creating a 'temporal trajectory within which [periods] of disclosure [follow periods] of repression' (Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place* 36). If queer temporalities exist

[55] See for instance 2016's *Fairy Tales for the Disillusioned: Enchanted Stories from the French Decadent Tradition*, edited by Seifert and Gretchen Schultz.

parallel to or independent from normative time, coming-out moments might substitute or overshadow some normative landmarks of life experience. For instance, while reaching the age of majority might be an important milestone for many people, coming out of the closet might be a more significant moment for queer individuals. This is amplified by the fact that living in the closet can push back a lot of the experiences non-queer people first encounter during adolescence, such as first loves and first sexual relations, which incidentally furthers the impression that queer people live out of step, perhaps even out of time, or are somehow 'backwards.' Heather Love calls attention to the fact that queer people have embraced this 'backwardness' as a key feature of queer culture, 'in celebrations of perversion, in defiant refusals to grow up . . . and in stubborn attachments to lost objects' (Love 7). However, the succession of coming-outs that Sheppard mentions above actually points to a progression, an unfolding of identity that both mimics and offers an alternative to normative growing-up processes: a sort of sideways becoming, or 'sideways growth,' to use Kathryn Bond Stockton's term (13). In what follows, we will see how some stories in Ford's collection explore the characters' awakening to different sides of their identity, and also how identities shift and are reorganised according to queer time and queer space.

A good percentage of the stories collected in *Happily Ever After* depict BDSM sex in one way or another, which is also a fairly common theme in Cashorali's less-explicit collections. Robin Bauer points out that BDSM culture as we know it in the west has its roots in post-World War II biker clubs that were comprised of homosexual war veterans who would replicate military discipline in their sexual practices (Bauer 143). For this reason, it is a group that has been closely linked to the gay community from its modern beginnings. However, BDSM is still a marginal sexual practice even within the gay community, and it might require its own kind of coming out (Bauer 142). In Ford's collection, BDSM themes often emerge in retellings whose pre-texts invite a dominance/submission dynamic or evoke other kinds of power imbalance, such as William Mann's 'Jack and the Beanstalk,' in which a boy is trained by a giant to be a good submissive partner, and Michael Lassell's 'The Three Bears,' in which the Goldilocks character has a sexual encounter with the three eponymous 'bears,' here referring to the gay slang term.

They also emerge, interestingly, in retellings of tales in which identity is a central theme, such as 'The Frog King,' or, predictably, 'The Ugly Duckling.' Andersen's 'The

Ugly Duckling' is a tale that tackles identity, alterity and belonging head-on, as mentioned when analysing Cashorali's version. Sheppard's version of the tale indeed taps into this potential for queering, and he even keeps the retelling within the somewhat expected boundaries of a coming-out narrative, but he adds a slight twist to it:

> Once upon a time, a man named Swann looked into a mirror and did not much like what he saw there. For you see, the man in Swann's mirror was decidedly middle-aged. (Sheppard 91)

The appropriately-named Swann[56] has to come to terms with ageing in a commercial gay scene that greatly privileges youth, and is 'even hostile to older age' (R. Jones 23). Considering 'older age' in this context can be just barely 'over thirty' (R. Jones 23), Swann spends several years rejecting his own ageing process. He desperately latches onto the artifacts of youth by turning 'his cap back-to-front' (Sheppard 92) when young people start doing it, and by peppering 'his earlobes with new holes' (Sheppard 92) when that seems like the fashionable choice, which echoes the 'defiant refusal' to grow up mentioned by Love (7).

However, eventually, the dissonance between his inner image and the image others perceive becomes too great to ignore:

> Castro Street on a sunny Saturday was a place for the young and beautiful . . . youths showed off their nipple rings, nose rings, navel rings, and rings God knew where else, putting Swann's few pathetic earrings to shame. *He's old. He's ugly*, Swann thought he heard them say. (Sheppard 92)

The Castro in San Francisco is here an eminently queer space in that it is (apparently exclusively) populated by queer men, but also in that their desires have seeped into the public sphere, refashioning the rules of normative society so that youth and a queer take on male beauty reign supreme.[57] These are, in any case, quite exclusive rules, and, as a person who does not fit this paradigm, Swann feels constantly and increasingly out of place.

He tries the sex club, the gym and the gay bar, in search of a pocket within the queerscape that would accept him, but he runs into repeated rejection. Swann thus heads

[56] This might be a double reference: on the one hand, to Andersen's swan, and on the other, to Proust's Charles Swann, who has been read as queer.

[57] This notion of reshuffled hierarchies within queer spaces will be further explored later in the chapter in relation to Jesse Monteagudo's 'The Prince and the Pauper.'

home by way of a cruising area in which men seek anonymous sex, and while he finds the familiar rejection in many men, one boy calls out to him:

> "Hello, Daddy," the tall, skinny boy said. *Daddy! Was he really that old, then? Daddy!* At first, Swann thought he should feel insulted. But he didn't . . . He felt something entirely new. (Sheppard 95)

When Swann and his new lover have sex, they do it in a public space, in front of appreciative onlookers, and they never exchange names. Their encounter thus goes beyond the regulated heterocentric norms of togetherness, which would only authorise one-on-one, private, (hetero)sexual encounters, usually within a monogamous relationship. The roles of Daddy/boy they assume also produce a scenario in which incestuous taboo and the power differential of an intergenerational relationship are consciously harnessed for erotic purposes, which sets them further away from the norm. This proves to be a meaningful experience for Swann, who sees his identity reshaped as he learns to 'see himself in the mirror of the boy's desire' (Sheppard 96). At the end, Swann comes out as a leather daddy, which opens up new possibilities of kinship for him: 'Saturdays on Castro Street, he nodded at other men who looked like him: handsome, balding men who carried themselves well in their leathers' (Sheppard 96-97). Sheppard's story thus re-routes the traditional path to happiness and fulfilment, which would include marriage and the promise of reproduction in the heteronormative trajectory, at the same time as he highlights less-visible ways of belonging within a queer space.

Jesse Monteagudo's 'The Prince and the Pauper'[58] shares several themes with Sheppard's story, although the main character and the overall message are almost its polar opposites. The protagonist of Monteagudo's story is named Tom Conte, a twist on the original pauper's name, Tom Conty. Conte is a common Italian name, but it also means 'tale' in French and so it works to underscore the story's fairy-tale connections. Unlike Swann, Conte is an exceptionally attractive man, just like the ones that would

[58] This story is a retelling of Mark Twain's 1886 novel by the same name. As an American writer, his oeuvre technically falls outside of the western European tradition, but this particular novel takes several themes from European fairy tales, such as the rags-to-riches plot (found in tales such as 'Puss in Boots' or 'Cinderella') and the hidden or mistaken identity plot (found in 'Donkeyskin,' 'Cinderella,' 'The Frog King,' et cetera). As such, I consider it close enough to the European fairy-tale tradition to warrant keeping this retelling in my analysis.

walk up and down Castro Street in 'The Ugly Duckling,' and he has no trouble getting attention in the same spaces Swann could not:

> Tom had a body that wouldn't quit, both on the job by day and at the hottest gay discos and sex clubs by night. Then he was a prince, worshiped by every man, approached by only a few. (Monteagudo 284)

Conte is, as befits his character, 'a pauper' (Monteagudo 284), but as soon as he enters a queer space, this side of his identity fades away and he is worshipped like 'a prince' (Monteagudo 284). This is especially true in the sex club, where all markers of wealth and lack of thereof are stripped off together with his clothes.

In his epigraph, Monteagudo says that the gay world shakes up the normative hierarchy, so that wealth and class 'are less important than youth and beauty' (Monteagudo 283), a sentiment already reflected in Sheppard's retelling. This levelling of the playing field is what allows the pauper and the prince character to interact as equals when they first meet: 'Tom approached his twin, aroused by the opportunity to make love to himself' (Monteagudo 286). However, this narcissistic fantasy dissolves as soon as they are done having sex and step outside of the liminal, magical space of the sex club, when all the material differences between them are thrown into sharp relief:

> As the two men dressed, Tom began to notice the differences between Ed Tuttle and himself. Instead of the old T-shirt and jeans that Tom wore, Ed put on an expensive outfit . . . Astonished by the contrast, Tom followed his new friend to the parking lot, where Ed's Rolls Royce awaited them, a new model bearing the license plate PRINZ ED. Once in the car, the men drove . . . toward Ed's penthouse apartment. (Monteagudo 286)

Once the spell breaks, neither is capable of going back to the illusion of equality of their first meeting. The 'prince,' Ed Tuttle, is revealed to be the closeted heir to a great fortune, which places him far from Tom's less-than-privileged reality. The power of the gay world to upend hierarchies proves to have a short reach: the heterocentric world has the strongest pull, and Ed must stay in the closet to avoid losing his position within the family business. Their relationship seems doomed, until Ed's father dies, leaving him free to live openly as a gay man and to pursue his love for Tom. Thus, Tom follows the well-trodden rags-to-riches path that ultimately casts him as a Cinderella figure.

Monteagudo mentions how the rearranged hierarchy of the gay space and the transformative power of gay desire 'helps us transcend the boundaries of race and class'

(Monteagudo 284). However, this assertion whitewashes tensions within the gay community, which has historically been over-represented by middle-to-upper class white men living in the city. It is telling that the author (a Latino man) chose two white-coded men as the protagonists of his story, who met in a paying sex club that would restrict access to people with less economic resources, and who managed to achieve happiness (and to retain economic status in the case of Ed Tuttle) via normative channels of inheritance. As Monteagudo puts it, 'while our desire can get us through the night, we need more than our libido in order to make it past breakfast' (Monteagudo 284). Ultimately, at least in Monteagudo's narrative, the hierarchy-defying, equalising power of gay desire is ephemeral and only works (partly) within the confines of the gay space, since outside of it there are more powerful elements at play to which both characters must bend.

3.6.2 HIV/AIDS and Magical Contagion

The topic of HIV/AIDS is not avoided or ignored in Ford's erotic collection, and in fact the themes of death and sex are sometimes intimately intertwined. The treatment of the crisis in these stories is not widely different from the way it was approached in Cashorali's—particularly when it comes to avoiding the disease's name. Out of all twenty-eight stories, only Robert Thompson's 'The Traveling Companion' mentions AIDS by its name. A noteworthy difference between these collections is the way magic features quite prominently in Ford when it comes to the epidemic. For instance, in Bruce Benderson's 'Pinocchio in the Port Authority,' Pinocchio is a hustler who meets the famous Blue Fairy. The Blue Fairy, besides allowing for the facile double entendre, is revealed to be under a debilitating spell:

> The Blue Fairy had been lithe and attractive just a few months before and had loved every kind of pleasure—dinner parties and clubs, sex and leather. Then a spell had begun to transform him into an unwell, emaciated man. (Benderson 11)

AIDS is thus a magical malady here, mysteriously contracted and mysteriously transmitted, so that not even the powerful Blue Fairy is immune to it.

Overconcern about the transmission of HIV/AIDS has been understood in the context of the law of magical contagion, one of the laws of sympathetic magic (Rozin, Markwith and Nemeroff, 1081). This is the description of a principle thought to underlie

beliefs in traditional cultures, and it maintains that 'when two objects touch . . . they pass properties to one another' (Rozin, Markwith and Nemeroff, 1082). In another study from 1989, Rozin, Nemeroff, Wane and Sherrod concluded that this was a deeply-held belief among Americans, for whom magic contagion could have positive effects if the contact was between an object and a revered or loved person, or negative if the contact was with a despised or feared person (Rozin, Nemeroff, Wane and Sherrod, 367-70). Bringing it back to the issue of HIV and AIDS, Rozin, Markwith and Nemeroff found that, beside an excessive fear of contagion through non-risky contact, there was also the moral threat of contact—a fear of stigmatisation by association (Rozin, Markwith and Nemeroff, 1089).

The exact process of contagion in 'Pinocchio and the Port Authority' is unknown, and Pinocchio actually sees a kindred spirit in the gaunt Blue Fairy: 'there was a look of purity to his ravaged body. In fact, it seemed worn and polished down into simple, elongated curves, much like Pinocchio's' (Benderson 11). Of course, his status as a marginalised, homeless sex worker cancels out any potential stigmatisation that could arise from associating with a person with AIDS, and the fact that he is made of wood makes him immune to diseases of the flesh. 'How wonderful,' the Blue Fairy thinks at some point, 'to be made of wood and never have to worry about getting sick' (Benderson 11). HIV/AIDS is, in any case, literally passed on through mysterious magical means in 'Pinocchio in the Port Authority.' But if we think of the less literal 'magical contagion' that Rozin, Markwith and Nemeroff describe, D. Travers Scott's 'Hansel and Gretel' comes closer to depicting it:

> A terrible plague and famine gripped the land, filling their every day with suspicion and fear. No medicine could prevent or cure the plague. Some people died immediately . . . others wasted away over years. In some families, the parents got sick and died while the children remained completely healthy. Sometimes only the children died . . . And so on. The sickness spread from person to person through the slightest touch: brushing shoulders, holding hands, kissing, embracing . . . Children learned to walk without the guidance of parents' hands. Over the years, the disease had forced lovers to stay virgins. (Travers Scott 312)

Whether this AIDS-like plague is actually transmitted by simple touch or supernatural means is unclear, but the belief within the story's universe is that all human contact leads to death. This pushes people to extremes: they not only stop touching each other completely, but they close themselves off to the world.

Hansel and Gretel are two gender non-normative siblings who grow up in that repressive world. Hansel is shy and likes reading fantasy novels in secret, while Gretel prefers the bench press to books, and they both practise their hobbies far away from their parents' judgemental eyes, who believe Hansel is the one exercising and Gretel the one reading. This creates a strong bond between the two, which at some point takes a desperate, incestuous turn:

> Once he had confessed to Gretel, and she to him, of his constant aching, his lonely hunger. They decided that night to risk the plague and touched each other, exploring their bodies together . . . Strangely, they found no relief, only more frustration and loneliness. (Travers Scott 314)

The hunger of the pre-text is transformed into hunger for contact in Travers Scott's retelling. It is not satisfied by touching each other, possibly because they are siblings, but most likely because both are dreaming of lovers of their same gender: 'Hansel imagined her as a man, a powerful stranger who could take Hansel . . . to a far-off land where there was no plague and an equally powerful sister for Gretel' (Travers Scott 314). Ultimately, it is their non-normativity (with regard to their desires, bodies and bond) which works as the catalyst to them being abandoned in the forest: their parents become convinced they have contracted the plague since Hansel is too thin, 'no matter how much he eats or exercises' (Travers Scott 315), and Gretel must have fallen sick as well because they spend so much time together. Thus, homophobic parental rejection emerges in this story just like in Cashorali's 'Romaine,' only here there is the added factor of HIV/AIDS stigma, with its connotations of moral transgression, and a (perhaps justified) fear of magical contagion.

It is interesting to note that both Travers Scott's and Cashorali's retellings make the cabin in the woods the site for a kind of queer discovery that is personally reaffirming but also potentially annihilative, harnessing the particular blend of desire and fear that characterises the Grimms' version of the tale. Much like in the Grimms' story, then, Hansel and Gretel will find what they want the most at the house in the forest, the specific kind of nourishment they were craving:

> Out into the pale moonlight stepped two of the most beautiful people Hansel and Gretel had ever seen: a man and a woman, both completely naked . . . Without a word, each embraced a child, encircling them with their arms, flooding their cold bones with warmth and rejuvenating their dry, starved skins with velvety caresses. (Travers Scott 319)

The witch figure is split into two characters in this retelling in order to make room for lesbian as well as gay desire. This is particularly salient since this is the only tale (in Ford's and Cashorali's collections both) to explore lesbian sexuality, which could be understandable considering the target audience of these works, but becomes conspicuous once one notes it is also one of the only stories to include lesbians at all, who are nowhere to be found even in retellings set where diversity could be expected, such as gay neighbourhoods.

The siblings' initial wonder is short-lived, just like the pre-text's Hansel and Gretel's first enchanted encounter with the candy house soon leads to them discovering the horror that lurks within. The beautiful beings claim to be free of the plague, and to have purified their house so that it 'heals all who pass through its doors' (Travers Scott 320), which seems to be offering the magical cure to AIDS that Benderson and Cashorali carefully avoided in their tales. However, it all takes a dark turn. While the siblings are distracted by the sex they are having with the two witches, which they perceive as 'a physical engorgement, a seven-course feast after years of famine' (Travers Scott 320), the house itself is preparing to consume them:

> The room had changed. The walls and ceiling had moved closer . . . Most horrifying was the fireplace, burning bright blood-red. A fireplace no longer, it yawned: a huge fleshy mouth, opening wide to reveal a wet, quivering throat pulsing with luminescent red veins. (Travers Scott 320)

The anthropophagous house pushes the Freudian concept of the uncanny or unhomely to new extremes, in that it cracks open the fiction of the safe, familiar space of the home (made doubly safe by its magical prophylactic properties) to reveal something monstrous and deadly. This house is reminiscent of other horrifying fairy-tale houses, such as Baba Yaga's chicken-legged hut, and Andersen's 'The Little Mermaid's sea witch's house, which was made up of bones of shipwrecked human victims. The witches' house in this retelling is also made up of bodies, in this case of previous victims fed to the cabin in exchange for its magical protection. Both siblings soon realise the doorknobs are closed fists, the door jambs are writhing legs, the knots in the wood open into vigilant eyes and the floor is an ambiguous sexual organ, 'hairy and spastic' (Travers Scott 321). The abject house thus blurs the boundaries between inanimate and alive, object and subject.

But perhaps the most frightful aspect of the house is its single-minded hunger, which mirrors and distorts the queer hunger that led the two siblings there in the first

place and adds a cautionary dimension to the retelling. The witches keep the siblings captive, and try to get their fluids out of them to 'empower their hungry home-beast with a double dose of deflowering' (Travers Scott 322), but the siblings are able to resist thanks to years of denying their physical needs. The house claims other victims in the meantime, whose disembodied parts add themselves to its hybrid frame:

> Hansel and Gretel would hear the screams of a new victim who had realized the witch and warlock's secret too late. Soon new faces, arms, and legs would appear in the body of the house. (Travers Scott 323)

Following the pre-text, Hansel and Gretel are eventually able to trick the devouring house into eating the two witches. The house collapses into itself, letting out the 'death-howl of an agonized beast' (Travers Scott 326) and disappears into the ground.

> Standing in the clearing where the house-beast and its evil lords had once been, they squinted up into the brilliant sun at songbirds swooping by overhead. To the east rose the dark hills of the land of their birth. To the west rose purple-green mountains of unknown lands. They smiled and continued their journey forward. (Travers Scott 327)

A sense of hope is thus projected on to the west, symbolically situated against their repressive birthplace (which is geographically located to the east). 'The west' as a concept is significant for queer people, figured as an Edenic, paradisiacal alternative to their ostensibly rural, intolerant places of origin. Famously popularised by The Village People's gay anthem 'Go West,' which described the 1970s 'gay flight' to California (Alwakeel 85-88), the dream of the idealised west collapsed soon after, when HIV/AIDS ravaged these enclaves of sexual freedom and social acceptance. Both Hansel and Gretel, however, are fleeing from an AIDS-like plague that has affected their heteronormative homeland. Revising the tale from a mid-nineties perspective, Travers Scott thus rewrites the trajectory of the epidemic and restores the dream of the Edenic queer west, allowing the two queer characters to escape unscathed towards the untouched promised land of Hansel's daydreams.

3.6.3 Queer Belonging

What underlies Travers Scott's 'Hansel and Gretel' ultimately is a desire to belong, to find that place where one's difference is celebrated rather than feared or despised, and the hope that such a place exists. Elizabeth Freeman defines queer

belonging along these lines, as a 'longing to be, and be connected' (Freeman 299), which suggests that connecting to others reaffirms one's existence. Or, in other words, that recognising similar experiences in others makes our own experience of difference more legible, more coherent, and thus more real—which incidentally explains the success of consciousness-raising groups in early attempts at uniting gays and lesbians.

This is, of course, hardly a thematic oddity in narratives that deal with non-normative, minoritarian identities, and so the same undercurrent of queer belonging can be found in most stories analysed so far, across all three collections. Queer belonging is certainly central to the 'Hansel and Gretel' and 'The Ugly Duckling' retellings in Ford's collection, and also to Tom Bacchus's 'Lily Boy,' a composite retelling of several tales of miniature people, such as the Grimm's 'Tom Thumb' and Andersen's 'Thumbelina,' in which childless parents wish for a child, however small. In Bacchus's story, the protagonist is found inside a lily, and that moment will mark the beginning of his quest for queer belonging:

> Giulia searched around, looking for a sign, until a spot of moonlight guided her to a lily blossom, just opening. Nestled in its white folds lay a tiny sleeping boy, no bigger than a bird. (Bacchus 333)

Thus he is named Lillo. Lillo never grows to be taller than an 'impressive' seven inches (Bacchus 339), a tongue-in-cheek reference to above-average-sized penises. It is his disabled status, his deviant physiology and non-normative size, which puts him in constant danger of being devoured or stomped on, kidnapped and exploited for the benefits of others, but his Otherness extends to his sexuality, and it is the intersection of all these which drives the need for belonging.

Although he begins a rather unlikely sexual relationship with his attractive (full-sized) cousin, who is presumably bisexual, his cousin soon marries a girl. Feeling sad, Lillo wanders away from the village and follows 'the path through the forest to a place that, although he did not remember having visited, felt familiar and safe' (Bacchus 349). This 'familiar and safe' place is of course the liminal forest clearing where his mother first found him, and it is where Lillo will find, in turn, his people:

> 'Have you been enjoying yourself in the human world?' said another creature . . . he was no taller than Lillo.

> The boy was caught between shock and joy. He had never seen anyone his own size. Even the babies of the village . . . had been born twice his size, and fat, and so noisy. These were...
>
> 'Fairies.'
>
> 'Yes, all of us.' (Bacchus 350)

Lillo discovers, for the first time, that there is an 'us' that includes him and his intersectional existence, and the story could stop there, neatly and happily, with the finding of Lillo's queer kin. However, it delves into the tensions of maintaining two separate families, as Lillo keeps his relationship with the fairies from his parents. This draws an obvious parallel with the schism between biological and chosen (queer) family that often arises when queer people, like Lillo, feel split in their loyalties, and remain 'some of one, some of the other' (Bacchus 351).

Most retellings follow similar structures to 'Lily Boy's, in that the protagonist's final, queer belonging is part of the story's denouement. This has to do with the fact that queer belonging in these examples equals (or approximates) the pre-text's happy ending. In order to find a departure from this script, then, one has to look for retellings of fairy tales that do not offer a happy ending. Such is the case of Kyle Stone's 'Aquamarine,' a retelling of the most famously sad fairy tale, Andersen's 'The Little Mermaid.' Stone's retelling is a neat mirror image of Bacchus's 'Lily Boy' in that it draws an almost exact inverse narrative path, in this case from queer belonging to loneliness and abjection. It might not be entirely coincidental that they appear side-by-side in the anthology. The story begins under the sea, where human rules of being do not apply:

> Down there beyond the reach of men live the water people, who are neither male nor female, human nor fish, but a wonderful combination of all four. Their country is full of beautiful plants and flowers, and the sun floats down in bars of shimmering gold. All manner of amazing creatures live there, too. They glow every color of the rainbow and a lot more besides that we have no words for. (Stone 353)

Besides its normative monarchical order, the underwater world is fantastically queer, inhabited by hybrid creatures of ambiguous gender and taxonomy. It is truly beyond the reach of men—not only physically, but also conceptually, so that even the colours down there have no human name.

The little mermaid character is named Clare, is referred to as a ‘he’ and he has a father, but all other characters are spoken of in gender-neutral terms—his father used to have a partner, and Clare has several siblings of unspecified or unknowable gender. Clare’s budding queer curiosity leads him to spy on his siblings, and one time he finds two of them ‘entwined in an upside-down embrace’ (Stone 353), which offers a blurry glimpse as to how the rules of togetherness operate under the sea. This nebulousness and borderline queer ineffability is extended to other elements of underwater life, so that when Clare starts developing he feels he is transforming into an indescribable ‘something "other",’ which is for him ‘inexplicably exciting’ (Stone 353-54).

When the statue of a human man floats down to his garden, Clare realises merely transforming into a grown-up merperson would not be enough, that this ‘something other’ he feels himself becoming would require crossing species lines:

> Clare let his breath out in a long sigh and knew at last what he had been longing for. "I want to be a man," he said, but his tutor had fallen asleep again, which was probably just as well. He would merely say what was plainly evident: Clare was a sea prince. He would never be a man. (Stone 355)

Stone amplifies the trans murmurs in Andersen’s story with an added twist: in Stone’s retelling, Clare’s transition is clearly positioned against his ‘queerer’ original state. That is to say, Clare belongs to a genderqueer, hybrid species, and seeks to align himself to a binary-oriented, monospecies identity. Clare’s journey imitates that of an intersex person, whose body is regarded as incomprehensible in our binary-oriented society and is made to conform by carving it into a binary mould.

In any case, in love with a human prince, Clare does transition to the cisnormative human world through magical means, and he pays the same price as the little mermaid: the loss of his voice, and the excruciating pain of his newly-formed feet. Therefore, Stone keeps the disabled aspect into his narrative,[59] which adds another layer of Otherness to queer, transgender and transspecies Clare. Alterity does not hinder love, however, and the human prince quickly falls for Clare. Both of them live blissfully until a beautiful princess catches the attention of the bisexual prince, and he marries her. Both Bacchus and Stone imagine similar points of inflection in their narratives, only Lillo’s

[59] For a discussion on ‘The Little Mermaid’ from the point of view of disability studies, see Lori Yamato’s 2017 article ‘Surgical Humanization in H. C. Andersen’s “The Little Mermaid”.’

heartbreak prompts the discovery of his fairy kin, whereas Clare, having rejected his queer homeland in favour of 'the world of men, where there are laws that regulate love' (Stone 366), commits suicide by jumping into the sea.

There is an undeniable political message in a story about a queer creature that enters the cisheteronormative world only to be exterminated, but another political dimension of the tale is explicitly laid out by the prince:

> "But my dearest boy, a prince must marry. If I could follow my heart, perhaps I would marry you." He smiled. "But you know as well as I do that the law of the land will not allow such a union." (Stone 366)

Legally safeguarding the rights of queer people is figured here as a countermeasure for their annihilation. This speaks to another aspect of queer belonging as described by Freeman, which she understands not only as the mentioned 'longing to be' and connect, but also as a desire to 'be long' (Freeman 299). That is to say, to extend beyond one's limited existence, to have something 'queer exceed its own time' (Freeman 299). Although Freeman speaks of finding non-normative ways of 'being long,' Stone's narrative call for legally regulated kinship (in the form of marriage, perhaps) has the undefined potential to extend beyond its own time, of holding out 'a hand across time and touch the dead or those not born yet' (Freeman 299). It can be said this aspect of queer belonging underlies all three collections to the same extent that the desire to find a queer space does. After all, these are queer cultural artifacts that long to *be*, to reach back into the past and correct the bedtimes stories told to the authors' and readers' child-selves, but they also long to reach forward into the future, and speak their reality, needs and desires to those like us who might be listening in other times.

3.7 Conclusions

Both of Cashorali's collections and Ford's anthology strive to reclaim the fairy tale for gay men on several levels. They consistently demystify the centuries-old genre by imbuing it with the immediacy of contemporary issues and language, and inject large doses of campy humour to further weave gay subjectivity and culture into the genre. Writing at a historical junction in which gay writing, publishing, and genre fiction had evolved enough to make way for confronting reimaginings of 'children's literature,' all three collections place queer characters at the centre of the narrative, so that they are not

only present, but also not subsidiary to heteronormative characters, in an attempt to address both the invisibility of queerness in canonical fairy tales and a broader subordination of sexually-diverse characters in cultural production. The repeated use of certain fairy tales as the source of their retellings such as 'The Ugly Duckling' or 'Hansel and Gretel' reveals an existing potential for queer readings within those tales that different queer authors, independently but concurrently, have been able to recognise and tease out. Furthermore, the many overlapping themes being tackled across all three works, be it the AIDS crisis or the personal need to belong in a community, speak of comparable experiences of difference among gay men in the mid-nineties. The articulation of these issues through fairy-tale retellings is fairly consistent across the three texts, which, when put side by side, create a defined image of gay identity and community. In other words, these authors submit a coherent proposal for a dialectically constructed gay community, which appears here folded into their fairy-tale vessels.

It is, however, an imperfect, necessarily incomplete, depiction of the gay community. With few exceptions, gay men are represented as being cisgender, white, middle-class, and sexually active, marking their difference only in relation to their non-normative sexuality. While undoubtedly revolutionary in their own right, these retellings remain mostly blinded to racial, class, and gender identifications, among others, which ultimately undermines the potential of these works to effectively question some structures of power (within and without the fairy tale).

This is not to say Cashorali's and Ford's figurations of community are invalid—these retellings approach gay experience from extremely personal points of view, after all. As Cashorali reveals, his stories were directly based on his or his friends' experiences of homosexuality (qtd. in Dubin), and most authors writing in Ford's anthology speak of similarly intimate approaches to their retellings in the epigraphs. However, in their desire to make their own experiences visible within the genre, these writers also invisibilise large swathes of the gay community, particularly as the collections have generalising subtitles such as *Erotic Fairy Tales for Men* and *Fairy Tales Retold for Gay Men*. Perhaps it would be necessary to qualify this, then: these retellings are a valiant attempt to reclaim the fairy tale for some gay men, but more work needs to be done so as to reclaim it for all.

As Bacchilega puts it, fairy tales are 'ideologically variable desire machines' (*Postmodern* 7), a claim she later adds nuance to:

> For some, fairy tales instigate compensatory escapism, while for others they offer wisdom; alternatively, fairy tales are seen to project social delusions that hold us captive under their spell; or else they promote a sense of justice by narrating the success of unpromisingly small, poor, or otherwise oppressed protagonists. (Bacchilega, *Transformed* 4)

For Bacchilega, then, the fairy tale has variable meanings, uses and potential to effect change depending on our own understanding of the genre. As seen, the queer fairy tale as imagined by gay writers in the nineties is strangely situated as all of the above: as depositories of contemporary wisdom and escapist fantasies (not without limitations); as comforting and utopic narratives which also foreground subversive desires. Of course, as Bacchilega implies, the fairy tale holds within all of these possibilities, even in its most classical iterations—for instance, the Grimms' 'Hansel and Gretel' reflects the drama of famine, the danger of trusting apparently kind strangers, but also children's primal appetites and fantasies of excessive consumption; the fear of being dehumanised and turned into food, but it also depicts the impossible architecture of candy houses which at once are condensations of atavistic desire and adumbrate the threshold to horror. The authors analysed thus not only demystify cultural texts to show that 'social change is possible once we become aware of the stories that have guided our social, moral, and personal development' (Tatar, *Classic Fairy Tales* xvii)—in refusing to position themselves, they are reactivating all the contradictory possibilities at once, which were already present, however dormant, in the genre, thus uniquely exploiting the queer, contrapuntal potential of the fairy tale.

At a moment in time when AIDS had ravaged the gay community, the queer, contradictory desires of the fairy tale (desires of excess, of transformation, of challenging hierarchies, of belonging, of mundane pleasures and ineffable ones), its queer spaces of wonder, as well as its powers of construction (or magical regeneration) of community, proved, thus, to be uniquely productive for gay writers.

4 Heroes vs. Monsters: Tracing Monstrousness, Monstrosity and the Normalisation of Queerness in Fairy-Tale Retellings From the New Millennium

Fairy tales do not give the child his first idea of bogey. What fairy tales give the child is his first clear idea of the possible defeat of bogey

G. K. Chesterton in *Tremendous Trifles*

Monster Theory . . . Thesis Two: The monster always escapes

Jeffrey Jerome Cohen in *Monster Theory*

4.1 Introduction

Classic fairy tales are famously perceived as polarised narratives, with a clearly delineated axis of good and evil and characters that must fall on either side. The conflict between both extremes gives shape to the genre in its most popular form, and so countless heroes kill countless monsters, beautiful princesses prevail over ugly witches, clever or kind younger brothers succeed where their cruel older siblings fail, and so on. It is thus a genre expectation that the righteous and deserving should triumph over their rival, the villainous monster, and that the monster should be suitably punished for their misdeeds:

> The wicked woman uttered a curse, and she became so frightened, so frightened, that she did not know what to do. At first she did not want to go to the wedding, but she found no peace . . . When she arrived she recognized Snow-White, and terrorized, she could only stand there without moving.
>
> Then they put a pair of iron shoes into burning coals. They were brought forth with tongs and placed before her. She was forced to step into the red-hot shoes and dance until she fell down dead. (Grimm, 'Little Snow-White')

The punishment of the monster signals a return to normalcy, the eradication of the chaotic Other by normative forces: a restoration of the status quo. Even if, as Duncker points out, the fairy tale favours plots of individual upward mobility, 'the hierarchies remain resolutely intact' (Duncker 71). In tales where the status quo is momentarily troubled by a protagonist who challenges their social station, for instance by trying to

become rich when they are peasants, or by dressing up as knights if they are women, the final reward often involves the assimilation of the transgressive protagonist into normative institutions, such as royalty, usually through the equally normative institution of marriage. Heroism is thus ultimately identified with the norm, and antagonistic figures are identified in opposition as the non-normative, the outsider who must be eradicated, and the queer.

Drawing an explicit parallel between monsters in fairy tales and queerness, Dallas Baker has noted that antagonists work as obstacles for 'the heteronormative narrative trajectory' (80), and that it is the death of the monster which 'precedes a heterosexual union or reunion . . . and thus this punishment can be seen as a necessary precursor to heterosexual fulfilment' (81). The scene of the queen's demise, shown above, in which she is made to dance in blistering iron shoes to her death, and on the same day of Snow White's wedding no less, is a fitting example of Baker's assertion.

Although the formal function of queer monsters as obstacles for normative fulfilment is quite prevalent in many fairy tales,[60] particularly in canonical ones, the way in which these monsters are realised varies—they do so either through a manifestation of monstrousness, of monstrosity, or a combination of the two. As Alexa Wright writes, the terms 'monstrosity' and 'monstrousness' are often used interchangeably (3), but mean different things. Monstrousness 'encapsulates the impossible, dreadful, amoral, inhuman, unspeakable and even unthinkable qualities that lie at the periphery of human identity' (Wright 3). It is, in other words, an abstract, unfathomable quality that is moral, or intangible, rather than physical. Monstrousness in the fairy tale can be found, for instance, among the incestuous kings who try to marry their daughters, such as the one in Perrault's 'Donkeyskin,' or in the beautiful but jealous stepmother in the Grimms' 'Little Snow White.' Monstrosity, on the other hand, is 'the tangible means by which the unspeakable and threatening force of the monstrous is brought into being' (Wright 3); that is to say, a physical manifestation of monstrousness. Witches and ogres in fairy tales are often physically repulsive on top of being morally crooked, such as the cannibalistic witch in the Grimms' 'Hansel and Gretel' and the frightful ogre in Basile's 'The Flea.'

[60] It is often, but not always the case that queer monsters fulfil this function. For instance, the witch Baba Yaga, popular in Slavic folklore, might at times be the queer monster obstacle and at times fulfil the role of the donor figure, or even be morally ambiguous.

What these monsters share is thus their oppositional relationship with the tale's hero, who must vanquish them. The pervasiveness of this opposition has made it a favourite target of deconstruction in contemporary retellings of fairy tales, as noted in chapter two of the present study. On top of this trend, which would reimagine fairy-tale monsters and heroes altogether, many contemporary retellings also remove the heterosexual union (and even the romance plot) from the narrative, thus making the required monster death somewhat less of a requirement, going by Baker's formulation above. Specifically, queer retellings, which by definition eschew the heterosexual prerequisite of the fairy tale, would potentially be the last ones to narratively demand the queer monster and its punishment. However, many queer retellings from the new millennium still show an unrelenting attachment to the thematic tensions between the virtuous hero and queer monster, even if the categories themselves are hopelessly muddled, heroes are not that normative or free of abjection,[61] and monsters, although still presenting physical monstrosity, might not be all that monstrous.

This chapter will focus on texts from the mid-2000s to the present, to coincide with a noticeable increase in the number, variety and sophistication of queer fairy-tale retellings in English. It will analyse Jim C. Hines' *The Stepsister Scheme* (2009), Neil Gaiman's *The Sleeper and the Spindle* (2014), 'Bones Like Black Sugar' by Catherynne M. Valente (2006), Lauren Beukes' *The Hidden Kingdom* (2013), and the ABC TV show *Once Upon a Time* (2011-18). Following the first community-constructing efforts in the nineties, we will situate these queer fairy tales within an ongoing conversation around the normalisation and de-radicalisation of queerness, which has gained traction in the past two decades, particularly with regards to cultural representations. Ultimately, this chapter will investigate the prevalence of the queer monster in these retellings, its amalgamation with the fairy-tale hero, and the meaning of such monstrous resiliency when the mainstreaming of queer seems to have eradicated all the queer monsters.

[61] I use the term 'abject' in this chapter along the same lines as Julia Kristeva, who posited a definition in *The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* by which the abject is that which induces horror because it disturbs normative understandings of 'borders, positions, rules' (Kristeva 4). As such, it threatens to collapse the boundaries between self/Other, clean/filthy, living/dead, et cetera.

4.2 No More Queer Monsters?

In 2011, Sam Miller declared that 'there [were] no more queer monsters' (222). He was referring to the horror genre and not the fairy tale, but both genres are intimately connected: as Karra Shimabukuro and Kara Andersen put it, the constant 'violence in fairy tales seems to make a horror/fairy tale match-up an inevitable conclusion' (93). Moreover, they have long been similarly well-stocked with queer villains, even if monsters in horror are somewhat more explicit about their queerness. The fairy tale features the famous crossdressing wolf in the Grimms' 'Little Red Cap,' but most villains in canonical tales usually allow for queer readings of a more symbolic kind, such as the evil stepmothers in 'Snow White' and 'Cinderella,' who are queer insofar as they stand in the way of heteronormative fulfilment, or the witch in 'Hansel and Gretel,' who queerly opposes 'reproductive futurism' (Edelman 3)[62] by attempting to eat the two children. Contrarily, horror contains early literary examples like Sheridan Le Fanu's lesbian vampire in *Carmilla* (1872),[63] who makes romantic advances towards the female protagonist and exclusively feeds on young women, and Oscar Wilde's notoriously queer monster in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890).

Horror film history has also been densely populated by queer monsters, including two of the most iconic villains of all time: crossdressing, murderous Norman Bates in *Psycho* (1960), and trans serial killer Buffalo Bill in *Silence of the Lambs* (1991). But whereas *Psycho* did not receive a lot of negative press from gay and lesbian groups at the time of release, *The Silence of the Lambs* faced very public backlash. The film was bracketed by two other films featuring queer killers, *Cruising* (1980) and *Basic Instinct* (1992), and all three were boycotted by LGBTQI activists who demonstrated against them. In the case of *The Silence of The Lambs*, some groups like ACT-UP even threatened to disrupt the Oscars ceremony (Bloomer). These reactions were by-products of increased political organisation during the AIDS crisis, but also involved a targeted

[62] For Edelman, this is the belief that political organisation is ultimately driven by the promise of creating a better future for children. In this way, the future itself is emblematised by the figure of the Child, and is linked to heteronormativity, rendering all alternative (queer) modes of kinship as indicating non-futurity. The witch in 'Hansel and Gretel' is variously positioned against reproductive futurism: she is childless and shows no interest in procreating, but also threatens to eat the children (quite literally the results of reproduction) thus ultimately precluding the possibility of a future. She is, following Elderman's theorisation, intent on consuming the future.

[63] Although less obviously queer, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) presented, for Halberstam, not only anti-Semitic attitudes, but also gender and sexuality anxieties, particularly as only Dracula himself, and not female vampires, possessed a body capable of reproduction (Halberstam, *Skin Shows* 344-45).

effort to infiltrate the cultural mainstream, or at the very least to correct 'damaging' representations of queerness.

For Miller it is precisely this fight for positive representation, particularly in mainstream American culture, that has brought about the death of the queer monster: representation has led to normalisation, normalisation has defanged the monster, and, as a result, queerness 'is no longer frightening' (S. Miller 226).

4.2.1 Eradication of the Queer Threat Through Normalisation

Jordan Schildcrout points out that negative representations of queerness, among which figure queer monster-villains, have long supported equally negative attitudes about gender nonconformity and sexual non-normativity (2). Trying to influence the mainstream representation of minorities has thus become one of the fronts in the fight for equality in America. To that end, the Gay & Lesbian League Alliance against Defamation (GLAAD) was founded in 1985, modelled after other lobbying groups such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Jewish Anti-Defamation League (Schildcrout 2). GLAAD has monitored mass-produced popular culture for over thirty years. If the organisation perceives a particular product as negative to the representation of queer people, they can put pressure on 'creators, sponsors and consumers' (Schildcrout 2) so that the defamatory images are eliminated, or at least acknowledged as negative. As Schildcrout writes:

> Representations of 'normal' and even exemplary LGBT people are lauded and affirmed, and negative representations are thus positioned as hindrances to the goals of acceptance and assimilation. (Schildcrout 2)

Representational politics are part of a broader discussion about the assimilation, mainstreaming or normalisation of queerness, which deeply divides queer groups. Of course, LGBTQI movements have never been monolithic, from the early homophile days described in the previous chapter to today. As historian John D'Emilio posits, LGBTQI movements have historically tended to get divided into 'those who pursued mainstream methods of lobbying, education, and negotiation' against 'those who urged more militant, confrontational tactics,' and 'those whose work gave priority to opening up mainstream institutions to gays and lesbians' against 'those who valued the building of almost 'nationalist' communities' (85). GLAAD belongs to a mainstreaming strand that

could be regarded as Neoliberal, and which favours, in Lisa Duggan's words, 'politics compatible with a corporate world order' (L. Duggan 42). As such, it seeks the normalising of queerness, not based on 'any political analysis or critique of oppression' (S. Miller 223), but through the recasting of previously threatening individuals as harmless, even coveted consumers, in this case within the ever-growing media market. Though this lobbying style is very specific to American culture, the conversation about positive representation has crossed borders, possibly due to the American pre-eminence in the world's media market (Chalaby 33) and the global emergence of LGBTQI politics. For instance, in the 'BBC 2017/18 Equality Information Report,' the British public service broadcaster remarked that they were aware 'the diversity of production teams and who our audience see and hear in our programmes is vital to how we reflect modern Britain' (BBC 81), and for that reason they were committed to have an '8% LGBT on screen portrayal including some lead roles' by 2020 (BBC 81).

Moreover, on a different but related front, the mainstreaming of queerness through access to normative institutions, such as marriage and the military, has been, and continues to be to this day, a central issue for LGBTQI activist groups globally. Starting in the nineties, this focus on mainstream equality has been regarded as a conservative turn in LGBTQI activism,[64] and was immediately criticized for 'taming or [domesticating] the radical potentials of queer desires, practices and institutions' (Manalansan 78), and for excluding identities and bodies that did not satisfy the established hegemonic values (Grué 128). That is, those that are less 'palatable,' less easily homogenized, less compliant to heteronormative expectations, since, as Miller reminds us, the normalisation project has 'primarily benefited white people who conform to a mainstream understanding of masculinity or femininity' (S. Miller 228).

The fear of taming queerness and the possible consequences of doing so have spread to different areas: in 2003, Halperin voiced his concern that queer theory, which derived its power from confrontational postures and 'its shocking embrace of the abnormal' (341), would be so effortlessly, even eagerly, absorbed into institutions of knowledge (Halperin 341). In his words, as queer theory got increasingly accepted and utilised in different disciplines, it became 'harder to figure out what's so very queer

[64] Compare to the Gay Liberation Front (and admittedly radical group), which in 1970 had proclaimed 'it's not a question of getting our share of the pie. The pie is rotten' (Wittman), referring to the system and all its institutions.

about it' (Halperin 342). Similarly, by the turn of the new millennium, B. Ruby Rich proclaimed that the very New Queer Cinema (NQC)[65] she had given name to a decade before was over (18). She believed that the radical style, aesthetics and preoccupations of NQC had been absorbed into the mainstream, so that the new product offered unthreatening narratives and characters to its audience (18).

However strongly critics opposed the normalisation, or perhaps the de-radicalization, of queerness in either and all of its forms, it has proven to be an unstoppable process: as of 2018, eighteen years after the Netherlands was the first country to implement marriage equality, twenty-six countries recognise same-sex marriage, and just as many countries explicitly allow joint same-sex adoption (Duncan), thus allowing for legal equality, but also for queerness to be absorbed into the fold of respectable family structures. Queer theory is still widely utilised across academia, and films that offer largely positive images of queer people have been recently nominated for the Oscar, such as *Moonlight* (2016) and *Call Me by Your Name* (2017), with *Moonlight* winning the coveted Oscar for Best Picture. For its part, GLAAD announced in 2015 that they would discontinue their Network Responsibility Index, which for nine years had monitored the quality, quantity and diversity of representation of LGBTQI characters on American TV, because all networks were found to be 'adequate' or above, with FOX being the first network to be ranked 'excellent' (Goodman and Adam). In all fairness, this indicates, not only that non-confrontational images of queerness are being produced and widely consumed, but also that there is an increasing mainstream acceptance of queerness, even if that queerness has to have its ragged edges polished off in order to fit within the straitjacket of normalcy, or has to be ironed down into homonormativity. The question remains, to echo Halperin above, if queerness is somewhat de-queered in order to be accepted into the mainstream, what, if anything, is so very queer about it anymore?

In the face of the rapid advance of LGBTQI rights and the growing strength of the normalising discourse, the process of de-queering has found a lot of resistance, but

[65] New Queer Cinema was a movement of independent queer filmmaking that emerged in the nineties, particularly in the U.S. and the U.K., and which produced films that were radical in their representation of queerness. Films like Todd Haynes' *Poison* (1991) offered confronting images of queerness that would not only reject hegemonic attitudes, but also the promotion of positive representation: 'No longer burdened by the approval-seeking sackcloth of positive imagery, or the relative obscurity of marginal production, films could be both radical and popular, stylish and economically viable' (Aaron 3).

also a lot of compliance among queer people[66] for whom normalcy can be uniquely attractive. As Michael Warner puts it, who can blame them, 'if the alternative is being abnormal, or deviant, or not being like the rest of us?' (*The Trouble with Normal* 53). In other words, if the alternative to being normal is being a monster in a society that favours a binary worldview, it is not surprising so many people would back the normalising project of queerness, rejecting all approximations of their (oft-demonised) identity to abjection.

4.2.2 Monstrous Potential

The association of queerness and monster, or sometimes more specifically, homosexual and monster, has a long history. Halberstam situates the first signs of a shift of emphasis in the 1890s: the monster, always standing for a fluctuating 'Other,' tended to be connected to class, race and nationality, but at this point in time the monster signifier expanded to indicate non-normative sexuality and gender as well (*Skin Shows*, 64-77). 1890 was precisely the year in which Oscar Wilde published *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, which was used against Wilde in his 1895 trial for homosexual activity (Halberstam, *Skin Shows* 84). This is not to say queer monsters did not exist until this point; as mentioned, less explicitly queer monsters are a staple of fairy tales. However, there was a noticeable increase in the cultural association of monstrousness and queerness, which has been linked to 'the hegemonic installation of psychoanalytic interpretations . . . which understand . . . monstrosity as sexual pathology' (Halberstam, *Skin Shows* 24). Moreover, legislation against homosexual sex and the medicalisation of homosexuality (Halberstam, *Skin Shows* 65-69), which took place towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, also contributed to this trend. Particularly, the medicalisation of homosexuality, according to Foucault, worked to restrict normative sexuality and at the same time produce perverse sexualities (44). In other words, the monster is created with the very establishment of the norm. Therefore, once the limits of acceptable sexuality are firmly defined, the monster-outcast comes to embody the perverse in its ever-changing body.

[66] For more information on both positions, see Andrew Sullivan and Urvashi Vaid's mirror-like books: *Virtually Normal: An Argument About Homosexuality* (Sullivan, 1995) and *Virtual Equality: The Mainstreaming of Gay and Lesbian Liberation* (Vaid, 1995).

Similarly to Halberstam, who read the late-nineteenth century against the anxieties that were transferred to the monster signifier, Jeffrey Cohen defends reading cultures 'from the monsters they engender' in his foundational essay, 'Monster Culture: Seven Theses' (3). Writing in 1996, Cohen maintains the monster 'polices the border of the possible' ('Monster Culture' 12), be it with regards to the intellectual, the geographic or, relevantly, the sexual (Cohen, 'Monster Culture' 12). Whether we accept Halberstam's thesis on how the shift in the borders of possible sexuality generated a recognisable queer monster in the nineteenth century or not, it is undeniable that the figure of the queer monster was firmly established by the twentieth century. This is particularly due to a growing cinematic convention in Hollywood that would implicitly associate all queerness with the monstrous, and even explicitly so under the Hays code (S. Miller 221). Officially the Motion Production Code, the Hays code was a series of guidelines, implemented from 1934 to 1967, that decreed there would be no immorality in film. While homosexuality was not mentioned openly, it was codified that only 'correct standards of life' should be presented,' and that 'sex perversion or any inference to it is forbidden' (qtd. in Bresler 174-76). This left filmmakers with a narrow space to explore non-normative sexualities and identities, and even queer creators, such as director James Whale in *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935), had to codify queerness as terror-inducing monstrosity and/or monstrousness in order to sneak it past the censors.

Harry M. Benshoff historicises cinematic queer monsters in his book *Monsters in the Closet: Homosexuality and the Horror Film* (1997) and indeed finds them to be largely derogatory representations, with queer identities and desires displaced onto, and contained within, a monstrous signifier that is ultimately annihilated. A similar sentiment was expressed by Brent Hartinger in 2008:

> Literally all the big-budget Hollywood movies until, perhaps, *Philadelphia* in 1993, that featured major gay male characters portrayed them as insane villains and serial killers. Worse, these movies often played on the audience's fears of gay people and discomfort with behaviors that violate gender norms, using people's prejudice to make them hate the villain more, and make the audience feel better when the hero finally vanquishes them (usually violently killing them). (Hartinger)

For critics like Hartinger, the problem arises when the monstrous queer is the only representation of queer people available—when the only space they are given is as

sexually transgressive monsters that exist to briefly threaten the status quo, and to be eradicated by the normative hero in comforting narrative turns.

However, Cohen recognises another side to these conservative narratives. If the monster contains the ineffable, the unthinkable, all that is transgressive and threatening and different, monster narratives can be seen as unique opportunities to safely experience the pleasure of that transgression, all those forbidden desires, at least momentarily. The monster stands just beyond the threshold of the acceptable, indeed, and its capacity to instil horror pivots on how much of an 'Other' it is, but also on how that same Otherness that repulses us can attract us just as easily. As Cohen writes:

> The monster is continually linked to forbidden practices, in order to normalize and to enforce. The monster also attracts. The same creatures that terrify and interdict can evoke potent escapist fantasies; the linking of monstrosity with the forbidden makes the monster all the more appealing as a temporary egress from constraint. This simultaneous repulsion and attraction at the core of the monster's composition accounts greatly for its continued cultural popularity . . . We distrust and loathe the monster at the same time we envy its freedom. (Cohen, 'Seven Theses' 16-17)

For a lot of queer people, the queer monster is in fact a source of dissident pleasure. Despite the conservative slant of many queer monster narratives, and the openly negative prejudices they perpetuate, queer monster tropes have been, in the tradition of camp, reappropriated, their grotesque form transformed, and all their horrors deployed against a dominant heteronormative culture. In Miller's words, the queer monster 'not only provides an opportunity to identify with someone . . . it also allows us to vicariously live out our rage against a social order that oppresses us' (S. Miller 221). There are several good examples of this among films from the NQC movement, but Gregg Araki's *The Living End* (1992), in which two HIV-positive gay men go on a killing spree across America, might be the best example of cathartic, anti-heteronorm, queer monster rage from this period. Another queer monster which has captured the imagination of queer spectators is crossdressing murderer, and parody of Dr Frankenstein, Frank 'N' Furter from the cult classic *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975), who, among other things, deceives and seduces a heterosexual married couple, creates a sex slave, and cooks and eats his ex-lover. Even the queer-coded Disney villains have been eagerly welcomed into queer circles: for instance, *The Little Mermaid*'s monstrous Ursula has been termed 'the diva that launched 1,000 drag costumes' (Lang).

The monster, indubitably, has long perpetuated narratives of exclusion, fear and abjection about minorities that are misunderstood and misrepresented. Nonetheless, even those monsters that are produced within the normative order can provide queer people with subversive modes of identification. In the right hands, they can be reimagined as fantasies of destruction, as revenge ideations against the oppressor. In fact, for Schildcrout these demonised monsters 'probe the darker anxieties and fears that can affect queer lives . . . including victimization from homophobia, the oppression of the closet, and the devastation of AIDS' (Schildcrout 4), perhaps in ways that queer heroes could never do. Even if concerns about positive representation would forever kill off the queer monster, the potential for subversion, confrontation and even liberation in that figure might very well keep it alive.

4.3 Navigating Fairy-Tale Dichotomies in Contemporary Retellings

All the texts analysed in this chapter were released between 2006 and 2018. It is in 2006, indeed, when I locate the final turn of the key that definitively opened up the genre to queerness. In chapter three, the mid-nineties were identified as the point in which a first small wave of gay and lesbian responses to the fairy tale came out. I call it a 'wave' because queer retellings from that period are somewhat thematically linked, with comparable views on sexuality, identity and even historically-specific issues. Interestingly, from 1996, when Michael Ford's *Happily Ever After* was published, to 2006, when the first edition of JoSelle Vanderhooft's *Sleeping Beauty, Indeed* came out, there were few queer fairy-tale retellings to be found, both in the independent and mainstream scenes.[67] However, from 2006 to the time of writing, countless retellings have been released.[68] This significant boom in production is due to a number of factors,

[67] 2001's *Shrek* is an exception in this timeline. Unquestionably a film of wide mainstream appeal, it contained a crossdressing wolf (from 'Little Red Riding Hood') and a trans-coded evil stepsister (from 'Cinderella').

[68] Author Malinda Lo broke down the number of Young Adult books published by major publishers that contained queer characters. Ranging 2003 to 2014, her study found that there was a 'high point' in 2007 (Lo, 'LGBT YA'), when 25 books were published. The number did not grow in the following year but it did not go down much either, and in 2014 she found 24 books of those characteristics were published. While not directly related to queer fairy tales (although Lo would publish her queer Cinderella retelling *Ash* in 2009), these findings could point to a shift in mainstream interest, which could have affected queer fairy tales as well and precipitated the boom in the following years. It could also be incidental, as she says, just 'a blip in the radar' (Lo, 'LGBT YA').

such as the resurgence in popularity of fairy tales,[69] the growing visibility of queer identities and desires in the mediascape, and the increasing number of avenues for publishing material with a queer focus, among which I include new possibilities for self-publishing and relatively democratic internet-based fiction.[70]

The great diversity in these retellings, both with regards to themes, media, intended audience and production values, makes it difficult to speak of them as belonging to a wave with unifying characteristics—beyond all of them belonging to what we could characterise as the sophistication period of queer fairy tales. In any case, as products of a particular time, all of these texts can be read in light of the ongoing conversation surrounding the de-radicalisation of queerness, particularly as it intersects with the issue of representation. As outlined in this chapter, this conversation and the tensions between normalising and disruptive positions have seeped through several cultural layers, particularly in the Anglophone western world. Some conclusions might be gleaned from previous sections, namely that there is a correlation between exemplary (or heroic) queer characters and normalising or mainstreaming positions, which would make queer heroes conformist representations. In that same line, the queer monster could be aligned with subversive, non-assimilationist positions, and could be therefore perceived as more ideologically incisive. On the other hand, one could also do the opposite reading: queer monsters perpetuate negative stereotypes, after all, and as such feed back into conservative narratives of queerness, whereas queer heroes could be seen as breaking away from age-old prejudices and thus as more revolutionary representations of queerness.

While the aim of this chapter is not to perform a reductive classification of contemporary queer fairy-tale heroes and monsters as either 'good' or 'bad' representation, all possible readings presented above are relevant to the analysis of these texts and will be considered. As we will see, these retellings weave a complex, queer tapestry around the very categories of hero and monster. The queer characters that will

[69] To the question 'are fairy tales back in fashion?' Gaby Wood answered that the 'the recent success of Disney's films *Frozen* (2013) and *Maleficent* (2014) seems to point to something' (Wood).

[70] Self-publishing and internet fiction might not directly reflect mainstream trends, but they can impact the mainstream: for instance, Tim Manley's *Alice in Tumblr-Land* (2013), a collection of micro-parodies of Disney-inflected tales (among which feature a lesbian Rapunzel and a trans Mulan), was originally serialised on the social platform Tumblr, where it went viral, drawing the attention of Penguin and leading to the mainstream publication of the book. This topic will be expanded upon in the next chapter.

be discussed are all the protagonists of their own stories (or are at least co-protagonists), are on a quest or journey, and are clearly positioned at the centre of the narrative in such a way that the reader or viewer empathises with their plight. In that sense, they are all heroes. However, they also present some degree of monstrosity or monstrousness, or both, an Otherness that sets them apart from an established norm. In that sense, all of them could be read as monsters.

Bearing in mind that these categories are by no means fixed, the chapter will be organised around them using a loose set of parameters. The section 'Heroes' will focus on Jim C. Hines' *The Stepsister Scheme* (2009) and Neil Gaiman's *The Sleeper and the Spindle* (2014). The queer protagonists in these texts have been identified as primarily heroic: they are essentially just LGBTQI versions of existing fairy-tale protagonists, and so they remain adventurous, brave, and beautiful, even if their narratives are at times haunted by the spectre of the queer monster. The section 'Monsters' will analyse 'Bones Like Black Sugar' by Catherynne M. Valente (2006), Lauren Beukes' *The Hidden Kingdom* (2013), and the ABC TV show *Once Upon a Time* (2011-18). The characters in this section are similar to the ones in the 'Heroes' section in that they are fairy-tale protagonists reimagined as queer, but they are also openly, explicitly monstrous, physically and (often) morally as well.

This chapter will thus analyse how these texts, which exploit the most horrific elements of the fairy tale to various degrees, reimagine the fairy-tale dichotomy of the hero/monster, to what extent they collapse it, reproduce it or deconstruct it, how this ties in with the normalising trajectory of queerness in culture, and how it positions contemporary queer fairy tales in the debate of representational politics.

4.3.1 Heroes

Male fairy-tale heroes might take a number of different forms. Tatar explains that folklorists tend to divide male heroes into 'active heroes and passive heroes, formal heroes and ideal heroes, tricksters and simpletons, dragon slayers and male Cinderellas' (Tatar, *Hard Facts* 86). Thus the hero is recognised as such, not because he sticks to a single archetype, but because he is the focus of the narrative, and because, at the end of the day he 'embodies the superior terms of [good vs. evil] dualisms as he adventures forth on his quest and encounters evil monsters, dragons, witches and the like' (Hourihan

2). The hero is thus defined by his position within the story and in opposition to the enemies he must defeat.

Male fairy-tale heroes are also defined against the rather more passive female heroes. Compared to their male counterparts, fairy-tale heroines exist within a more restricted range, especially in canonical tales. A lot of female fairy-tale characters have been defined as 'innocent persecuted heroines' (see Bacchilega, 'An Introduction,' and Jones, 'An Analysis'), who must endure debasement and pain, and be industrious and pious in order to deserve their happy ending—or even just their status as heroes, since straying from the marked path of virtue might very well land them within range of becoming monsters. Among characters that fit the type described by Bacchilega and Jones we find Snow White, Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty, all of which will be variously reimagined in the queer retellings analysed below. However, as we will see, the new versions of the well-known characters will mostly renounce the 'innocent persecuted heroine' archetype and will at points draw closer to the figure of the male hero, at points to that of the queer monster, ultimately wedging themselves in an in-between space that pushes at the boundaries of the established categories.

4.3.1.1 Jim C. Hines' *The Stepsister Scheme*

The plot of Jim C. Hines' *The Stepsister Scheme* is in fact entirely based on the correction of the persecuted princess archetype. This Young Adult novel begins right after the traditional ending, and so a Cinderella-type protagonist has recently married Prince Charming. However, within the first few pages, she finds out her husband has been spirited away to the Fairyland by her abusive stepsisters, and that she will have to team up with Snow White and Sleeping Beauty in order to save him. From the beginning, this retelling infuses the princesses with agency by reversing their traditional roles (from helpless damsels in distress to powerful rescuers), throws together fairy-tale fragments in a postmodern pastiche, and deconstructs the happily-ever-after.

Of course, happily-ever-afters are notoriously fragile, as has been exposed by countless retellings (feminist and otherwise), because they depend entirely on the story ending at the right moment. *The Stepsister Scheme* easily shatters the mirage of the happy ending by beginning the story soon after the fairy-tale wedding. The action starts quickly as the protagonist must save herself from an assassination attempt at the hands of her stepsister, Charlotte. She is helped by Talia, named after Basile's 'Sun, Moon and

Talia,' who in-universe is better known as Sleeping Beauty. She introduces the protagonist to Snow (White, naturally), who explains that both women work for the queen, mother to the prince. What follows is an inverted fairy tale in which three princesses rescue a prince.

The particular premise of the novel allows for a thick layering of intertextual references. There is obviously the mixing of, among others, the tales of Cinderella, Snow White and Sleeping Beauty, but even when constructing the Cinderella story, Hines does not limit himself to one source: Cinderella is called Danielle in reference to the 1998 film *Ever After*, she enlists the help of birds, like the Grimms' Cinderella (and, famously, Disney's), and also like in the Grimms' story, the spirit of her mother inhabits a wish-granting tree from which she receives her famous 'gown and glass slippers' (Hines 56). Hines also maintains the more gruesome elements of the Grimms' tale, in some cases making them even more horrific: Cinderella's helpful birds attack the stepsisters at her wedding, only in Hines' story they actually kill the stepmother, and when Charlotte attacks Danielle, Danielle notices her foot is bandaged and bloody from the time her stepmother 'had cut away part of her heel in a deranged attempt to fit Charlotte's foot to Danielle's discarded slipper' (Hines 10). In the Grimms' story, it is merely her toe she cuts off. Furthermore, when Danielle reflects on some palace rumours, Hines uses the opportunity to reference elements from Perrault's version of the story, which were further popularised by Disney:

> Within days of the winter ball, rumors had spread through the city, growing wilder with every retelling: she had snuck from her house to attend the ball—no, she had stolen a carriage—no, she had ridden within an enchanted pumpkin, drawn by giant mice. (Hines 3)

This also serves as a metafictional commentary on the nature of fairy tales, which to a greater or lesser degree can be found in all retellings discussed in this chapter. Fairy tales, like the stories people tell in *The Stepsister Scheme*, have many different, coexisting versions that feed off each other, are mixed and confused, and often changed upon retelling.

However, within the universe of *The Stepsister Scheme*, some versions are also more accurate than others, and detangling one version from another in order to understand the characters' backstories will make up a significant portion of the plot:

> ‘Sleeping Beauty?’ Danielle turned to Talia . . . ‘Aren’t you married?’
>
> ‘Hardly,’ said Talia.
>
> ‘But the stories, your prince awakened you with a kiss, breaking the fairy curse, and—’
>
> ‘Sometimes the stories are wrong.’ (Hines 32)

These stories, presumably meaning classical fairy tales, are indeed wrong on at least one aspect, which is the part the princesses play within the particular story Hines is weaving: as we have seen, there is a sustained role-reversal at the heart of the novel, an effective queering of gendered categories. All three princesses are definitely the heroes of the story, whose unique skills are essential to survive in the treacherous Fairyland and rescue the prince. Their role is, just like that of traditional heroes, constructed against that of the passive princess, which in this case is fulfilled by Danielle’s husband. As Hourihan writes, ‘women in hero stories appear only in relation to the hero’ (3), and, correspondingly, Prince Charming only appears in the narrative at the end of the novel, when the three princesses finally breach the tower where he is being kept captive—which references the trope of the princess stuck in a tower, passively waiting to be rescued. However, this does not necessarily result in a ‘demythologizing a romanticized image of fairy tales’ (Bacchilega and Rieder, 31), since the love between Danielle and her prince is still celebrated as magical and everlasting.

Another significant way in which Hines transforms the category of princess is by bringing their sexualities to the forefront. Talia, Danielle, and Snow still possess most of the qualities that Ming-Hsun Lin recognises in archetypal princesses, namely nobility stemming from social, spiritual, or biological sources:

> Socially most are of royal birth or obtain royal status by marriage. Spiritually they are often pious and virtuous. Biologically they are usually young and beautiful. Their beauty is an expression of their inner positive qualities—an internalized form of nobility. (Lin 81)

They all are indeed beautiful, young and belong to the royal family. However, they are not perfectly virtuous or pious. For instance, Snow is presented as an openly sexual, flirty, exceptionally attractive woman from the start:

> Though she looked a few years older than Danielle, her smooth, pale face evoked the innocence of childhood . . . a blue shirt draped her shoulders and made a half-hearted attempt to conceal the curve of her chest . . . though it

> would have had a better chance had she bothered to do up the laces. A polished silver pendant in the shape of a snowflake hung between her breasts. Danielle did her best not to look at it, or rather, at *them*. (Hines 28)

Even Danielle, who checks all the boxes of heteronormativity (she is feminine, presumably straight, married to a man and expecting a child), has somewhat ambiguous reactions to Snow's exuberant beauty, like in the extract above, where her reaction could be read as indicating queer desire.

All three protagonists can be read as queer in the sense that they are rejecting the gendered category they would traditionally belong to, and there are also some queer echoes in the intense bond Danielle develops with both Talia and Snow over the course of their adventure. However, no relationship in the novel is queerer than that of Snow and Talia. Their interactions throughout are marked by tension, the source of which remains unresolved until the moment when Snow is struck by a sleeping curse. Talia (in diminutive form after eating shrinking spores, in reference to *Alice in Wonderland*), wakes her up with a kiss, to Danielle's absolute surprise:

> 'What are you doing?' Danielle asked . . .
>
> Talia shook her head hard enough that her hair fell in front of her face. Planting one foot in Snow's right ear, she pulled herself up, grabbed a nostril for balance, and kissed Snow on the corner of her mouth. Snow's eyelids began to flutter. (Hines 283)

The tradition of the true-love kiss is not as prevalent in fairy tales as disneyfied versions would lead us to believe: for instance, Perrault's Sleeping Beauty wakes up because her one hundred years of sleep are up, the Grimm's Snow White wakes up because the poisoned apple gets dislodged from her throat when a servant stumbles while carrying her glass coffin, and the frog from 'The Frog King' transforms back into a human when a princess throws him against the wall in disgust. However, Hines is working within, or at least is aware of, that very disneyfied tradition, and the significance of that kiss is made as clear to the reader as it is to Danielle: Talia is in love with Snow, and will possibly prove to be her one true love. Talia's feelings are further clarified after Snow wakes up, when she cautions Danielle against revealing what she has done to save her:

> 'Breathe a word about what really happened, and I'll kill you myself.'
> Danielle looked at Snow, then back at Talia. There was a kind of weary resignation in Talia's dark eyes . . . Snow clearly had no idea how Talia felt. (Hines 286)

Talia's explicit feelings mark her as the 'queerer' hero among the three, but her queerness, which was likely meant to be a straightforward subversion of heterocentric fairy-tale stereotypes, becomes something rather more complex than mere positive representation when her backstory is finally revealed. As mentioned, her character is named after Basile's Sleeping Beauty tale, described in chapter two, and her past closely resembles that version of the tale:

> 'I was awakened by the agony of childbirth,' Talia said, 'as my twin children were expelled from my womb . . . My prince wasn't as kind as yours,' Talia said. Her words were like knives. 'I'm sure he began by planting a royal kiss on my cold lips. That's what you're supposed to do, right? But it didn't work. I didn't open my eyes and fall madly in love with him. So instead, he indulged another fantasy.' (Hines 276)

Talia's horrific rape is given here the emotional weight that was missing in the original tale, in which 'the very idea of "consent" is deemed immaterial' (Short, 'Crime/Justice'), but since Hines has reimagined her as queer, the rape has the added connotation of being a 'corrective rape'[71] through which lesbians, unavailable to male desire, are 'punished and/or violently recovered' (Gqola 9). As Paul Morrison writes, in the heterosexist imaginary, 'gender trumps sexuality,' and a 'lesbian is, after all, a woman, and a woman is defined by her sexual availability to men' (5-6). Thus, Talia's overt unavailability might lead to her 'violent recovery' through rape. While this can serve as (somewhat oblique) commentary on a very real issue, the fact stands that the only openly queer woman in the narrative is also the only one who is sexually assaulted, which is reminiscent of many instances of homophobic victimisation. It is also quite egregious, given her backstory, that Talia would impose her desires on a sleeping Snow—even though she is merely following fairy-tale rules—and that she would thoughtlessly perpetuate the cycle of fairy-tale sexual violence rather than break it.

Furthermore, Hines relocates the tale of Talia to a vaguely Middle-Eastern kingdom: she wields a spindle-shaped whip, she is described as brown-skinned and dark-eyed, and her musical, long-vowelled accent leads Danielle to guess she comes from 'the Arathean Desert to the south' (Hines 4). By taking the story of the raped Sleeping Beauty, an Italian tale, and transplanting it onto a distant, exotic land (heavily coded as

[71] The term was first used within the context of South African 'curative' rapes, although it is now used in other geographical contexts as this is a sadly recurrent issue (Denton 31).

Middle-Eastern), Hines is shifting the narrative blame, as it were, away from Europe and the global north. The new land he creates, where such un-Charming, somnophiliac (or nechrophiliac) princes would be allowed to act out horrific fantasies, is thus safely removed from the centre:

> The habitations of the monsters . . . (whatever land is sufficiently distant to be exoticized) are more than dark regions of uncertain danger: they are also realms of happy fantasy, horizons of liberation. Their monsters serve as secondary bodies through which the possibilities of other genders, other sexual practices, and other social customs can be explored. (Cohen 18)

Talia comes from that same monstrous place where sexual excesses are permitted—both rape and, presumably, queerness. Therefore, Talia, variously marked as monstrous by her non-normative sexuality, her status as a racialized foreigner and even as a rape survivor, is more intelligible to the norm since she hails from one of Cohen's 'dark regions of uncertain danger.' In other words, the perhaps confronting reimagining of a fairy-tale princess as queer might be more palatable since she is also made to be a racial Other who comes from a land infused with Orientalist stereotypes about Middle-Eastern violent men and victimised women. The main villains in the story are indubitably Danielle's evil stepsisters, both of whom are written as straight, but Talia's complex intersections, and her rebounds into conservative monstrousness, can be seen as undermining the subversive potential of her status as a queer hero.

4.3.1.2 Neil Gaiman's *The Sleeper and the Spindle*

The treatment of the queer hero is somewhat less problematic in Neil Gaiman's *The Sleeper and the Spindle*, a YA novella published in 2014 and illustrated by Chris Riddell. It tells the story of a young queen, inspired in Snow White, who, on the eve of her wedding, abandons her fiancé and sets out to rescue a sleeping princess accompanied by her dwarven entourage. This text will employ several of the same deconstruction and inversion techniques as Hines', showing an active, queer Snow White who has grown out of the constraints of her past, and who must bravely navigate a dangerous fairy-tale land in order to fulfil her quest.

As Pauline Palmer explains, classical fairy-tale heroines are 'frequently relegated to the conventional heteropatriarchal role of trophy and object of exchange' (141), but the queen in *The Sleeper and The Spindle* thoroughly deconstructs that trope, perhaps even more so than the princesses in *The Stepsister Scheme*. To begin with, she is

queen in her own right—she does not ascend to the throne via marriage, and in fact is superior in station to her fiancé:

> She called for her fiancé and told him . . . that they would still be married, even if he was but a prince and she a queen, and she chucked him beneath his pretty chin and kissed him until he smiled. (Gaiman 16)

The role of the traditional princess, beautiful and patiently waiting, is thus transferred to the queen's fiancé, similar to the way Prince Charming in Hines' novel was cast as the damsel stuck in a tower. The queen, for her part, comes closer to the figure of the male hero, or even that of Prince Charming: accordingly, she is dashing, adventurous, athletic and knightly, ready to ride to save a kingdom (and a sleeping princess). She could also be read as recuperating the tradition of the crossdressing maiden knight, because, even though nothing indicates she is crossdressing according to in-universe rules, her heroic, armour-wearing ways are reminiscent of Straparola's Constanza/Constanzo or d'Aulnoy's Belle-Belle/the knight Fortuné. Much like them both, on top of being an excellent knight, her features are those of an adequate fairy-tale heroine: she is pale as snow, has 'raven-black hair' (Gaiman 20) and cherry-red lips. Her aesthetic however strays from that of most princesses. Riddell's hyper-detailed illustrations walk the line between beautiful and grotesque: drawings of skulls dot all her clothes, she has very straight, very long dark hair and an ample forehead, moody facial expressions, and her silhouette and proportions are overly thin and skeletal, adding up to a Burtonesque style that suggests monstrosity (see figure 1).

Figure 1. Double-page splash of the queen in bed, with her Goth wedding dress and her sword in the background. Illustrated by Chris Riddell.

This gender-role-defying queen, who has built up a resistance to sleeping spells thanks to her fairy-tale background, thus enters a kingdom full of sleeping inhabitants who try to stop her:

> They were easy for the dwarfs to outrun, easy for the queen to outwalk. And yet, and yet, there were so many of them. Each street they came to was filled with sleepers, cobweb-shrouded, eyes tight closed or eyes open and rolled back in their heads showing only the whites, all of them shuffling sleepily forwards. (Gaiman 35)

If zombies are 'the walking dead,' monsters in *The Sleeper and the Spindle* are 'the sleepwalkers,' thus juxtaposing the death-like false sleep of fairy tales and the zombie ethos. The swarm of sleepers is, thus, modelled after a swarm of zombies, 'distributed and horizontal, but also driven by an invisible, intangible life force' (Thacker 182). The abject zombie swarm queers human life by being human and no longer human, dead and animate, by being composed of individual bodies and having an insect-like collective consciousness. However, this swarm, unlike most zombie swarms, has someone that controls it, a spider 'at the centre of the web' (Gaiman 59) that eerily speaks through them and steadily pulls the protagonist closer with a request reminiscent of 'The Beauty and the Beast:'

> ‘Bring me roses,’ said the three bandits as they slept, with one voice, while the blood oozed indolently on to the ground from the stump of the fat man’s arm. ‘I would be so happy if only you would bring me roses.’ (Gaiman 40)

Determined to get to the sleeping princess, the protagonist cuts through the swarm and burns her way through a thick barrier of enchanted thorns, and, finally, she enters the tower, where she finds a sleeping princess and a mysterious, senile old woman, the only awake person in the kingdom. When the queen sees the young girl lying on the bed, she assumes what every knowledgeable reader will assume: that she is Sleeping Beauty. Following common knowledge, then, she kisses her on the lips so as to wake her up:

> ‘Somebody’s got to do the honours.’
>
> ‘I shall,’ said the queen, gently. She lowered her face to the sleeping woman’s. She touched the pink lips to her own carmine lips and she kissed the sleeping girl long and hard.’ (Gaiman 49)

Figure 2. Double-page splash of the queen kissing a girl awake. Illustrated by Chris Riddell.

The kiss is not necessarily framed as romantic in the narrative, and, since the possibility of marrying the princess after she wakes up is not put forward, and true love is never mentioned, the kiss could be seen as being entirely divorced from personal desire, just a remedy to a problem. However, there is still a distinct sensuality to the description above and, especially, in the illustration, which feeds on Disney’s visual tradition and the company’s iconic kissing scenes in films like *Sleeping Beauty* and *Snow*

White and the Seven Dwarves. It is also worth noting that both women (created by a man and illustrated by another, both presumably straight) are depicted as conventionally feminine, particularly in figure 2 above, in which they kiss, demurely, on the lips. There is a pointed focus on their equally long and flowy, but starkly different in colour, hair, which intermingles on the sheets in an intimate manner that suggest sexual contact. Notably, the queen's less normative features (her Burtonesque proportions, her Goth aesthetic) are obscured in figure 2, due to perspective or conscious effort on Riddell's part, and so she seems more conventionally beautiful, with a markedly feminine flower stuck on her hair. Therefore, figure 2, which would otherwise be seen as undoubtedly queer, reveals itself as reliant on male fantasies about lesbians, in which women retain normative feminine traits, presumably appealing to straight men even as they engage in practices that would effectively exclude them. Sometimes these lesbians-for-male-visual-pleasure, like those in pornographic films, are in fact hyperfeminine, sporting, for instance, unlikely long nails—in the case of *The Sleeper and the Spindle*, they have unlikely long, loose hair, surely an unpractical feature on an adventuring queen. As such, the women above are made to be relatively non-threatening, visually domesticated so as to offset, or soften, the narrative's queerest moment.

The twist in the story comes when, upon waking, it is revealed the sleeping beauty is in fact the witch who enchanted the whole kingdom—and the one controlling the murderous sleepwalkers. Thus, the death-like sleep that prompted Talia to claim 'To sleep is to be helpless' (Hines 227), which positioned her, and so many other princesses before her, as a victim, is entirely reimagined by Gaiman:

> 'then I lay down on the bed, and I slept, and they slept, and as each of them slept I stole a little of their life, a little of their dreams, and as I slept I took back my youth and my beauty and my power. I slept and I grew strong. I undid the ravages of time and I built myself a world of sleeping slaves.' (Gaiman 52)

Gaiman queers fairy-tale sleep, transforming it so that it is not passive but active, not imposed but chosen, not vulnerable but safely guarded by sleep-zombies. It is also not a punishment the heroine suffers, but a way for the witch, the queer monster in the story, to regain her power. And the witch is undoubtedly a queer monster—she is beautiful, deadly, and seductive in the style of lesbian vampires, who have always been a staple of literature high and low. Much like these predatory monsters, who would corrupt younger, innocent, straight-seeming women, the witch cheated the young girl she is impersonating

(now the withered old woman) out of her youth and her life. Moreover, when she wakes, she tries to seduce the queen with promises of unlimited power: 'Love me . . . All will love me and you who woke me must love me most of all' (Gaiman 55). This echoes the 'true-love kiss' and inverts it, making love not a prerequisite for the kiss to work, but a consequence of that magical kiss. The queen is tempted, but her previous experience with her stepmother makes her more resistant than most to magical lures, which transforms her past as a fairy-tale victim into a source of personal strength: 'Learning how to be strong . . . had been hard; but once you learned the trick of it, you did not forget' (Gaiman 59). She finally opts for letting the old woman kill the witch off, which, in turn, ultimately reveals the old woman as the hero of the story, following traditional formulations, since she is the one vanquishing the kingdom's great evil.

The ending drives home a few final inversions in Gaiman's tale. After her adventure the queen sits thoughtfully under a tree and she ponders about her wedding. Finally, she concludes: 'there are choices . . . There are always choices' (Gaiman 63). She has the choice to reject heterosexual marriage, and, with it, the constraints of a life of queenship she feels does not fit her. She chooses to go on adventuring with her group of dwarves, leaving behind the limitations of heteropatriarchal duty, but also all homonormative approximations, in favour of escaping 'into the night' (Gaiman 66). The queerness of this open ending works to trouble the structure of the tale, as well: it reveals the story is reorganised as a capsized fairy tale, with its structure almost completely flipped so that it begins with the wedding and ends with the hero going on an adventure. Fittingly, then, the queer monster dies at the hands of an unexpected hero, and the queer protagonist is allowed to continue, untethered, freed of her status as fairy tale princess, queen, and even hero, towards unknown lands.

4.3.2 Monsters

As noted above, the monster is created simultaneously with the norm: it guards the limits of the normative, and teratology scholars such as Halberstam usually analyse it against the non-monstrous. However, as Cohen reminds us, the monster is also a 'harbinger of category crisis' (6), an inherently queer creation that refuses 'easy categorization' and participation in the 'classificatory "order of things"' (Cohen 6). Therefore, although monsters uphold the norm, they also instil horror as their very existence poses an unrelenting threat to normative distinctions (Cohen 6). It is not

surprising, then, that such ambiguous, dangerous figures should eventually be object of domestication. As Robin Wood writes:

> Otherness represents that which bourgeois ideology cannot recognize or accept but must deal with . . . in one of two ways: either by rejecting and if possible annihilating it, or by rendering it safe and assimilating it, converting it as far as possible into a replica of itself. (R. Wood 65-66)

The first option can be found in classical vampire books and films, according to Benshoff and Travis Sutton, as they 'reject and destroy the monstrous other' (T. Sutton and Besnhoff 204), whereas the *Twilight* books and films would 'work on the latter mode, rendering the [monster] safe by attempting to assimilate it to dominant values' (T. Sutton and Besnhoff 204). The assimilation process, which Tina Marie Boyer calls 'individualization' or 'humanisation' of the monster, is a trend that has been on the rise in the past few decades, particularly among monsters with humanoid features (Boyer 15). For instance, we find angsty teenage werewolves in MTV's hit series *Teen Wolf* (2011-17), and in BBC Three's *In the Flesh* (2013-14) newly-aware, medicated zombies must learn to 'live' again, haunted by what they did as mindless monsters.

Predictably, the domestication of the monster can be, and in fact has been, compared to the domestication of queerness (see S. Miller), as the threat of the 'humanoid' queer, or, in Butler's terms, unintelligible to the norm, 'less-than-human' (Butler 2) queer, has been extinguished through its successful assimilation. It is in this context that the following texts will be analysed and narratively situated. We will see how the queer characters fall variously along the monstrous continuum. As protagonists of their own stories, they collapse the distance between hero and monster, but they also maintain a threatening Otherness that will be more or less easily controlled—for no matter how tame they seemingly are, they will always leave us with an anxious feeling that they are not perfectly domesticated.

4.3.2.1 Catherynne M. Valente's 'Bones like Black Sugar'

Perhaps the most disturbingly monstrous protagonist among the chosen texts is Gretel from Catherynne M. Valente's 'Bones like Black Sugar.' The very short story, which could also be characterised as a prose poem, is a dark sequel to 'Hansel and Gretel' originally published in *Fantasy Magazine* and later compiled in JoSelle

Vanderhooft's lesbian fairy-tale collection *Sleeping Beauty, Indeed*. The tale's unique tone is set in the opening lines:

> Why did I ever go back? Wasn't it enough that the eggs fried evenly in my iron pan, that the white edges crisped so prettily, like doilies . . . that the green trees stayed in their civilized trim, that they never again reached out for me as they did in those days, brackish arms a-bramble? . . . I have a house of my own, of wood and stone, with violets eating earth in the shadow of an iron-hinged door, and not a sparkle of sugar in any cupboard, on any tongue. (Valente 29)

Valente paints a haunting scenario in which both siblings have left behind the poverty of their childhood, they have built a house, and have the things they used to lack, 'milk enough, and bread enough, and meat slung across the table, glistening with fat' (Valente 30), but a traumatised Gretel is unable to forget the past. 'I will never recover from this, I will never be well, I will never grow up,' (Valente 31), she thinks, which brings to mind Love's queer refusal 'to grow up' (7), although in here this indicates paralysing trauma rather than queer defiance to comply with normative growth. The liberating space that could emerge within that house (she has. after all, 'a house of [her] own' in an echo of Virginia Woolf's room) fails to materialise, and the house proves to be a prison instead: '[Hansel] built a house around me, up, up, up, a house with no windows' (Valente 29).

Hansel is, through Gretel's eyes, a double figure, both provider and warden. He brings the food, builds the house, but also regulates her behaviour, forbidding her from boiling 'chocolate in a silver tin,' from combing 'honey from any hive' (Valente 30). As befits a tale which draws heavily from the Gothic tradition, incestuous undercurrents throb through the narrative, but unlike in Travers Scott's 'Hansel and Gretel' retelling, analysed in chapter three, they never break through the textual surface. Still, Gretel bows her head before Hansel 'as before a husband' (Valente 29), and describes how 'he sleeps behind me, sleeps dead and sweat-pooled' (Valente 30). Hansel's controlling, 'brutish-blond' (Valente 29) figure thus closes in on Gretel like the walls of a house, projecting a twisted version of normative masculinity and rendering their relationship into a perverse replica of heteronormative domesticity.

This pushes Gretel to leave the relative comfort of her home and to retrace the steps of her childhood nightmare on a nightly basis: 'To her, to her glen, to the ruins of her house casting shadows like spice on the grass' (Valente 30). What follows is an unsettling, nightmarish, fragmentary scene stitched together in a textured filigree of

compound words: ‘crumble-barren’ (Valente 30), ‘cinnamon-cinders’ (Valente 31), ‘sweetshop-graveyard’ (Valente 34). What remains of the gingerbread house, once she arrives, is merely a candied ruin, with ‘charred banisters of twisted liquorice and cherry-sticky stairs leading up to the star-bowels,’ (Valente 30), and its syrupy chaos stands in direct contrast with the manicured order of Hansel’s house-prison—where, of course, all sugar is strictly forbidden. Whereas Gretel could scour her cubicle of a house ‘until my fingers wore away’ (Valente 29), the witch’s is derelict, wall-less, roof-less, impossible to clean, even infected, with its ‘carbuncle-heart of sugar seething in its endless boil’ (Valente 30).

At the centre of the monstrous house awaits its monstrous stomach, ‘a good German oven . . . Its cacao-grille throat-open’ (Valente 31),[72] and sticking out of it, half-consumed, is the witch:

> her candied pelvis caught on the broiling pan, fleshless arms stretched out in supplication, frozen in the grace of a ruined arch, the skeleton of an angel consumed, angles all wrong, ribs descending black as treble scales, femurs like cathedral columns dripping with honey-gold. (Valente 31)

For Gretel, the body of the witch is a desecrated holy building, just like her melted house but infinitely more worthy of being worshiped. Thus, she picks up every bone, and she deposits the witch on the altar-like bed. The grotesque ritual, which Gretel performs with the ease of someone who has done it countless times before and knows all the rules, is almost like a wedding night, which Gretel later confirms: ‘It would be poetic to carry her up the stairs, a dead bride’ (Valente 32). There is no need for normative displays of that kind between the two of them, and so Gretel simply rearranges her bones ‘like runes’ (Valente 32), as if for a spell or religious ceremony, and the witch comes back to life:

> And under my arms there is flesh . . . Under my lips there are lips like floss, and my eyelashes beat against warm skin . . . She smiles at me, she smiles at me and the belly under my hands is turkish delight, she smiles as if I had never pushed her . . . She smiles like erasure. (Valente 32)

This is the turning point in the story, where Gretel’s sanity and stream of consciousness starts to unravel. Gretel, now grown-up and trapped in marriage-like duty to her brother,

[72] This image brings to mind Travers Scott’s depiction of the anthropophagous house, which unveils tendrils connecting queer retellings: ‘A fireplace no longer, it yawned: a huge fleshy mouth, opening wide to reveal a wet, quivering throat pulsing with luminescent red veins’ (320).

deeply regrets her part in murdering the witch, and, unable to move on, imagines the ways in which her past could be erased or rewritten. In Gretel's mind, the witch would find her a child again, 'student-bright' (Valente 32), ready to learn from her and be like her. The alternative reality she charts is kinder and more forgiving, and everyone would be scrubbed clean of blame.

However, wishful scenarios of a preferred past soon turns into a dark litany of transgressive desire, which is, in the style of all things queer, 'scary, perhaps unspeakable, unimaginable. . . certainly not for the faint of heart' (Pasquesi 120):

> and punish me, punish me, I ought to be punished, I ought to be burned, I ought to have gone into the oven with you, into the fire, into the red and the ash . . . and my skull ought to have shattered on the stone where my fontanel must have been, and the shards of it, the shards of it ought to have mingled with yours when the leaves fell, ought to have been indistinguishable, ought to have, ought to have. (Valente 33)

The narrative grows increasingly repetitive and frantic, and in that moment of sublime desperation, Gretel wishes for an intermingling of their flesh in a perverted version of sex, melted together into the oven; burned like martyrs or sinners.[73] Gretel is thus projecting a radical mode of togetherness, an inventive vision of intimacy for the witch and herself—in short, a twisted queerness to offset the twisted heteronorm her brother has built around Gretel. It is during that feverish ritual, in the broken church with her dead bride, that Gretel finds freedom from her life with Hansel, who would forbid her to 'stretch taffy between my fingers for the village children' (Valente 29-30), which suggests he was able to see that her lurking monstrousness mirrored that of the witch of their past. Spiralling down, Gretel finally pleads for the witch to eat her:

> Devour me now as you promised, swallow me, I am offering it . . . take me up into your iron pot and I will boil for you, if you ask it . . . my love, you promised to destroy me.' (Valente 33)

This brings the retelling full-circle with its pre-text; it recuperates its hunger, and queers the villain/victim binary. While Warner maintains that cannibalism in fairy tales is tied to

[73] This brings to mind Turner's reading of the Grimms' 'Frau Trude:' 'Associated in Christian tradition with martyrdom, purification, and transformation as well as evil and damnation, fire, the tale's central motif, grounds "Frau Trude" in familiar religious binaries' (Turner 260). In fact, 'Frau Trude' shares many thematic undercurrents with 'Bones Like Black Sugar,' since both stories deal with themes of desire, transgression, queer kinship and monstrous consumption between a young girl and a witch.

the fear of loss of personal identity (see M. Warner, *Six Myths of our Time*) Gretel desires to escape her identity through cannibalism, to be consumed by the witch, to be remade by her and be one with her in a distorted echo of the Eucharist, which both absolves the cannibalistic witch of blame and positions Gretel as a willing monster disciple. The story forecloses the possibility of a queer transubstantiation as it concludes with the horrific, nechrophiliac image of Gretel holding a corpse under the moonlight, the illusion broken, the witch's 'dead mouth yawning at the moon' (Valente 34). However, this ending does not completely preclude a queer, monstrous future for Gretel, and in fact draws attention to the loose grasp Gretel has on her liquid monstrousness, which threatens to overflow at any moment and destruct the boundaries that contain her.

4.3.2.2 Lauren Beukes' *The Hidden Kingdom*

A case of uncontained, overflowing physical monstrosity (and even moral monstrousness) can be found in *The Hidden Kingdom*. The comic volume belongs to the series *Fairest*, a spin-off of the *Fables* series by Bill Willingham, and it was written by Lauren Beukes and illustrated by Iñaki Miranda. The main series tells the stories of different characters from fairy tales that have been expelled from their Homelands and must establish themselves in the human world, in a hidden community known as Fabletown located in New York City. *Fairest* is comprised of five volumes and a standalone issue, each dedicated to a female fairy-tale character.

The Hidden Kingdom, specifically, focuses on Rapunzel, who travels to the Japanese version of Fabletown following a mysterious letter that reads simply 'your children' (Beukes ch. 1). Rapunzel takes this to mean her twins, the same from the Grimms' version of the story, which in the *Fables* universe were stolen at birth. It is revealed that she had travelled to Japan before: 'I came here to erase myself' (Beukes ch. 2). The text thus unravels two timelines simultaneously, one set in the present, and one relaying her first visit to the Celestial Palace, centuries ago. That would be the Japanese equivalent to the Homelands, where folklore creatures, the yokai, used to leave before they, too, were driven out, into Tokyo in this case. The text therefore transplants characters from the European fairy-tale tradition (who are also from the U.S. via the *Fables* series) and drops them within the darker Japanese mythscape, which is variously populated by ghosts, demons and all manner of nightmarish creatures, all of them rendered in colourful detail by Miranda.

The totality of the text is thus geographically recentered, so that this particular, monstrous 'dark [region]' (Cohen 18) comes into focus, its dangers not uncertain but lovingly depicted, in contrast to the vague descriptions offered in *The Stepsister Scheme*. For Wright, 'once it can be symbolized, monstrousness loses its terrible power' (Wright 4). What is truly monstrous is, then, that which remains invisible, unimaginable, and 'cannot be situated' (Wright 18). By situating all the monsters so visibly, Beukes and Miranda are thus potentially removing some of their monstrousness, making their grotesque monstrosity just part of the landscape. For instance, if the initial image of Mayumi, the character based on the Kuchisake onna, is confronting, by the time we reach the end of the issue we have grown accustomed to her broken-open face and pointed teeth (see figure 3).

Figure 3. Panel of Mayumi's first appearance. Translated as the 'Slit-Mouthed Woman,' the Kuchisake onna is the traditional vengeful spirit of a woman who was disfigured by her husband. Her name comes from the deep gash that he tore on her face from ear to ear, which is revealed to be Mayumi's backstory too. Her punk, grotesque physique becomes less shocking as the comic progresses. Illustrated by Iñaki Miranda.

Most striking, perhaps, is Rapunzel's visual descent into the grotesque, potentially due to her status as a well-known fairy-tale character and her initially familiar, wholesome image. It is revealed that when the Celestial Palace was attacked, she was thrown in the well alongside dead bodies, expecting her to die, but, as an immortal *fable*, she did not: 'The others started to rot. The maggots set in. I ate my own

hair, I couldn't consider the alternatives. It broke something in me' (Beukes ch. 4). Unlike Gretel, Rapunzel could not consider the possibility of cannibalism, which could perhaps reveal her as less monstrous, although in this case it would be cannibalism for survival rather than a desire to incorporate the Other in ritualistic transubstantiation. By eating her magical hair, however, she invites in at least one kind of monster: she creates magical bezoars[74] which pull her out of the well. The bezoars, here sentient creatures, help Rapunzel kill her enemies, but eventually escape her control and wreak havoc in the Celestial Palace. The image of Rapunzel emerging from the well is a reference to Japanese horror film *Ringu* (*The Ring*, 1998), and stands in stark contrast with traditional representations of fairy-tale princesses.

Figure 4. Cropped splash page depicting a gruesome Rapunzel climbing out of the well in the style of Sadako Yamamura in *Ringu* (or Samara in the 2002 American remake). Illustrated by Iñaki Miranda.

[74] MedlinePlus defines a bezoar as 'a ball of swallowed foreign material most often composed of hair or fiber. It collects in the stomach and fails to pass through the intestines' (*MedlinePlus*). Historically, however, they were believed to have magical or curative properties, and were depicted as such in Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, a tradition that Beukes is perpetuating in *The Hidden Kingdom*.

Figure 5. Cropped still of Sadako climbing out of the well in 1998's *Ringu*. Sadako is a vengeful ghost that kills anybody who watches a cursed tape. After climbing out of the well in the recording, she breaks through the TV screen and kills whoever is watching.

However appalling this image may seem, the connection between Sadako/Samara and Rapunzel has been imaginatively drawn before, concretely by Walter Rankin, who in 2007 wrote:

> Both are changeling daughters taken from their original homes by foster mothers who . . . ultimately abandon their daughters when they find that they cannot control them. Rapunzel and Samara are both isolated from the outside world as they get older, and they reach out though the media or their time, whether song or video, as they try to save themselves. And, yes, their hair serves as a defining physical characteristic for each of them, from Rapunzel's golden locks to Samara's ebony tresses. (Rankin 75)

The disquieting juxtaposition of both characters ought not to be so shocking, then, particularly if we consider, as Rankin does, the well merely as an 'inverted tower' (Rankin 77). In *The Hidden Kingdom*, Rapunzel, as a Sadako/Rapunzel hybrid, thus plunges from her fairy-tale tower into her death well, where her monstrosity finally spills out.

The covers for the issues reflect the progressive decomposition of Rapunzel's character. The earliest one presents her as innocent, pure, beautiful and surrounded by animals, but they progress into darker territory by showing her splattered with blood and as a screaming skeleton, with only her golden hair to recognise her by. Even her hair, the most obvious symbol of the Rapunzel character, could potentially be linked to

monstrosity. Marina Warner explains: 'Maidenhair can symbolize maidenhead—and its loss too, and the flux of sexual energy that this releases' (M. Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde* 374). Rapunzel's excessive hair is thus also mark of excessive sexuality, uncontained and unpredictable, even dangerous. In the Grimms' story, it is by climbing her hair that her prince can breach the tower and impregnate her, and in *The Hidden Kingdom*, her hair grows whenever she has sex, a feature she incidentally uses to break out of a tower. It is fitting then that her murderous bezoars, which are indeed referred to as her 'monstrous children' (Beukes, ch. 4), should come out of her excessively sexual hair in a corrupted version of birth-giving.

This potential for monstrosity, passed down from the Grimm tale and finally realised at the Celestial Palace, is what, ultimately, allows for Rapunzel's queerness. In the rest of the series she is presented as heterosexual, but in *The Hidden Kingdom* she falls in love with the kitsune[75] Tomoko—a fittingly monstrous partner, half woman, half man-eating fox. The book's back cover, which already publicizes this central relationship, is notoriously filtered through a male, heterosexual gaze—much more so than the kiss' illustration in *The Sleeper and the Spindle*. The two lovers appear in a sexualised, unlikely position: Rapunzel, naked but covered by her hair, is throwing her head back while Tomoko, barely shielded by a kimono, looks provocatively at the potential reader. This taps into stereotypical male fantasies, since Tomoko seems to be beckoning an onlooker to join in their lesbian encounter. Their relationship within the book is treated with enough sensitivity by Beukes, but this initial image by Miranda potentially colours the reader's perception of their relationship as transient or unserious, and ultimately as less threatening.

[75] Kitsunes in Japanese mythology are magical foxes. They can be wise, good, or mischievious, and they possess the ability to shapeshift into humans or humanlike creatures.

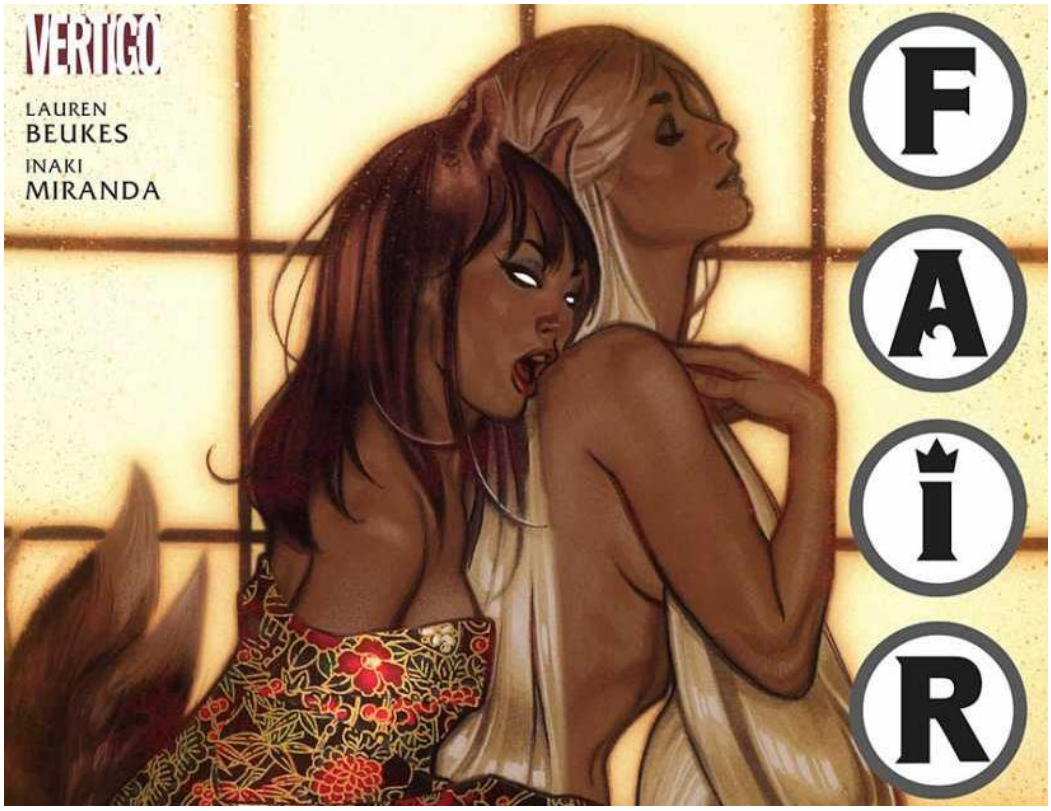

Figure 6. Tomoko leans into Rapunzel in the midst of some vaguely sexual encounter. Illustrated by Iñaki Miranda.

The Celestial Palace, where their relationship is allowed to develop, positions itself as considerably more open to queerness than the Fabletown in New York, which is filled with magic and impossible creatures, but it is in fact invariably heterocentric. As one disgruntled review reads:

> In all of these worlds, in stories with talking animals and fantastic worlds, there doesn't seem to be any gay or lesbian characters . . . For as many stories about people being transformed into animals, objects and even plants, both purposefully and in some cases against their will, transgender doesn't come up at all either. For a universe [in which magic is commonplace] switching genders hasn't come up at all. (Cox)

The exotic Celestial Palace is thus aligned once more with other queer, monstrous, distant lands, such as the desert land Talia came from in *The Stepsister Scheme*, and as such it is positioned against a more restrictive, normative and moral counterpart. Predictably, therefore, Rapunzel's queerness, as well as her monstrosity, are not allowed to escape the confines of the exotic land of dark desire. Tomoko begs Rapunzel to stay with her and suggests that Rapunzel forget who she is, which indicates that being with her is incompatible with remaining the traditional Rapunzel figure:

> ‘Easy things: forgetting, falling back into her arms, letting go. I’m so tempted . . . Or I could do what I have to do and face the dog of my past’ (Beukes ch. 6)

The cover for the last chapter shows a warrior-like Rapunzel, fierce but whole again, which foreshadows the ending. Rapunzel chooses to go back to Fabletown with Joel, a friend who is in love with her and with whom she has sex on occasion. In the end, normativity reasserted, she pulls away from a queer, temporary and exoticized—located in an ‘Other’ world—fantasy. Rapunzel, looking like a beautiful girl out of a fairy tale (that is, looking like a traditional fairy-tale heroine once more) is effectively giving up her monstrous queer past up in order to focus on her heterosexual present. However, this fairly conservative ‘happy’ ending is undercut by the very last lines: ‘there's plenty of time to think about the future, about the possibility of coming back...’ (Beukes ch. 6). Her monstrosity is imperfectly circumscribed within the Celestial Palace, and there could always be a repeat spillage, should Rapunzel choose to return and/or embrace a queer future.

4.3.2.3 *Once Upon a Time*

Finally, the last analysis in this chapter will focus on what is possibly the character which better exemplifies the domestication of the queer monster: Little Red Riding Hood, known as ‘Ruby’ or ‘Red’ in the TV show *Once Upon a Time*. The show’s premise is similar to that of *Fables*’: it features several fairy-tale characters that have been transported to the human world, only in this case they have forgotten who they really are and, unwittingly, stand frozen in time, unable to move forwards or return to their homeland (in other words, they are stuck in non-normative, queer time). The show aired on ABC, which belongs to the Disney Corporation, so it is heavily inspired by Disney, both when it comes to the array of characters it focuses on,[76] the narrative trajectory of their backstories, and the visual representation of these characters. For instance, the beauty from ‘Beauty and the Beast’ is called Belle after the 1991 animated version, and she is seen wearing the iconic golden dress in episode 12 of season 1, ‘Skin Deep.’ *Once Upon a Time* features other characters from tales which have not been reimagined by Disney, however, like the evil villain/tragic antihero Rumpelstiltskin, and, of course, Little Red Riding Hood, whose analysis I will base primarily on two episodes:

[76] Protagonists include typical fairy-tale princesses like Snow White, but also legendary characters like Mulan and literary ones like Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz*.

season 1, episode 15, 'Red-Handed,' and season 5, episode 18, 'Ruby Slippers.' Not being part of the Disney line-up ostensibly frees Red from representational constraints, at least while she inhabits the human world, and so she embraces a more transgressive look: she wears revealing clothes, heavy makeup and a multitude of red extensions in her hair. More relevantly, she is also freed from constraints of a narrative kind, and she will be revealed to be a werewolf in season one, and in season five, bisexual.

As Brittany Warman writes 'Red's werewolf nature [is] a coded depiction of her then latent but later confirmed bisexuality' (Warman, 'Wolf' 2). Indeed, just like in all the other monsters (and even heroes) covered in this chapter, monstrosity and queerness are inextricably intertwined in the case of *Once Upon a Time*'s Red, which becomes readily apparent from the start. 'Red-Handed' is the first episode in the show to focus on Red, who lives and works with her grandmother, with whom she has a complicated relationship. The source of intergenerational tension between the two is, in true fairy-tale style, the grandmother's desire to police Red's sexuality and Red's desire to break away from that control, thus leading to a good amount of bickering when Red flirts with customers:

> GRANNY: For another thing, *Liza*, you dress like a drag queen during Fleet Week.
>
> RED: And *you* dress like Norman Bates' mother when he dresses like Norman Bates' mother. (*Once Upon a Time*, 'Red-Handed')

This exchange in the beginning of the episode invokes queer monstrosity in both grandmother and granddaughter. Red is likened to drag queens, monstrous representations of femininity (or failed masculinity with monstrous results),[77] and Granny is likened to *Psycho's* monstrous transvestite Norman Bates. The reference to a monstrous crossdresser, incidentally, conjures yet another monstrous crossdresser: the wolf from the Grimms' 'Little Red Cap,' who famously ate the grandmother and then dressed in her clothes in order to deceive the little girl. Eating the grandmother is, of course, a transformative process by which both grandmother and wolf become one, and so the exchange above can be seen as foreshadowing, not only Red's, but also Granny's status as a queer werewolf.

[77] Furthermore, the 'Liza' probably refers to Liza Minelli, a notorious gay icon.

'Red-Handed,' just like *The Hidden Kingdom*, unfolds two narratives: one set in Storybrooke, in the present, and one revealing the character's past in their fairy-tale land. Red is quite different in the flashbacks: she is innocent, and obedient, and her look resembles familiar descriptions of pure-white skin against a blood-red cape, which symbolises the imminent passage from childhood to womanhood. As Zipes writes, 'Little Red Riding Hood' is the 'most provocative fairy tale in the Western world' (Zipes, *Trials and Tribulations* 343), underpinned by themes of maturity, violence and 'the regulation of sex roles and sexuality' (Zipes, *Trials and Tribulations* 124). These themes definitely carry over in 'Red-Handed.' In the flashbacks, Red yearns to be with her boyfriend, but her grandmother is strict about her staying in at night. There have been deadly wolf attacks in town, during what townspeople call 'Wolf's Time.' As Warman suggests, 'Wolf's Time' alludes to '"Moon Time", a phrase often used for the period when a woman is menstruating' (Warman, 'Wolf' 6), which ties in with the theme of impending sexual maturity central to so many 'Little Red Riding Hood' tales, symbolically represented by the red cape. The red cape in 'Red-Handed,' however, plays a somewhat different role: it is revealed it is what keeps Red from turning into a werewolf, hence her grandmother's anxiety when she finds she has left it behind in order to run away with her boyfriend. The cape both controls her sexuality and keeps her tied to her human side, thus standing for a tool of normative control. In the end, Granny finds Red in the forest, back in her human form, next to the dismembered body of her boyfriend.

This is not the first text to make the somewhat obvious connection between lycanthropy and menstruation, and also not the first 'Little Red Riding Hood' retelling to combine the figure of the girl and the wolf into one lycanthropic character—for instance, 1984's *The Company of Wolves*, a film based on Angela Carter's retelling, does all of the above. It is unique however in its incorporation of queerness to this mix. Although it will not be explicit until the fifth season, as Warman contends:

> [The werewolf/Red is] a dangerous creature who terrorizes normative society and destroys the possibility of heterosexual love . . . in keeping with heterosexual fears regarding queer sexualities. (Warman, 'Wolf' 7)

Red is effectively the stereotypical, predatory queer monster, which threatens heterocentric structures and even murders the innocent heterosexual love interest. However, Red is unaware of her condition because her grandmother, a former werewolf herself, has kept it from her for her own good. This works to exculpate Red and make her

monstrous side almost incidental: she is a blameless victim of her monstrosity; a character to whom monstrosity happens, rather than a character who knowingly perpetrates monstrous acts. Granny discloses Red's mother was also a werewolf and, although she thinks her dead, Red will find her in episode 7 of the second season, 'Child of the Moon,' and will discover she belongs to a werewolf commune that hates humans. A genealogy of queer female monsters is thus established: her grandmother, who would forever suppress her monstrous side; her mother, who would embrace her monstrosity and use it against the established norm; and Red, who as a heroic monster will be effectively 'assimilated to dominant values' (T. Sutton and Besnhoff 204).[78]

Indeed, Red embodies the humanised or individualised monster Boyer described (15), and, somewhat ironically, the complete assimilation of Red will be simultaneous with the discovery of her non-normative sexuality. By the fifth season of the show, she has learned to control her monstrosity with the help of the magic cape, and in fact is able to transform strategically in moments of need, which reimagines her monstrosity as a superpower. However, she is still looking for her pack, which implies she has not found a place in which her liquid identity fits. This is the point at which she meets Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz*, with whom she will strike up an immediate connection, to the point that in 'Ruby Slippers' Dorothy will be put under a sleeping spell, and Red will be the only one able to wake her up with a 'true love's kiss.' From episode one, *Once Upon a Time* establishes the true love's kiss, in the style of Disney, as a powerful type of light magic, indeed as the most effective curse-breaker. It is used over fifteen times over the course of the show's seven seasons, but 'Ruby Slippers' features the only time a homosexual couple attempts to make use of the highly normative magic of true love.

For Warman, Red's explicit bisexuality 'distances the show significantly from Disney's . . . notoriously heteronormative politics' and characterises *Once Upon a Time* as 'unconventional and progressive' (Warman, 'Wolf' 9). However, Red's status as an utterly defanged monster and the concurrent reveal and assimilation of her queerness through the exclusive rite of the 'true love's kiss' undermines this reading. The show oscillates between characterising Red as normative and Other, as monster and hero, but

[78] For a discussion on how Red's stance with regards to her lycanthropy ties in with her bisexuality, see Warman's 'I Am the Wolf: Queering 'Little Red Riding Hood' and 'Snow White and Rose Red' in the Television Show *Once Upon a Time*.'

her ambiguity is stabilised into a homonormative approximation to dominant values of monogamy and acceptable togetherness through her pairing with Dorothy. Even if Red is not perfectly 'normal,' and in fact her (controllable) monstrosity likely positioned her as an acceptable candidate to 'become' queer, her identity ultimately settles millimetrically close to the norm, just barely, harmlessly, marked by Otherness.

4.4 Conclusions

When Sam Miller wrote about the death of the queer monster in horror, he was referring primarily to mainstream cinema, since he could still find some queer monsters in independent gay films such as '*HellBent* (Paul Etheredge, 2004) [and] Bruce LaBruce's *Otto; or, Up with Dead People* (2008)' (S. Miller 228). This divide between independent and mainstream is not replicated in fairy-tale revisions: the most mainstream of them all, *Once Upon a Time*, maintains its queer monster roots, even if the monster appears here as a (mostly) successfully domesticated Other. This is not surprising, however, since the show is intended for younger viewers and, the conservative slant of the Disney Company notwithstanding, less subversive forms of queerness are more likely to be shown in that type of product—if at all. Products for children generally 'meet standards of acceptability that preclude overt sexual content' (Kenney 171). (Hetero)normative sexuality is naturalised, seen as innocuous and thus commonly found in these products, but non-normative sexuality is automatically perceived as sexual or sexualised, and therefore considerably rarer (Kenney 171). *Once Upon a Time* is intended for a young audience, but not necessarily for young children (it was classified as *PG* in the U.S. and as 12+ in countries such as the United Kingdom or Spain), which might explain its timid, but present, inclusion of queerness.

On a related front, queer heroes are more likely to be found in retellings directed at young adults, such as *The Stepsister Scheme* and *The Sleeper and the Spindle*. Relatively free from the conservative constraints of texts intended for children, especially from the 2010s (see Town, 18-22), the Young Adult genre can be regarded as a fertile site for narratives of empowerment. As Terry Norton and Jonathan Vare argue, queer YA literature 'may not eliminate homophobia nor alleviate the risks stemming from it,' but 'well-written books may help subvert the culture of silence still current in many school environments and offer a supportive framework for self-understanding by gay and lesbian teens' (23). Thus, these types of products would favour (at least

seemingly) positive representations of queerness, so as to serve as positive examples for young queer readers. Nonetheless, in spite of presumably good intentions, *The Stepsister Scheme*'s characterisation of Talia as queer and a racial Other feels underdeveloped and raises problems when closely examined. It amounts to what Kristen J. Warner calls 'plastic representation,' which 'can only approximate depth and substance because ultimately it is hollow and cannot survive close scrutiny' (35).[79] In other words, Talia's characterisation is revealed as superficial, simplistic and, actually, rather negative once the supra-textual, real-world implications of her intersectional identity are taken into account. On the other hand, although *The Sleeper and the Spindle* is arguably haunted by the creators' male gaze and maintains the normative death of the queer monster, it also features a fully-realised queer hero. Therefore, the queer monster does not 'stand alone in the field of representation' and the text avoids universalising associations of queerness with Otherness (Schildcrout 3). It also manages to avoid overly homonormative closures: the retelling, in fact, ultimately offers an escapist queer fantasy in which the final hero reward is freedom from the normative institutions of marriage and royalty, in a subversion of classical fairy-tale endings.

Comparatively, texts that are directed to adult readers are generally allowed to represent a wider spectrum of queer identities, so 'Bones like Black Sugar' and *The Hidden Kingdom* both spotlight truly monstrous queer characters. 'Bones like Black Sugar,' perhaps owing to the fact that is the most independently-produced among the analysed texts, allows for Gretel's uncomfortable, unassimilable monstrousness to roam free in the forest. Her descent into monstrousness is unapologetically unfurled before the reader, and the narrative does not at any point sweeten[80] the nightmarish scenario or offer any manner of comforting endings. For its part, *The Hidden Kingdom* offers positively grim visuals, and so we find a ghastly reimagining of Rapunzel, who is a strange combination of the traditional fairy-tale princess, a murderer, a saviour, a mother of monsters, and a vengeful spirit in the style of *Ringu*'s Sadako. This book, however, exposes a problem that might emerge as queer fairy tales evolve, enter the mainstream, and are aimed at new markets, beyond the niche audiences of earlier examples: that is, non-queer creators might utilize the subgenre to primarily appeal to non-queer audiences,

[79] This criticism can potentially be levelled at Red in *Once Upon a Time*, as well, although her status as a werewolf adds a compelling dimension and complexity to the shallow exploration of her bisexuality.

[80] Pun intended.

thus failing to inscribe queer sensibilities within their work, which can come off as exploitative.

As these different types of texts would suggest, the fairy tale has an unflinching affinity to the queer monster, which surpasses even the attachment to that figure in horror. So strong is this affinity, in fact, that it finds its way to shows intended for young audiences, that queer monstrosity and monstrousness burrow themselves inside the most heroic queer protagonists. Indeed, the (apparently) strict fairy-tale categories are largely rendered porous in these retellings so that the monster can flow through them—when they do not build their plots around the traditional tensions between hero and monster, these retellings transfer that conflict to the protagonist's body, producing monstrous heroes or heroic monsters that must learn to control or navigate their fragmented identity. This positions the fairy tale as an equally valid site for aspirational, normative, comforting narratives and horrific, subversive or otherwise defiant ones.

Marina Warner writes that the fairy tale's wonder mode elicits 'dread and desire at once, attraction and recoil, producing a thrill, the shudder of pleasure and of fear' (*Wonder Tales,* 3). This claim neatly mirrors Cohen's description of monsters as creatures that terrify but also evoke 'potent escapist fantasies' (17). Both the genre and the creature are, then, inescapably linked by their capacity to simultaneously attract and scare, to captivate audiences with their odd, appealing, Other-worldly and, yes, even off-putting qualities. Thus, the wondrous fairy tale reveals itself as a natural habitat for the monster outcast in all its forms, even the most provocative, which explains why the endangered, dissident pleasure of the queer monster can still be easily experienced in many contemporary fairy tales when it has become increasingly rare in other genres. In fact, Miller, at the same time as he was mourning the queer monster's demise, remarked that it 'might come strutting [back] at any moment' (S. Miller 231). Perhaps it had never left. Perhaps it was just waiting to be found, in true horror fashion, in the most unexpected place.

5 Queer Fairy Tales 2.0: Parodying the Disney Paratext from Online Counterpublics

> *The effectiveness of fairy tales . . . depends on the innovative manner in which we make the basic information of the tales relevant for the listeners and receivers . . . As our environment changes and evolves, so too do we change the media or modes of the tales to enable us to adapt to new conditions.*
>
> Jack Zipes in *Why Fairy Tales Stick*

5.1 Introduction: Mainstream Fairy-Tale Parodies

In 2001, at the turn of the new millennium, DreamWorks released the computer animated film *Shrek*, a postmodern fairy-tale parody that sought to challenge the cultural and corporate monopoly of Disney. The film throws together inverted versions of characters from fairy tales, legend, and children's literature, many of which can be found in Disney's adaptations, and mixes them with pop culture references and adult-oriented humour. The titular Shrek is a crude, fairy-tale-hating, swamp-dwelling ogre. A traditional fairy-tale monster-villain, he will be recast as the hero of the story in a narrative move that, as seen in previous chapters, has steadily gained popularity. Shrek, together with his donkey sidekick, will thus proceed to rescue a princess, they will depose the authoritarian antagonist, the princess will be revealed to transform into an ogress at night, and the two loved-up ogres will eventually have their fairy-tale wedding—in a swamp, to the upbeat sound of Smash Mouth's 'I'm a Believer.' This parodic engagement with Disney fairy-tale conventions was so popular it grossed $120,000,000 during its opening weekend (Bacchilega and Rieder 9), which cemented the foundations of a lucrative franchise with, among others, three sequels, a TV spinoff, numerous video games, and even a musical.

The film's incredible success demonstrated a number of things: that the fairy tale was as pliable as ever, capable of being reinvented through technical innovation and genre mixing; that the genre's appeal was not exclusive to children; and that the fairy tale could easily, even productively, be approached from a place other than the sentimental

nostalgia characteristic of the Disney paratext.[81] As Bacchilega and Rieder claim, it was also an effective contestation to Disney's 'monopoly on the cinematic fairy tale' (30), which influenced the production of other CGI films parodying fairy tales, such as *Hoodwinked!* (2005) and *Happy N' Ever After* (2007). Eventually, even the Mouse company jumped on this trend and released *Enchanted* (2007), a film that mixes animation with live-action techniques and that satirises Disney's own fairy-tale codes (Bacchilega and Rieder 30). In fact, in the past decade Disney's output has grown, if not parodic, at least increasingly meta-referential, reinforcing the company's approach to fairy tales at the same time as they demystify it. For example, the live-action film *Maleficent* (2014) is a prequel to Disney's 1959's *Sleeping Beauty* that rehabilitates and recontextualises the villain, but it also establishes Disney's take on 'Sleeping Beauty' as the canonical one.

However, as much all these films aim to revise fairy-tale conventions and adapt them to twenty-first century sensibilities, none of them have been able to tackle or trouble their insistent heterocentrism, which points to major shortcomings regarding the power of subversion of these types of retellings. Bacchilega and Rieder in fact contend that both *Shrek* and *Enchanted*, as different as they are, show the same staunch allegiance to the romanticised fairy-tale plot:

> [While *Shrek* draws] on a satirical demystification of fairy tale formulas and motifs already active in popular culture, the effect is merely humorous and transient because the alliance of fairy tale and romance still ends up shaping the stories' closure and emotional power. *Enchanted* seems to have learned from the Shrek films this dualistic strategy of initially parodying the idealization of romance . . . only to conclude by celebrating the same set of conventions. (Bacchilega and Rieder 30)

This 'set of conventions' is not explicitly identified as including compulsory heterosexuality by the authors, but Linda Pershing and Lisa Gablehouse mention that heterosexuality is certainly 'presumed in *Enchanted*; viewers see no same-sex couples or alternative gender depictions' (147). It must be noted that gender non-conformity is found in the *Shrek* franchise in the figures of a crossdressing wolf, a trans-coded ugly

[81] 'Disney paratext,' as used by Greenhill and Matrix (5-8) and explained by Ida Yoshinaga, refers to 'the pervasive (collectively) canonical intertext generated by The Walt Disney Company's control of mass-produced, audiovisual fairy-tale representations from the twentieth century onward' (Yoshinaga). It typically includes a young girl who yearns for love, freedom or status, a villain who threatens and/or imprisons the protagonist, a young prince or love interest who rescues the protagonist, and a happy ending in which both young lovers get married (Yoshinaga).

stepsister (from *Cinderella*) and a lingerie-wearing Pinocchio, but alternative gender expression or identity is always played up for (mostly horrified) laughs. To be fair, everything is played up for laughs in the *Shrek* tetralogy, so these jokes could be seen as staying in-line with the franchise's general irreverence. However, the fact that the closest approximation to a homosexual character is evil, vain and laughable Prince Charming (voiced by gay actor Rupert Everett)[82] reinforces the impression that the franchise sees gender and sexual non-normativity as something to ridicule and/or fear. Disney, for its part, has consistently avoided including explicitly queer characters in its major releases, with the sole exception of 2017's *Beauty and the Beast* remake, in which the villain's sidekick, LeFou, can be seen dancing with another man for a second, which was meant to convey his homosexuality.

Disney is of course constrained by its own well-established codes and reputation, and the company's attempts to break away from that have remained mostly superficial. Changing too much or too fast would likely endanger the company's cultural position, which, as discussed in chapter two, has long promoted conservative, children-friendly products.[83] In comparison, Zipes deems DreamWorks' *Shrek* 'a delightful and hopeful anticipation of a de-Disneyfied world' that shatters 'standard notions of fairy tales and normative standards of beauty, proper mating behaviour, femininity and masculinity' (*The Enchanted Screen* 59). However, and given that even DreamWorks has largely organised *Shrek*'s fairy-tale plots around heterosexual love (with the third film introducing straight love's most normative product in the form of ogre triplets), one has to question how possible it is to truly challenge the most entrenched fairy-tale codes from within American entertainment conglomerates, where creative freedom and even creators' ideology are secondary to corporate and economic interests.

[82] In the NBC Halloween special *Scared Sherkless* (2010), Charming appears in a parody of *Psycho* called 'Boots Motel.' He is depicted as a murderous crossdresser in the style of Norman Bates, which brings us back to last chapters' discussion on the relationship between queerness and monstrousness/monstrosity, as well as the pervasive presence of the queer monster in fairy-tale retellings.

[83] Apart from the disproportionate backlash that Disney got for LeFou's gay second in *Beauty and the Beast* (2017), the company has been accused, quite ironically, of being one of the main promoters of the 'homosexual agenda' in America from the nineties, when it was introducing slightly more progressive internal policies like same-sex partner benefits (Sweeney 130). Give these reactions to the smallest signs of progressiveness, Disney might be wary to introduce explicitly queer representation in their wide-appeal fairy-tale films.

To this day, we have to turn to independent producers in order to find fairy tales that effectively challenge cisheteronormative conventions. As the texts analysed so far in this study show, almost all queer fairy tales are produced outside of the mainstream, or are the very least relatively small projects, especially when compared to big-budget animated films. In previous chapters we have analysed novels, novellas, poetry collections, short stories, comic books and TV shows, but, since the 2010s, a new kind of queer retelling has flourished and steadily gained strength, not defined, in this case, so much by its format as by where it originates and spreads, and that is web-based queer revisions of fairy tales. The internet has indeed provided a number of platforms for queer independent creatives to disseminate parodic contestations that, much like *Shrek*, seek to undermine Disney's hegemony, but that, unlike *Shrek*, address the problematic cisheteronormativity of the fairy tale.

This chapter will thus analyse texts that were created online and gained wider visibility through social media: Tim Manley's illustrated collection *Alice in Tumblr-Land* (2013), Brittany Ashley's webseries *Lesbian Princess* (2015-16), Todrick Hall's music video parodies, such as 'CinderFella' (2012) and 'Cinderoncé' (2013), and Jose Rodolfo Loaiza Ontiveros' pop art illustrations. As we will see, in spite of the medial diversity of these revisions, they all, invariably, identify Disney as the contemporary fairy-tale canon-maker, and so its adaptations are seen as authoritative versions to reference, resist or otherwise undermine. We will explore how these independent (or semi-independent) producers take commodified forms and then tactically redeploy them in order to humorously undercut disneyfied discourse. The resulting texts thus challenge centralised, mass-produced, corporate fairy-tale paratexts through a patchwork of small politicized contestations emerging from queer online counterpublics.

5.2 Queer Online Counterpublics

Queer counterpublics are a type of what Nancy Fraser terms 'subaltern counterpublics' (following Gayatri Spivak); that is, those alternative discursive spaces where members of subordinated groups 'invent and circulate counter-discourses' (Fraser 67). This concept was developed as a critique of Jürgen Habermas' idea of the singular public sphere, a space 'made up of private people gathered together as a public and articulating the needs of society with the state' (Habermas 176). For Fraser this is an idealised vision, since the unified public sphere has historically offered limited access to

minorities, such as ‘women, workers, peoples of color, and gays and lesbians’ (Fraser 67). These groups must instead come together in counterpublics so as ‘to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs’ (Fraser 67). As such, subaltern counterpublics act as ‘spaces of withdrawal and regroupment’ (Fraser 68) in which members of the group excluded from the public sphere can create a language to articulate their experience and construct their identities in their own terms. They also serve a second function: as venues of ‘agitation, activism and contestation’ (Boklage 120) from which members try to reach a wider audience and work to challenge the subordination of participants in the dominant public sphere (see M. Warner, *Publics*). For instance, consciousness-raising groups discussed in chapter three, where queer people would get together to share their experiences and struggles so as to construct identity and community, are good examples of subaltern counterpublics, especially as they helped in the eventual mobilisation of gays and lesbians. So did the discussed LGBTQI organisations, neighborhoods, bars, clubs, bookstores, et cetera, that emerged in the second half of the twentieth century, which can also be described as counterpublics—or more specifically, queer counterpublics (see M. Warner, *Publics*).

The notion of ‘publics’ as understood by Habermas does not necessarily exist in a located, identifiable space, and indeed neither do counterpublics: as Evgeniya Boklage contends, subaltern counterpublics nowadays are practically synonymous with internet technologies (121). Boklage writes that the internet has helped bring about a decentralised communication network managed by civil society (Boklage 121), thus restoring the possibility for participation, response and relative control denied by old media. This is not to say that there are no limitations: although user-generated, bottom-up content has gained a lot of terrain, it is still more often than not filtered through commercial and institutional frames (i.e. by the use of platforms such as Facebook or YouTube). Still, the new media model facilitated by internet infrastructures mitigates one of the biggest impediments for the dissemination of counter-hegemonic discourses emerging from queer counterpublics, which, according to Michael Warner, could ‘circulate up to a point, at which it is certain to meet intense resistance. It might therefore circulate in special, protected venues, in limited publications’ (M. Warner, *Publics* 120). As seen in previous chapters, that was long the case of LGBTQI literature (and, even longer, queer fairy tales) which flourished at the same time as specialised publishing houses, circulated mostly in limited circles, and only marginally impacted the

mainstream. Counter-hegemonic discourse, queer and otherwise, although still working from within capitalistic frameworks, has significantly benefited from the availability and increased reach of digital and online technologies.

Undeniably, the internet provides alternative avenues, not only for the circulation of counter-hegemonic discourses, but also for social networking, organisation, political mobilisation, and identity affirmation, among others. These possibilities are particularly attractive for LGBTQI people, who, as detailed in chapter three, have historically grown up in isolation from other queer people, and thus disconnected from identity-forming referents, their own community, and so on. Online connection pathways can be seen as offsetting this historical isolation, leading Christopher Pullen to argue that the LGBTQI community is in fact 'increasingly distanced from the need of a physical social space,' as it forgoes the 'physical and disconnected' in favour of the 'virtual and immediate' (Pullen xi). Chapter three covered the ways in which gay people could be characterised as an imagined community of readers due to their dependency on gay literature for identity and community-construction, so this final shift away from the 'hold of the local' (to use Anthony Giddens' term), which situates the LGBTQI community as uniquely dependent on online counterpublics, ought to be seen as a natural development of that same tendency: after all, the LGBTQI community has become, in many ways, an imagined community of internet users**.**

5.3 Digital Fairy Tales

It follows that this particular subset of internet users would eventually use the potentialities of queer online counterpublics to produce revisions of fairy tales. This is due not only to the freedom and immediacy provided by such spaces to creatively explore marginal interests, develop distinctive contestation styles to dominant discourse and build an audience of like-minded individuals, but also to the fairy tale being remarkably suited for online platforms.

As seen in chapter two, the fairy tale has successfully migrated transmedially, from oral forms to written ones and back; it was used by early filmmakers like Georges Méliès to explore new technical possibilities, as well as by early animators like Lotte Reiniger, and has been adapted to such disparate forms as opera and the video game. In short, the genre has demonstrably been readjusted to fit a myriad of new media forms

and frameworks of production, distribution, and consumption, but it is the latest medium shift, with the rise of internet technologies, which might have most transformed it. As Jessica Tiffin writes, the twentieth-century commercial appropriation of the fairy tale:

> has perhaps blunted its aspect of communal *ownership*, despite its adoption of the mock oral-voice at times, but it has simultaneously ensured that the process of communal *experience* is enabled by new technologies of mass culture of mass production. (Tiffin 219, *Marvelous Geometry*, emphasis in original)

Indeed, internet technologies expand the opportunities for fairy-tale communal experience. The 'fairy-tale web,' as Bacchilega terms it (*Transformed* 3), makes classical fairy tales from all possible traditions widely accessible. For instance, D. L. Ashliman's *Folktexts* (http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/folktexts.html) compiles numerous fairy tales and folktales edited and translated into English by Ashliman; *Norske Folkeeventyr* (http://runeberg.org/folkeven), sponsored by the Runeberg Project, hosts tales by Asbjørnsen and Moe; and Heidi Anne Heiner's *SurLaLune Fairy Tales* (http://www.surlalunefairytales.com) supplies selected and translated fairy tales with hyperlinked annotations, illustrations, guides for teachers and students, discussion boards, and so on. The fairy-tale web also allows for an exploration of the intertextual and intermedial connections of the genre: the *International Fairy-Tale Filmography* (http://iftf.uwinnipeg.ca) is a growing, searchable database that indexes films from all over the world and links them to fairy tales or fairy-tale fragments they reference, and the *Fairy-Tale Teleography and Visualizations* project (http://fttv.byu.edu) is another indexed database of, in this case, TV shows that include fairy-tale material. It also offers visualisation tools that could open new avenues for studying fairy-tale connections in new media, which comes to show how the fairy-tale web has impacted both the object of study and the methodology used to study it.

However, internet technologies also restore the lost aspect of 'communal ownership' of the fairy tale Tiffin mentions above, much like new media models correct old media's limitations to a degree, particularly as the web favours practices of folk participation[84] and bottom-up transformation. A cursory Google search reveals intense folk engagement *especially* with regards to hypercommodified versions of fairy tales,

[84] In recent years, folklorists have discussed the necessity of studying 'techlore,' or internet folklore production, about which Trevor Blank writes that: 'Creativity is at the center of folkloristic inquiry, and the manifestations of online identity formation, artistic expression, folk religion, and the social dynamics of community construction are all important venues for analysis' (12).

such as those by Disney, which, despite copyright laws,[85] are routinely appropriated and challenged in online forums, for example via cosplay and fanart (found for instance on art site DeviantART, see figures 6 and 7 below), fanfiction (on sites like Archive of Our Own), discussions (like those found in the DISboard forums), or video essays and song mashups (both popular on YouTube). While Disney's filmic adaptations have been accused of attempting 'to become definitive, thereby solidifying a single variant' (Koven 177), creators in online forums forsake the single-variant model in favour of *'bricolage*,' to use Lynne S. McNeill's term, 'the construction of a personally relevant, pieced-together montage of meaning,' and thus their creations maintain the 'dynamism of the folk process' (McNeill).

Figure 7. These are two male versions of Elsa from Disney's *Frozen*. On the left, there is a piece of fanart by DeviantArt user Sakimichan titled 'Snow King.' On the right there is a cosplay (costume play) inspired on Sakimichan's fanart by DeviantArt user Hakucosplay, titled 'Elsa (Male Version Genderbend), Disney's Frozen.' This 'genderbending' or 'genderqueering' of Disney fairy-tale characters is common online, as are the (sometimes untraceable, due to lack of crediting) intertextual connections that vernacular creators establish with one another's work.

More relevantly still, online platforms extend the communal ownership of fairy tales to traditionally disenfranchised groups such as LGBTQI people. Thus queer creators online have found a way to, not only continue the process of reclamation of fairy

[85] Most of the examples listed would be protected in the United States as 'fair use' or 'transformative use,' but Disney has been, until very recently, notoriously intransigent when it comes to anything that would resemble copyright infringement (see Leonard).

tales started in the nineties, but to appropriate the disneyfied fairy-tale discourse and broadcast their sensibilities, cultural referents and aesthetic preferences with unprecedented impact, often transcending, as we will see, the boundaries of queer online counterpublics.

5.4 Camping Up the Fairy Tale

Extremely diverse and multilayered, Disney revisions in the fairy-tale web, queer and not, are a complex international phenomenon. Creators' cultural and linguistic backgrounds intersect with these globalised, commodified fairy tales, and then the resulting revisions interact at the vernacular level in different ways (see figures 6 and 7 above). Although they are not all parodic in tone or intention, I consider camp to be the main language of queer counterpublics, and one that blends seamlessly with the wondrous mode of fairy tales—particularly in their disneyfied versions—and thus this chapter will focus on parodic revisions that work to camp the genre.

In *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales,* Bottigheimer makes a distinction between fractured fairy tales and fairy-tale parodies, by which the former would be 'traditional fairy tales rearranged to create new plots with fundamentally different meanings or messages,' and the latter would be texts which 'mock individual tales and the genre as a whole' (Bottigheimer, 'Fractured' 209). The key difference in this understanding is that fractured fairy tales would have a 'reforming intent' and 'seek to impart updated social and moral messages' (Bottigheimer, 'Fractured' 209), and parodies, although closely related, would not. The parodies we will analyse in this chapter contradict this understanding as they indubitably mock disneyfied fairy-tale codes, but also contain, at their centre, 'updated social and moral messages' with clear 'reforming' intentions.

In that sense, they follow Linda Hutcheon's conception of postmodern parody, which is for her 'repetition with critical distance, which marks difference rather than similarity' (*Theory of Parody* 6) and is 'resolutely . . . and inescapably political' (Hutcheon, 'Parody and History' 180). Moreover, just like postmodern parodies, in revising Disney these texts confront the 'uniformization and commodification of mass culture' (Hutcheon, 'Parody and History' 183), and they do so, contradictorily, 'from within' the same structures of commodified mass culture (Hutcheon, 'Parody and

History' 183). A defining characteristic of postmodernism for Hutcheon is precisely that it is fundamentally contradictory:

> its art forms (and its theory) use and abuse, install and then subvert convention in parodic ways, self-consciously pointing both to their own inherent paradoxes and provisionality and, of course, to their critical or ironic re-reading. (Hutcheon, 'Parody and History' 180)

Hutcheon expands on this contradiction in *The Politics of Postmodernity* when she writes that 'parody is doubly coded in political terms: it both legitimizes and subverts that which it parodies' (97). All Disney parodies mentioned are contradictory in this way, and specifically the queer parodies we will be analysing in following sections closely follow this model of legitimisation and subversion: they acknowledge and reinforce the cultural monopoly of disneyfied fairy tales, but they also question the absolute authority of these versions. Thus, as much as these parodies can be accused of being complicit with certain structures of power, ultimately, their 'subversion is still there' (Hutcheon, *Politics* 102).

At the heart of most criticisms of the postmodern parody is, however, the simple fact that parody depends on an already existing texts, and thus it goes against Romantic notions of prized originality. Hutcheon nonetheless finds unique value in the parodic mode, as it 'forces a reassessment of the process of textual production' (*Theory of Parody* 4). This reassessment is particularly useful when it comes to exposing the relationships of power within textual production; that is, who 'possesses the original' and who on the contrary only 'possesses the parodic alternative' (Meyer 9). For Morris Meyer, only the dominant order is capable of advancing its own codes as the 'original,' and thus parody

> becomes the process whereby the marginalized and disenfranchised advance their own interests by entering alternative signifying codes into discourse by attaching them to existing structures of signification. (Meyer 9)

Therefore, camp, which for Meyer is synonymous with queer parody, is to him the only way in which 'the queer is able to enter representation and to produce social visibility' (Meyer 9).[86]

[86] Meyer was partly responding to Susan Sontag's 1964's 'Notes on Camp.' For Sontag, camp sensibility was detached, and thus depoliticised or apolitical, but Meyer sought to recover the politics of 'Camp-as-critique,' and the radical possibilities of 'parodic intertextuality' (Meyer 9).

Meyer was writing this in 1994, at a time when the debate around the normalisation of queerness was gaining strength, but, as covered in chapter three, the assimilation of queerness into the mainstream has fundamentally impacted the cultural and social visibility of queer people in the past two decades. Thus, I would not claim camp parody is the *only* means for queer social visibility nowadays, not even with regards to queer revisions of Disney—revisions online, queer and not, are as diverse as the people who produce them.[87] I would however consider camp to be the most salient mode in which counter-hegemonic discourse is circulated in queer counterpublics, and is later deployed so as to infiltrate the dominant sphere, even to this day. In pre-Stonewall times, as Bergman notes, camp was developed as 'an argot that provided an oppressed group some measure of coherence, solidarity, and humor' and a way 'to talk to one another within the hearing range of heterosexuals who might be hostile to them' (Bergman, 'Introduction' 13). Thus, camp was established as the language of queer counterpublics before their mass migration to the cyberspace. But camp it is not only coded queer language, it is also a queer aesthetic which seeks to 'undermine the heterosexual normativity through enacting outrageous inversions . . . and gender codes' (Medhurst 279), it is irony, 'theatricality and humor' (Babuscio 20).

While fairy tales are notoriously heterosexual, they are also indubitably campy: they are exaggerated and absurd in their mixing of mundane elements and magic, prone to outrageous, temporary inversions and their dramatis personae are theatrical, almost parodic in their depthless characterisation as gendered archetypes. Specifically, the Disney fairy tale routinely makes use of musical numbers, humorous animal sidekicks (some of which have been read as gay),[88] gender non-normative villains, bright colours and extravagant costume design. My analysis of the following texts will thus consider the double process of camping the genre as recognised by Anne Duggan, which can entail 'both reading camp into the tale as well as infusing the tale with camp aesthetics' (*Queer Enchantments* 46). I will examine the ways in which queer online creators identify the camp undercurrents in these tales, and how they reshuffle their elements in

[87] For an analysis of an online, non-parodic (or at the very least non-humorous) queer retelling, see Amy Carlson's 'Kissing the Mermaid: Resistance, Adaptation, Popular Cultural Memory, and Maya Kern's Webcomic *How to be a Mermaid*.'

[88] The American Family association called Timon and Pumbaa from *The Lion King* 'the first homosexual characters ever to come to the screen' (qtd. in Sweeney 130). Even though they are most definitely not openly gay, Gael Sweeney's '*What do you want me to do? Dress in drag and to the hula?*' offers a convincing queer reading of these sidekicks.

order to articulate counter-hegemonic discourses. In this way, we will see how they claim ownership over the disneyfied fairy tale, not by offering an authoritative substitute, but rather by advacing a myriad of 'personally relevant' alternatives that unsettle Disney's monolithic paratext.

5.5 Tim Manley's *Alice in Tumblr-Land*

Within the corpus of texts examined in this chapter, Tim Manley's *Alice in Tumblr-Land* is the clearest example of how parodies emerging within queer online counterpublics can later make the jump and gain mainstream recognition. The illustrated book, which was published by Penguin in 2013, is based on Manley's Tumblr blog, 'Fairy Tales for 20 Somethings' (http://fairytalesfor20somethings.tumblr.com), which he launched in 2012. At the time a twenty-seven year old (and thus a twenty-something himself), Manley started his blog so he could post micro-tales that poked fun at the same urbanite, Millennial struggles he was grappling with:

> Fairy tales were a big part of the way I made sense of the world as a child, and so it seemed logical to return to them as I try to make sense of it now. (Manley qtd. in Gray)

This approach is reminiscent of the one found in Cashorali's and Ford's collections, analysed in chapter three. Fairy tales are seen as foundational texts containing important life lessons by all of these authors, and specifically Manley claims to better understand life through the simplified, allegorical lens of the fairy tale. However, unlike Ford and Cashorali, who tailored their collections so that they would appeal to gay men in the nineties, Manley, although he identifies as bisexual, has a broader audience in mind. Tellingly, *Alice in Tumblr-Land* has the subtitle 'and Other Fairy Tales for a New Generation.'

Going by the micro-stories, this 'New Generation' is primarily characterised by its complicated relationship with social media, and so Cinderella is obsessed with having her photo blog succeed, Little Red Riding Hood tries to find love on OkCupid, where she gets insistent messages from wolves, and Sleeping Beauty, who is depressed and thus sleeps all day long, only experiences the outside world through her Facebook feed. The centrality of social media is, of course, already advertised in the cover, which announces that Alice will get sucked into the wondrous 'Tumblr-Land,' metaphorically and literally.

The illustrations and even the typography choices (see figure 8 below) immediately mark this work as derivative and parodic, and thus does not invite reading it as a serious contender for new, 'definitive' fairy tales for a younger generation.

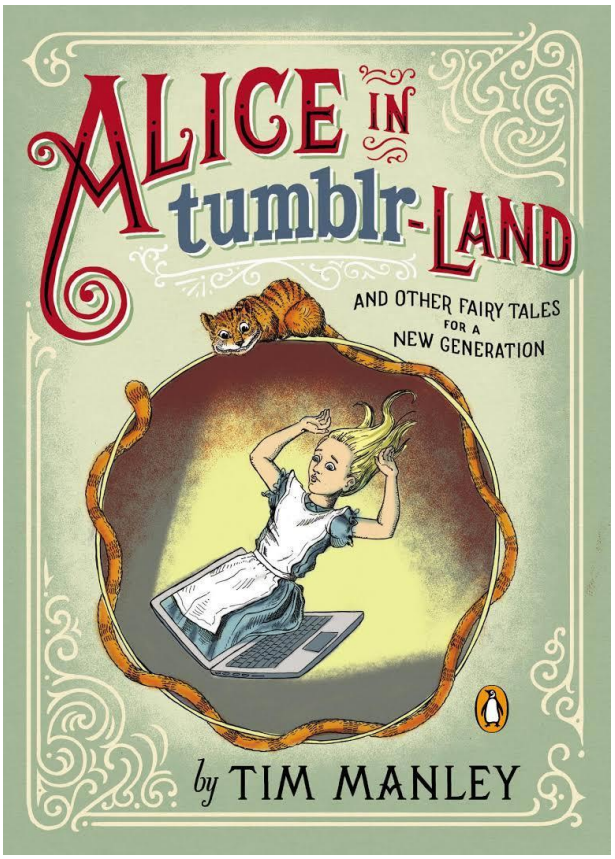

Figure 8. Cover of *Alice in Tumblr-Land*. The visual style mimics Sir John Tenniel's classic illustrations of Alice, and the word 'Tumblr' retains the distinct typography of the social network's logo. Illustrated by Tim Manley.

Tumblr is a microblogging platform founded in 2007 which allows users to share photos, videos, audio, short posts, and other short pieces of content. Manley's micro-parodies are thus tailored for this particular social network, in which images and short text combinations are well-received. The blog became the basis for the book, and so the tales retain the micro-tale format, with the difference that Manley gives a more traditional journey to his characters: whereas his Tumblr posts were mainly disconnected tales with no particular linear narrative, *Alice in Tumblr-Land* follows several characters' adventures to some sort of conclusion. However, the blog origins are still felt in the book's format, and so the tales are told in a non-consecutive manner, with each instalment of a tale interspersed with others, thus mimicking the spontaneous, uncontextualised nature of social media posting.

Manley also made use of the counterpublics side of Tumblr in order to viralise his project. Tumblr posts can gain wider visibility (beyond one's friend list) through a tagging and reblogging system that allows for users to find relevant content and to curate their blog with their own and other people's posts, in a way that reflects their interests, aesthetic preferences, identity, political tendencies, and so on. The social network, which leans young with 40% of its users in the 15-24 year-old bracket (Zain), has been seen as prime platform for queer identity formation and performance (Dame 23-25; Kohnen 351-67), and in 2017 the Daily Dot named it the safest space 'for LGBT youth to hang online' (Fabian). Particularly, Marty Fink and Quinn Miller consider that some Tumblr elements like its unstructured tagging system or its visually aggregated posts allow queer users to wrestle their identities 'out of a white, middle-class, cisgender (non-trans), mass-consumption paradigm' and build towards 'an individually tailored, polyvocal, margin-based, and personalized form of distribution' (Fink and Miller 612). This description of the possibilities of Tumblr's interface ties in with queer fairy-tale parodies, as the latter try to wrestle disneyfied fairy tales away from the cisheterocentric, bourgeois centre and move it towards more fragmentary margins—a connection Manley saw, and tapped into. He would initially tag his posts with popular, tangentially related tags such as 'feminism' (Manley qtd. in omgstephlol), and, eventually, others like 'gay or 'lgbt,' progressively growing his audience by making his tales visible to different counterpublics within Tumblr.

Indeed, while Manley's project did not aim to exclusively offer queered versions of fairy tales, sexual and gender non-normativity often appear throughout. As Manley mentions in an interview with American LGBTQI magazine *Out*:

> The characters' queerness came naturally . . . It's inevitable that a certain number of my characters would be queer, because that's what I see as true in life. (Manley qtd. in Lambe)

It follows that the generation at which this collection is aimed, who has grown up during the new millennium and thus has experienced the progressive normalisation of queerness first-hand, would generally expect normalised queerness in all aspects of their life, even in their fairy tales. Queerness is thus introduced in a fittingly casual manner. For instance, it is revealed that Cinderella divorced the prince soon after the end of the tale: 'no, he wasn't secretly gay, just kind of a prick' (Manley, *Alice* 14). This, at the very least, opens the tale up to the possibility of queerness, in direct contrast with the total

invisibility in Disney fairy tales (even parodic ones like *Enchanted*). Cinderella even moves 'back with her stepmother' (Manley, *Alice* 14) which reveals new possibilities for intergenerational sorority and challenges the female rivalry of the Disney paratext.

The targeting of the disneyfied tradition is clear: although the illustration that accompanies this Cinderella fragment is monochromatic and sketchy, and thus does not particularly attempt to mimic Disney's visual style unlike the works by Loaiza Ontiveros we will examine later in the chapter, the iconic Disney gown is still recognisable thanks to its shape, the puffy sleeves and voluminous skirt (see figure 9). Even Cinderella's hairstyle and gloves are similar, although she is wearing a more practical alternative to the glass slippers: 'As a symbolic gesture, she vowed not to wear glass slippers, or any slippers, ever again. From here on out, all Crocs, all the time' (Manley, *Alice* 14). Cinderella is thus seen walking down the stairs of a present-day New York City apartment building, in an echo of Cinderella escaping down the palace stairs in the 1950's animated film, while her white Crocs peek from beneath the classic, extravagant gown. This juxtaposition of anachronous and modern elements, regal and kitsch ones, was already used by Cashorali in his collections to the same effect: both authors exploit this contrast in order to produce incongruent, parodic images. Manley uses illustrations to amplify this parodic effect and to foreground what can already be seen as inherently campy in the Disney images; in this case, the intricate, impractical gown and the theatrical escape down the palace stairs. Much like Cashorali, Manley wields affectation and conscious artificiality as forms of queer appropriation.

Figure 9. Cinderella walks down the stairs wearing much more comfortable, much less-likely-to-slip-off Crocs. Illustrated by Tim Manley.

The effectiveness of these parodies ride almost entirely on the reader's' familiarity with Disney. There are some fairy tales which have not been turned into major feature films by the company which still made it into Manley's collection, such as 'Little Red Riding Hood,' but generally speaking both visual cues (such as the ones described above) and the corpus selection point to Disney. This is particularly salient when it comes to certain choices: for instance, characters such as King Arthur or Mulan are included in Manley's collection of 'fairy tales for a new generation,' when neither of them would be characters out of what we generally call 'fairy tales.'[89] They would instead be classified as characters from legend, but Disney made films of them at some point, and the transformative power of adaptation and association has turned their stories into fairy tales in the popular consciousness. Curiously enough, both are reimagined as queer by Manley, and so Arthur, not yet king, working at an Applebee's and only taking Excalibur out 'if he wanted to be really dramatic when cutting a sandwich' (Manley, *Alice* 85), is in love with his roommate, Lancelot, who in turn is dating Guinevere. This retelling taps into the legendary love triangle between Arthur, Lancelot and Queen

[89] Although, as mentioned in chapter two, Mulan could also be regarded as belonging to the tradition of crossdressing maiden knights.

Guinevere, but it also recuperates, indirectly and perhaps unknowingly, the homosexual subtext between Lancelot and Arthur in T. H. White's *Once and Future King* (1958), on which Disney's *The Sword in the Stone* (1963) is based. Since Manley is using Disney's version as reference, the queer element actually brings this web of intertextual connections full circle. For her part, Mulan in Manley's collection realises he is actually a trans man and eventually changes his name to Ping, which makes the intertextual connection with Disney explicit: Ping is the name Mulan chooses in the animated film when she has to disguise herself as a male soldier. Manley's tales about Mulan and Arthur become stories of difficult personal discovery, rendered in an ironically detached manner through the tone of the retellings: for instance, Mulan was unsure whether he wanted to identify as a man, although he liked dressing in men's clothes, until 'one night at the movies she saw the line for the women's bathroom and was like, *Well...*' (Manley, *Alice* 111). On the one hand, this can be seen as perpetuating narratives of transness as something frivolous by reducing it to liking men's clothes, not fitting in with girls and wanting to avoid the complications of being a woman. On the other hand, Manley is bringing to the surface the obvious trans and queer undercurrents in Disney's *Mulan*, while the film tried hard to dispel queer anxiety through constant reminders of Mulan's 'true' sex, and by avoiding too close of a connection to the male love interest until Mulan is revealed to be a woman. Ultimately, Manley's retellings find themselves in the complex position of postmodern parodies, complicitous with dominant values they 'inscribe as well as [subvert]' (Hutcheon, *Politics* 102).

Similarly, Manley's retelling of 'Rapunzel' reimagines her as queer but offsets this radical subversion with somewhat conservative humour. In his retelling, Rapunzel cuts her hair short and everyone starts reading her as a lesbian, which makes her wonder: 'Is this still a thing—that only lesbians have short hair? Can't pretty much anyone have short hair now?' (Manley, *Alice* 155). This presents a critical position to the conflation of gender expression and sexuality, which Rapunzel experiences from heterosexuals and lesbians alike; that is, she resists the dominant association of long hair with femininity and thus heterosexuality, and the opposite association of short hair with masculinity and thus lesbianism. In any case, Rapunzel confirms this conflation after a fashion when she

eventually starts dating a girl, which entails a complete rewrite of the disneyfied paratext:[90]

> There was the story Rapunzel had expected for her life: a damsel in distress stuck in a tower, dreaming to be rescued [sic]. But then there was the one she'd made for herself: a bad bitch with a buzz cut, a hybrid car, and a hot girlfriend. She preferred the one she'd made. (Manley, *Alice* 233)

This conclusion foregrounds the contrast between traditional elements (the damsel in distress, the tower) and modern ones (the buzz cut, the car, even the openness of a lesbian relationship), and serves as a metafictional suggestion for fairy tales to come: new generations, particularly those congregating in online counterpublics where individually-tailored content is favoured, would presumably prefer the self-made, modern version to the expected, passed-down scripts of traditional tales. The emancipating final message is however made less threatening to the status quo by the closing lines: 'I will bravely face the future, a fearless warrior completely undeterred by whatever is to—WAIT, am I getting crow's-feet?!' (Manley 233). The fear of aging, and thus of losing worth in a patriarchal value system, situates Rapunzel once more within the boundaries of stereotypical femininity expected of fairy-tale princesses, and throws into question the lasting power of her rebellion.

Manley originally chose Tumblr as a platform for his retellings because he perceived it as particularly accessible: 'There's no signup fee for Tumblr, and no laws on who can or can't post, and very few about what you can or can't post' (Manley qtd. in McNeil). However, Tumblr was purchased by Yahoo in 2013, which has ultimately exposed the limitations of such platforms to preserve counter-hegemonic discourse, and to prevent independent, radical content creators from being silenced when corporate interests are at stake. After years of small changes and increasing fear, particularly among Tumblr's queer constituency (see Fink and Miller 612-14), in December 2018, Tumblr announced it would ban all adult content on the site, which led to the purge of thousands of blogs, and the removal (i.e. censoring) of innumerable posts which were flagged as inappropriate (see Radulovic). This pre-emptive mass-censoring, performed

[90] It is interesting to note that, although a disneyfied paratext is undoubtedly referenced and challenged in this retelling, the actual Disney version of 'Rapunzel' is not. *Tangled* was released in 2010, two years before Manley began his project, so it could have reasonably made the cut. However, since Manley was already an adult by the time the film came out, it is likely the Disney version did not have any significant impact on his perception of the classical tale, which exposes the generational limitations of Disney as a fairy-tale canon-maker.

by an algorithm, has been accused of disproportionally targeting tags such as 'trans,' 'lesbian,' or 'bisexual,' even when posts did not contain any adult material at all (see Brammer). The optimistic, almost rosy vision Manley had of the platform he was entrusting his queer parodies to has thus been severely challenged. Browsing through his 'Fairy Tales for 20-Somethings' blog reveals that several of his fairy-tale posts have been flagged as inappropriate and are no longer accessible, even though his retellings never contain any sort of explicit material. At the time of writing, his vision for parodic fairy tales—those that thrived thanks to Tumblr's open-access policy, its facilitation of counter-hegemonic creativity and its fostering of queer networks—can only be fully experienced in Penguin's *Alice in Tumblr-Land*.

5.6 YouTube's Fairy-Tale Parodists: Brittany Ashley and Todrick Hall

Tumblr is not the only social network accused of unfairly censoring LGBTQI content. In fact, Tumblr's mass-censoring reminded queer users of YouTube's 'restricted mode' scandal, which took place in 2017. Explicit material is already banned in the platform, but the restricted mode, which is toggleable and thus can be turned off at any moment, aimed to filter out more mature content in YouTube in the style of parental controls. However, users soon realised that YouTube's algorithm was picking a large amount of videos with tame queer material and flagging them as 'mature' (see Hunt, 'LGBT'). This would effectively turn videos with no sensitive material invisible to many YouTube users, particularly young ones, just because they had words like 'lesbian' or 'transgender' in their titles. Even though YouTube reversed some restrictions (Brammer), many videos with queer content are still affected by the restricted mode—including the fairy tale parodies we will analyse below. And there are quite a few parodies to choose from: Warman maintains that these are in fact the most common types of fairy-tale videos on YouTube ('YouTube'). In a platform that enables even amateur users to become video producers, Carol Vernallis suggests that the parodic or sardonic response allows for a shortcut to reach and connect with a mostly anonymous audience: 'your sarcastic take immediately places you in relation to a select group of viewers . . . [it] piggybacks on an already accrued attention' (Vernallis 146). Below, we will see how Brittany Ashley and Todrick Hall navigate the platform's limitations and

exploit its technical affordances in order to communicate their queer criticisms, using the momentum of the disneyfied genre in order to appeal to a wider digital audience.

5.6.1 Brittany Ashley's *Lesbian Princess*

This webseries, released from 2015 to 2016, was produced by Ashley while she worked for BuzzFeed, which effectively meant she ceded the rights of her videos and her concept to the digital media company. As such, she does not fully qualify as an independent creator, unlike the other creators analysed in this chapter, but her case serves to illustrate a particular set of problems creatives working in new or emerging media platforms face. *Lesbian Princess* started as a standalone video that satirised disneyfied fairy-tale conventions, which is already indicated in the title. As Greenhill notes, 'Princesses are not limited to fairy tales, but are strongly associated with them, thanks in large part to the Disney Princesses franchise' (Greenhill, 'Sexualities'). The three-minute video begins with a familiar scenario—a princess, dressed in an elegant golden dress, kisses a frog (see figure 10) and murmurs the age-old fairy-tale lesson, 'with one kiss, I will be reunited with my one true love' (BuzzFeedVideo).

Figure 10. Still of the first episode of *Lesbian Princess*. Brittany Ashley holds a fake frog in a lavish castle bedroom.

The frog is obviously fake, which purposefully draws attention to the artificiality and self-reflexivity of the parody, as does the mixing of styles from different historical periods, both in the characters' costumes and in the architecture and décor. Her plastic

frog nonetheless turns into a handsome prince, but this is, of course, not the ideal outcome for a princess whose desires are not recognised within the fairy-tale script:

PRINCESS: No, I can't, I'm sorry. I'm super-duper gay.

PRINCE: You don't want to be with me . . . I am just not your type.

PRINCESS: Yeah, you could say that.

PRINCE: What would be your type?

PRINCESS: Like… Rapunzel?

PRINCE: I can grow my hair out! (BuzzFeedVideo)

This scene humorously contrasts the old-fashioned, British prince (whose clean-cut appearance, delicate manners and camp theatricality could in fact codify him as gay) with an American, down-to-earth, modern-sounding princess, heavily influenced by Ashley's online persona, thus putting the traditional and the new in conversation with each other, much like Manley's retelling of 'Rapunzel.' Moreover, as in Manley's work, the video situates explicit queerness on the more 'modern' side, as it points to the lack of queer characters within classic fairy-tale tradition: a union between a lesbian princess and Rapunzel just has no precedent in the genre, after all. However, the video also considers the possibility of subtextual queerness in fairy tales, not perceivable to those untrained to recognise it, although it does so in a sardonic way. When the prince exclaims 'I've never encountered a lady who lays with maidens,' the princess responds, 'Really? I doubt that' (BuzzFeedVideo). This leads to the prince listing a number of women in his life, including his mother's chambermaid and the witch who enchanted him, to which the princess declares that they are in fact all gay due to stereotypical identificatory markers, like the ones Rapunzel rejects in Manley's retelling:

PRINCESS: What shoes does she wear to the stable?

PRINCE: Homemade, low steel-toed boots.

PRINCESS: Gay. (BuzzFeedVideo)

The viral status of the first instalment (at the time of writing it has 3.7 million views) led to the expansion of the *Lesbian Princess* universe, turning it into a sitcom spoof that deals with different aspects of modern lesbian life through an anachronous fairy-tale lens. In this way, the titular lesbian princess goes to a medieval lesbian 'tavern'

and falls in love with Cinderella, only to run into her *Maleficent*-inspired ex and lose her potential true love at midnight. Other subplots deal with the princess' stepmother (who is just pretending to be evil), being a closeted royal, and parental pressure to find a husband. The series thus does not deal with particularly mature topics. However, out of the six episodes, three are unavailable when using YouTube's 'restricted mode,' when only one of them (episode five, 'When You Have a One Night Stand with the Jester') could be mistaken for having any mature content, which suggests that the algorithm is flagging these videos, like many others, because they contain the word 'Lesbian' in their title. Questionable platform policies aside, the webseries will remain permanently unfinished—Ashley was fired by BuzzFeed in June, 2016, reportedly due to a breach of a non-compete clause in her contract (K. Sutton). Although BuzzFeed offers creative liberty to its talent, and foregrounds marginalised voices rarely heard on mainstream media, such as racial minorities or LGBTQI people, it is first and foremost a company with economic interests, and it legally owns what their employees produce. And so, *Lesbian Princess*, one of the most popular webseries in BuzzFeedVideo, was left unfinished, with Ashley incapable of claiming ownership over her idea. Incidentally, this worked to further queer Ashley's parody by truncating all possibilities of continuing its narrative journey towards any kind of conclusion, much less the happy ending expected of the disneyfied paratext.

5.6.2 Todrick Hall's Disney Parodies

Despite the popularity of Ashley's webseries, the best-known queer parodies of fairy tales on YouTube are undoubtedly those by Todrick Hall, who has built his online brand around his Disney-inflected musical spoofs. He gained popularity as an *American Idol* contestant, but nowadays is perhaps better known for being a judge in *RuPaul's Drag Race* and a choreographer for artists like Beyoncé. On top of this, Hall is a prolific YouTuber who uses his channel to post personal video blogs, promote his music, and collaborate with other artists and personalities in elaborate, sleek musical parodies. His parodies tend to combine different elements of pop culture and filter them through a queer, black, urban and millennial lens. Some of his most notable Disney parodies, which have also been censored by YouTube's restricted mode, merge a disneyfied fairy tale with a pop music diva, such as 'Britney and the Beast' (2016), which casts Britney Spears as Beauty, and 'Cinderoncé' (2013), which reimagines *Cinderella* through

Beyoncé's songs. These types of videos rearrange the chosen singer's catalogue in a medley to fit the fairy-tale narrative, which several actors (including Hall himself) act out, dancing and lip-synching in Disney-inspired costumes and locations. These videos effectively bring together the traditional gay cult to powerful pop divas with the queer undercurrents of musical theatre, or, as Doty calls them:

> the musical's . . . camp and emotive genre characteristics [such as] spectacularized decor and costuming, intricate choreography, and singing about romantic yearning and fulfilment. (Doty 10)

Indeed, Hall makes ample use of the camp excess and self-conscious artificiality of musical theatre, so that even though 'Britney and the Beast' and 'Cinderoncé' maintain at their core the heterosexual love story of the Disney pre-text, the heterocentrism of the tale is fundamentally thrown into question. There is of course an inherent campiness to the musical, which is exaggerated and flamboyant and draws attention to its own status as performance, including the Disney musical, which mixes realistic sequences with intricate and stylised musical numbers. However, other YouTube channels, like Patti Cake Productions, have taken the same approach to the Disney musical parody as Hall, and the resulting videos are considerably more orthodox and downplay any queer possibilities. For example, their video 'Cinderswift' (2017), which uses Taylor Swift's songs to tell Cinderella's story, sticks close to the Disney paratext, without many playful departures. Contrarily, Hall takes several queer detours on his way to the heterosexual ending. For instance, he routinely makes use of beautiful male dancers, many of whom wear revealing costumes, in musical sequences that appear filtered through a clearly queer gaze and which work to disturb the apparent heterosexuality of some characters. Such is the case of Gaston, who in 'Britney and the Beast' can be seen pursuing Britney/Beauty, but also sharing a homoerotic sequence with several shirtless dancers to the sound of Spears' 'Work Bitch' (see figure 11).[91]

[91] This could also be seen as referencing the live-action remake of *Beauty and the Beast* (2017), in which Gaston is played by out gay actor Luke Evans.

Figure 11. Still from 'Britney and the Beast.' Gaston, shirtless in the centre, is surrounded by several background dancers. The women remain fully dressed while the men progressively lose their clothes in a queer inversion of heteropatriarchal expectations, by which women would have their bodies objectified instead.

Another way in which Hall queers his own apparently heterosexual videos is through the inclusion of well-known drag queens. For John M. Chun, the 'larger-than-life' personas of female performers in musical theatre can be compared with the 'exaggeration of femininity' one expects of drag queens (181-82). Hall effectively merges both into one: drag queens often appear in his musical videos in significant roles and on both ends of the good-evil spectrum, so for instance 'Cinderoncé' features performer Miles Jay as one of the ugly stepsisters, and *RuPaul Drag Race*'s alum Shangela as the Fairy Godmother—or, in this case, Fairy Dragmother.

> SHANGELA: Cinderoncé! It's your Fairy Dragmother. Yes, Halleloo! Now, I see your heart, I see your grace, but honey you're gonna need some *fashion* to match that pretty face. Let's get to work! ('Cinderoncé')

Shangela forgoes the matronly look of Disney's Fairy Godmother and instead wears a more appropriate silver, sequined short dress, flashy makeup and big curly hair, inspired on one of Beyoncé's looks for her 2007's tour, *The Beyoncé Experience*. Her part is one of the highlights of the video and it marks the turning point in the story: after her magical appearance, Beyoncé's 'Freakum Dress' starts playing and Cinderella, emerging from a fog and surrounded by male dancers, sees her outfit transformed into Disney's iconic blue dress before they all break into highly choreographed dance. Like Cashorali, Hall is thus drawing a connection between the transformative skills of drag queens and the magic of donor figures, which is so often used for comparable cosmetic purposes in fairy

tales. Moreover, Hall blends disparate layers of pop culture to start a dialogue with a select group of viewers, namely those who would recognise the Disney paratext, who would appreciate obscure *RuPaul's Drag Race*'s references,[92] and who are deeply familiar with Beyoncé's repertoire and fashion choices, including her lesser-known outfits. Such esoteric references to different texts would presumably render Hall's parody somewhat ineffective, since, as Ulrich Knoepflmacher explains, our 'awareness of a text before its comic refashioning is crucial to a parody's success' (762). However, the 5.8 million views the video has at the time of writing suggests both that Hall's parody is successful in making its multiple references ancillary to the narrative, so that they do not alienate less-knowledgeable viewers but still delight informed ones, and that the Disney fairy tale, Beyoncé, and Hall himself are enough (separately or variously combined) to draw in a big audience.

Hall is indeed central to his parodies. Not only is he the creator, but he also stars in them, usually in prominent roles. For instance, he plays both the Beast in 'Britney and the Beast' and Prince Charming in 'Cinderoncé.' By his own design, these parodies appear bracketed by his video blogs in his YouTube channel, in which he speaks openly about his experiences as a black gay man. Therefore, despite playing the heterosexual love interest in his videos, his queerness is always, if not directly referenced or implied, at least surrounding his parodies. In other words, the paratextual proximity of Hall's queerness is likely to colour his audience's viewing experience, especially for those who would venture beyond one or two video parodies, ultimately drawing attention to the artificiality of the (straight-seeming) tales he stars in. His racial sensibility also significantly impacts his work. Of course, Hall's participation in his videos automatically secures a degree of black representation, but, also, his parodies are heavily influenced by African-American culture. 'Cinderoncé' has an all-black cast, he has set several videos in primarily black neighbourhoods (such as 'Beauty and the Beat' or 'Snow White and the Seven Thugs'), and he makes sure that his videos are always racially-diverse at all levels, from the main parts to the background dancers, in direct criticism to the blindingly white Disney pre-texts.

We can say that all the queer fairy-tale retellings explored in this study, including Hall's, are inescapably political insofar as they consciously inscribe minoritarian

[92] Shangela's catchphrase on *RuPaul's Drag Race* was 'Halelloo!'.

identities rarely represented in fairy-tale texts. As such, they can be characterised as 'activist adaptations,' as Bacchilega calls those revisions in various media that 'instigate readers/viewers/listeners to engage with the genre as well as with the world with a transformed sense of possibility' (*Adaptations* 80), and that 'enact a politicized challenge to the hegemonic tropes of the genre' (Bacchilega, *Transformed* 70). However, of the queer retellings analysed so far, not many telegraph their political messages, and certainly not as boldly as Hall's 'CinderFella.' Hall himself plays the main part in this gender-flipped *Cinderella* parody, which is in itself remarkable: although queer, non-white characters exist in retellings of fairy tales (e.g. Talia in Hines' *The Stepsister's Scheme*), they are often Othered, secondary, and/or have their identities treated as discrete rather than intersectional. Hall never underplays his intersectional identity, and, placing himself at its centre, projects a highly personal, political parody, explicitly designed to support marriage equality. As Hall puts it:

> This story speaks volumes and I think that love is as classic as this fairy tale. It's time for us to legalize love in all shapes and colors. Please support this movement by posting this on your social media sites. ('CinderFella')

Hall is thus using 'CinderFella' as a piece of online activism, meant to transcend the queer and black counterpublics of YouTube it emerges from and effect change via peer-to-peer, web-based sharing. In order to make his message attractive and significant for people beyond his regular audience, Hall capitalises on the interest accrued by Disney and the naturalised connection between romance and the fairy tale, using the assimilationist (and far-reaching) rhetoric of 'love is love,' while still remaining faithful, as we will see, to the particular codes and contestation styles of queer counterpublics.

Beyond its political effectiveness, 'CinderFella' is possibly one of Hall's most successful parodies in terms of creativity and inventiveness. The video's concept is similar to other parodies in which he mixes Top 40's songs with the disneyfied fairy tale, but in this case Hall rewrites pop lyrics to make them work with Disney songs. In this way, the video opens with Hall in the role of a male Cinderella, singing a mashed-up version of Disney's *Cinderella*'s 'A Dream Is a Wish Your Heart Makes' and Jessie J's 'Who You Are.' Melodies and lyrics are integrated into a single, pop-sounding medley, and specialised knowledge is necessary to tell them apart. Some of the musical bits are quite intricately intertextual, and reference several sources in the span of a few seconds, such as the sequence in which Disney princesses enter the ball:

> I kissed a girl and I liked it, the taste of her fairy chapstick / A whole new world . . . take me away, on the magic carpet / It can't be wrong, it felt so right, can you feel that love tonight. (‘CinderFella’)

Hall makes use of one of the few pop songs with overt queer content, Katy Perry’s ‘I Kissed a Girl,’ and changes certain terms to make it thematically appropriate (e.g. ‘cherry chapstick’ becomes ‘fairy chapstick’). It also references *Aladdin*’s ‘A Whole New World,’ the animated film’s magic carpet (which also jokingly alludes to a woman’s pubic hair), and the line ‘can you feel that love tonight’ is in reference to *The Lion King*’s ‘Can You Feel the Love Tonight’—a song, incidentally, sung by queer artist Elton John.

This stratification of references, which is constant, does not detract from the parody’s energetic rhythm or its comedic dynamism. In fact, the rapid succession of musical references is comparable to the rapid succession of humoristic cameos, some of them exceedingly brief: YouTuber GloZell plays a sassy Fairy Godmother, Daniel Franzese shouts ‘He doesn’t even go here!’ in reference to his part in cult classic film *Mean Girls*, and gay ex-boyband member Lance Bass is revealed to be Prince Charming. One humorous highlight comes again from Shangela, who makes another appearance, in this case side-by-side with drag queen Willam, both cast as CinderFella’s stepsisters. They explain that CinderFella cannot attend the ball because he is a man, and the prince is, according to the well-known story, looking for a wife.

> SHANGELA: And that’s why *you* can’t go to the ball.
>
> WILLAM: Aw, I love balls. You’re missing out! (‘CinderFella’)

Besides introducing an amusing double-entendre, this exchange serves to generate queer ironic tension, as two gay men in drag forbid another gay man from going to the ball for homophobic reasons. Homophobia and villainy are equated, and so the scene, patently ridiculous, works to criticise the (equally ridiculous) exclusion of queer people from the disneyfied fairy tale. Through campy exaggeration, Hall is thus exposing the seams of naturalised assumptions and shifting focus so Disney’s heterocentric story is transformed into a pro-gay-marriage tale. At the end, CinderFella and his Prince dance at the ball surrounded by distinctly queer attendees, when the clock strikes midnight. In the traditional tale this would lead to Cinderella’s fevered escape to her carriage, but in Hall’s parody CinderFella is right where he belongs, reclaiming his rightful place in the

fairy tale, and the clock is marking instead the end of an era, within and without the genre. ‘It’s Time,’ read the sparkling words on the screen, ‘Legalize Love’ (‘CindeFella’), and with this closing injunction, Hall urges viewers in no uncertain terms to take a political stance.

5.7 José Rodolfo Loaiza Ontiveros’ Pop Art Parodies

The last creator we will be discussing is Mexican pop artist José Rodolfo Loaiza Ontiveros, whose work can be found on his Flickr page (https://www.flickr.com/photos/rodolfo_loaiza) but who has gained international notoriety via his Instagram account (https://www.instagram.com/rodolfoloaiza), where he has 104.000 followers at the time of writing. His oeuvre is heavily influenced by the lowbrow art movement, born in the 1970s in reaction to the inaccessibility of the fine art world, and thus it shows ‘interest in more tangible and immediately representational forms’ (Lowey and Prince 171), and is of a generally irreverent, rebellious nature. In Loaiza Ontiveros’ case, this translates into an almost-exclusive focus on subverting Disney’s fairy-tale canon by placing its well-known characters in unorthodox or compromising scenarios, usually to do with dark or adult themes, such as drugs, sex and violence. Loaiza Ontiveros’ art style perfectly replicates Disney’s stylistic conventions, down to the vibrant colours, and, although he mostly paints on canvas, using traditional materials such as acrylic or oil paint, technology has a flattening effect which disguises textures, brush strokes and other marks of physicality, so that his Disney characters, as they appear filtered through the screen, effectively retain the 2D animation characteristic of classical Disney films. This resemblance adds to the art’s shock value and its parodic effect, as these readily recognisable characters are radically recontextualised. Grouped under an overarching theme of ‘loss of innocence’ (Lark) and indubitably designed to provoke, Loaiza Ontiveros’ art comments on the global impact of American culture and sanitised fairy-tale imagery as he distils them both through a distinctly Mexican, queer gaze.

Loaiza Ontiveros showcases the same fixation with American celebrity culture, pop divas and classic Disney as Todrick Hall, and their parodies thus show a degree of overlap: they both offer satirical reimaginings of iconic moments in pop culture, they blend celebrities with Disney characters, and repeatedly revisit the same disneyfied fairy tales, thus starting multi-level conversations—including, presumably, between their own

revisions. For instance, although there is no particular sequentiality to Loaiza Ontiveros' art, a degree of intertextuality can be gleaned from his Cinderella paintings *I'm Toxic* (2012) and *Like a Virgin* (2013). 'I'm Toxic' shows a calm Cinderella shaving her head in reference to Britney Spears in her 2007 photos, where the former child star can be seen shaving off her head in front of a mirror. Spears, who was first famous for her participation on *The Mickey Mouse Club* was thus freeing herself from one of her most clearly feminine signifiers and shattering the image others had built around her. Cinderella is easily connected to Britney, as a character for children who is denied 'agency, sexuality, and corporeality' (A. Duggan, 'Gender') in the Disney tradition. Depicted in her blue gown and with half her head already shaved off, which suggests her rebellion against her sanitised image is well-underway, *I'm Toxic* points to a radical transformation, not dictated by clocks or magic but rather by necessity and personal conviction. The results of that transformation can be understood to be those shown in *Like a Virgin*, in which Britney/Cinderella appears kissing Madonna (see figure 12).

Figure 12. *Like a Virgin*, oil on canvas. The image shows a realistic Madonna kissing a cartoonish Cinderella. The mix of styles creates a textured, almost scrapbook-like effect, which draws attention to the medium in parodic metareference. By José Rodolfo Loaiza Ontiveros.

This piece references the much-discussed 2003 kiss between the two singers on the MTV VMA's, but is reframed and given further significance through its connection to the Disney text. The image superposes two emblematic moments: first, the mentioned kiss between Spears and Madonna, and second, the closing image of Disney's

Cinderella, in which Cinderella and Prince Charming are seen kissing through their carriage's window as they leave their royal wedding. Loaiza Ontiveros is thus cleverly connecting these disparate pop texts, as Britney, who was also dressed as a bride, is substituted by Cinderella, who kisses the Queen of Pop rather than Prince Charming. The Britney-Madonna kiss was clearly part of a performance and designed to scandalise or titillate the audience, but the Cinderella-Prince Charming kiss was the ultimate symbol of their love, preceding the camera panning out and the image transforming into the page of a book with the unequivocal fairy-tale declaration 'and they lived happily ever after' (*Cinderella*). Loaiza Ontiveros thus activates a double reading, one that would simultaneously suggest that this kiss is reinscribing the queer-as-spectacle of the MTV MVA's performance, and that this piece is queerly challenging the exclusive, disneyfied happy ending.

Nothing indicates either interpretation as the 'right' one, and in fact Loaiza Ontiveros's work always invites simultaneous, even contradicting readings, especially when considered in its totality, as he obsessively engages with the Disney tradition from different points of view. He is thus not seeking to substitute disneyfied fairy tales by offering one stable alternative. He does not even seek to completely undermine them—as befits postmodern parodies, his work is concurrently situated as loving tribute and scathing criticism. Loaiza Ontiveros in fact declares himself a Disney fan, and considers the work of Disney to be his first visual school:

> the background watercolors, the balance of the colors and the outline of the characters impressed me a lot. My school notebook was filled with Disney characters. I tried to imitate the style. All of this definitely informs my development as an artist. (Loaiza Ontiveros qtd. in Zaharuk)

However, the primacy of the Disney visual tradition during his formative years in Mexico raises other issues, namely the Americanization of global culture, and the hegemonic hold Disney has over children's imagination across the world. This is a topic that Loaiza Ontiveros tackles in his work, as he consumes American icons, remixes them with his Mexican referents, and feeds them back to the U.S. with shifted emphasis.[93]

[93] Loaiza Ontiveros currently resides in L.A. and has had several exhibitions in in the U.S. Particularly noteworthy are his solo exhibitions in lowbrow gallery La Luz de Jesus Gallery (L.A.), including *Disasterland* (2014), which ironically took place some fifty kilometers from Disneyland.

Many of his disneyfied parodies thus integrate elements from Mexican culture high and low: for instance, *Reencuentro - Las Dos Blancanieves* (*Reunion - The Two Snow Whites*, 2012) remixes queer artist Frida Kahlo's *Las Dos Fridas* with Disney's Snow White. Kahlo is indeed one of the recurrent figures in Loaiza Ontiveros' work, where she is equated to Disney princesses, after a fashion: in *Paloma Negra* (*Black Dove*, 2014), Loaiza Ontiveros forgoes the superposition of realistic and stylised figures he used in *Like a Virgin* and Kahlo appears in bold, colourful, Disney-inflected design, getting drunk with Cinderella, Snow White and Belle. As an extension of his criticism of Disney's cultural colonialism, he repeatedly casts Mickey Mouse in the role of Jesus Christ (see Loaiza Ontiveros's *The Incredulity of Saint Donald*, 2014, and *The Veil of Clarabella*, 2014) which suggests that the iconic mouse has surpassed the religious figure in visual currency. Religious imagery, fairy tales as well as popular icons are all flattened in his work, so that their narratives, elevated to different degrees by different groups, appear immediate and malleable, rather than distant and sacred.

Loaiza Ontiveros also uses this parodic blend of religion and pop culture to criticise the Catholic Church's outdated morals, which are, after all, quite similar to the disneyfied fairy tale's. One of his most notable pieces to do so is *Who Am I to Judge Him?* (2014). The picture shows Prince Philip (from *Sleeping Beauty*) and Prince Eric (from *The Little Mermaid*) getting married to each other in a ceremony officiated by Pope Francis (see figure 13).

Figure 13. *Who Am I to Judge Him?*, oil on canvas. Prince Phillip slides a wedding band onto Prince Eric's finger, both of them wearing their wedding attires from their respective films, while Pope Francis looks on approvingly. By José Rodolfo Loaiza Ontiveros.

The title references Pope Francis' statements during a 2013 press conference in which he stated that: 'if someone is gay and he searches for the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge him?' (qtd. in Donadio). He was referring to gay priests at the time, but his statement was generally perceived as an act of reconciliation with the LGBTQI community, leading to the Pope being named 'Person of the Year' by The Advocate, the biggest LGBTQI magazine in the United States. Loaiza Ontiveros is, however, pointing out the obvious shortcomings of the Pope's apparent acceptance of gay people: his discourse might be softer when compared with his predecessor's, but he still fully upholds Catholic doctrine, by which 'homosexual acts' are sinful. The incongruous image of the Catholic Pope marrying two Disney princes marks the Pope's words as insincere—he would never, of course, officiate such a wedding, or even remotely approve of it, which clearly suggests a degree of 'judgement' on his part. It is also highly unlikely that Disney would have two princes marrying each other any time soon. It is only in the subversive artscape that Loaiza Ontiveros projects, with all the old prejudices, taboos and hierarchies blurred out, that such a scene could take place.

In a comparable ways to Hall, Loaiza Ontiveros is thus deploying his revised fairy-tale images with political intentions. Furthermore, the flexibility of his medium

allows for him to constantly re-utilise his art. That is, he can routinely repost old pieces on his Instagram account and, through paratextual tagging, appeal to different counterpublics and recontextualise his art to comment on current events. For instance, he reposted *Who Am I to Judge Him?* in 2016, during the national debate that would eventually legalise marriage equality in Mexico, and added clickable hashtags such as 'Mexico,' 'gay marriage,' and 'no hypocrisy,' the latter of which is again alluding to the Pope's statement above. Similarly, in 2016 he reposted an old illustration, *True Ending* (2011), in which Snow White and Cinderella kiss tenderly, and tagged it 'national coming out day.' In this way, Loaiza Ontiveros expands his audience while using the technical affordances of Instagram so as to deliver textured, hybrid messages, in which current affairs, pop culture and traditional, disneyfied fairy tales intertwine with ever-shifting possibilities.

5.8 Conclusions

Although these creators clearly identify Disney's filmic tradition as the canon to parody, they have also taken a leaf off *Shrek*'s book, which is situated as a modern referent. As such, they engage the fairy tale with adult humour, they rely on a mix of pop references and anachronous elements, and they seem to operate in a disneyfied suprauniverse, in which all fairy tales coexist to some degree. However, unlike the *Shrek* franchise, they also challenge the systematic exclusion of queerness from the fairy-tale tradition, reclaiming fairy tales even in their most hypercommodified, exclusive forms.

New technology is vital for this type of vernacular reclamation. Particularly, online social platforms that promote the congregation of minorities in counterpublics, as they facilitate the production, dissemination and popularisation of this kind of counter-hegemonic texts. These fairy-tale parodies, born in alternative spaces, thus remain freely accessible, independent from traditional capitalistic structures. On the other hand, as we have seen, online platforms that have fostered the creation of these texts regularly place corporate, economic interest over the integrity of their user-generated content. Particularly, there is an increased pushback against queer content in digital spaces, which seeks to discipline transgressive creativity and forces queer creators to navigate constantly-changing homophobic intra-platform policies, as well as broader, inescapable homophobic structures of power. Although this poses obvious obstacles, these parodists

persist in queering the disneyfied fairy tale and remain faithful to the distinctive, camp contestation styles of queer counterpublics.

Sticking to these styles opens new possibilities for financial security, however, as these creators utilise the tendency of hegemonic, capitalistic culture to absorb, appropriate and commodify everything in its path. As Meyer puts it:

> Queer knowledge can . . . be introduced and incorporated into the dominant ideology because the blind spot of bourgeois culture is predictable: it always appropriates. And it appropriates whatever the [queer creator] chooses to place in its path. (Meyer 17)

Thus, queer parodists have highly commodified fairy tales pulled apart, their counter-hegemonic discourses installed within, and then they have them resold in consumable, innocent-looking packages. For example, Loaiza Ontiveros is selling his paintings for as much as 3.000$, and Manley's book has been optioned for TV by 20th Century Fox (Manley, 'Writing'). These creators thus benefit from the very system they criticise and seemingly resist. However, the fairy tales they give back have been infused with queerness, and slowly eat away at uniform, cisheterocentric, disneyfied versions. Ultimately, their multimedial, kaleidoscopic parodies, endlessly productive, work to loosen up the hegemonic hold Disney has over the genre and throw into question the authority of these texts.

6 Afterword: #GiveElsaAGirlfriend and a Queer Future for Fairy Tales

It's time to see what I can do
To test the limits and break through

'Let It Go,' *Frozen*

In 2016, the hashtag 'give Elsa a girlfriend' (#GiveElsaAGirlfriend) trended on Twitter. This is by no means a rare occurrence: every day, in every corner of the world, new hashtags gain traction, although they usually fizzle out just as rapidly as they appear. This was also not the first example of a fan-led hashtag campaign that demanded better minority representation in mainstream media. Hashtag 'Poussey deserved better' was triggered in 2016 by the death of a beloved character in the Netflix show *Orange Is the New Black*, but it also addressed broader issues pertaining to queer characters (and queer, non-white characters), who, as covered earlier in this study, have historically been disproportionately prone to dying. A year later, the hashtag 'SW Representation Matters' was launched to celebrate the racial diversity of the new Star Wars trilogy, while other Twitter users employed it to request visible queer characters everywhere, including in a galaxy far, far away. #GiveElsaAGirlfriend was, however, an exceptional case among these examples of online fan advocacy in that it surpassed the limits of Twitter, it sent ripples worldwide, gained an incredible number of supporters and detractors, and managed to reach, and perhaps influence, head creatives in Walt Disney Studios, with the effects that would have on the fairy tale.

The movement started modestly enough. At first, it was just a comment stating a desire for a lesbian Elsa tweeted by user Alexis Isabel Moncada, who was immediately encouraged to turn it into a searchable hashtag by her Twitter followers, all of whom 'are overwhelmingly dedicated to supporting LGBT representation' (Moncada). Moncada launched the hashtag in May 1st, 2016, which was three years after *Frozen* was released and a year after the company had officially announced there would be a sequel (Pulver). Instead, Moncada's hashtag corresponds to the release of the 2016 GLAAD Studio Responsibility Index, which gave Walt Disney Studios a failing grade, stating:

> Of all the studios tracked in this report, Walt Disney Studios has the weakest historical record when it comes to LGBT-inclusive films . . . In 2015, Walt Disney Studios released 11 films, of which 0 included appearances by LGBT people, amounting to 0%. (GLAAD)

Although none of the studios analysed that year obtained a passing grade, Walt Disney Studios was by far the worst rated. The hashtag was thus a means of criticising the continued absence of queerness in Disney's films, but it was also responding to the queer subtext that many fans had seen in *Frozen*.

Elsa, who is forced by her parents to conceal her magical powers, has been often read as queer, particularly as her main song, Oscar winner 'Let It Go,' can be easily understood as a coming-out, liberatory anthem:

> Don't let them in, don't let them see
>
> Be the good girl you always have to be
>
> Conceal, don't feel, don't let them know
>
> Well, now they know
>
> Let it go, let it go
>
> Can't hold it back anymore. (*Frozen*)

'Let It Go' marks the moment in which a newly outed Elsa 'lets go' of her old, constraining life to unapologetically explore her newly liberated queer identity, which temporarily turns her into the villain of the story. She is, in fact, explicitly branded a monster, which further evinces the allegiance between fairy tales and the queer monster, and which places Elsa in the same group as other queer-coded villains in the Disney tradition. What sets *Frozen* apart from other Disney films, and in fact brings it closer to other queer fairy tales studied in this thesis, is that Elsa reconciles her queer, monstrous identity with the normative world, represented here by her sister Anna and the kingdom Elsa has inherited from their parents, and she is ultimately positioned as the hero. This story of queer monstrosity resonated deeply with a lot of queer viewers, as Elsa's arc covers themes of isolation, demonised difference, self-acceptance, and ultimate assimilation of alterity into normative society (via the taming of Elsa's queerness, represented by her powers). If, on top of this, we consider the fact that *Frozen* is not only the most popular Disney film in recent history, but also the highest-grossing animated

film of all time (Hunt, '*Frozen*'), it is not surprising that Moncado's hashtag would gain as much traction as it did among like-minded users.

However, it was not only LGBTQI viewers who were able to identify queer tensions in the film. As tends to be the (paradoxical) case, queer critics and conservative extremists are similarly adept at reading queerness into apparently straight texts. For instance, Pastor Kevin Swanson declared the film was 'evil, pure evil,' because 'this cute little movie is going to indoctrinate [a little girl] to be a lesbian or treat homosexuality . . . in a light sort of way' (qtd. in Tashman). And so the digital battlefield was set: at the same time as '#GiveElsaAGirlfriend' was trending, the reactionary '#PrinceCharmingForElsa' also emerged, arguing for the perpetuation of the exclusive, cisheteronormative Disney paratext. In an ironically unselfaware manner, conservatives all over the world would beg for children's entertainment not to be 'spoiled by an adult agenda about sexuality' (Moynihan), and several formal online petitions were started with the intention of dissuading Disney from opening their filmic tradition up to queerness (Evans). Although none of these online campaigns accrued the desired attention, they evidence the deep anxieties that the mere *suggestion* there could be one non-straight character in a fairy-tale film awakes in some people. Some campaigns also used noteworthy strategies to instigate fear among like-minded people. For example, the petition launched by Spanish ultra-Catholic group Hazte Oír (Make Yourself Heard), which pleaded for Disney not to 'give in to the pressures of an international LGBT lobby' (Hazte Oír, my translation), used a collage combining a number of Loaiza Ontiveros's pieces. It was, after a fashion, a parodic amalgamation of an already parodic collection. The collage mixes several of his paintings in which same-sex couples are kissing, such as *True Ending* and *Like a Virgin*, and places them against a black background and under an ominous message: 'Is this the Disney you want for your children?' (Hazte Oír, my translation). Given that the petition did not reach the minimum 50,000 signatures it was seeking, we might think people do not care all that much—or, perhaps, it suggests that an inclusive Disney is precisely the kind of Disney they would want.

This fierce gatekeeping of the disneyfied fairy tale would not have been as intense or as widespread, nonetheless, had #GiveElsaAGirlfriend not reached some influential ears. By the end of May, 2016, Idina Menzel, the actress who voices Elsa, responded to the online campaign and stated: 'I think it's great . . . Disney's just gotta

contend with that. I'll let them figure that out' (qtd. in Ungerman). This response is far from an enthusiastic endorsement, but it raised alarm among conservative constituencies and pleased queer fans. All of this only increased when *Frozen* writer and co-director, Jennifer Lee, commented in 2018:

> It means the world to us that we're part of these conversations. Where we're going with it, we have tons of conversations about it, and we're really conscientious about these things . . . I always write from character-out, and where Elsa is and what Elsa's doing in her life, she's telling me every day. We'll see where we go. (qtd. in Bradley)

Lee's comment is, if possible, even more ambiguous than Menzel's, but mainstream media and fans (and detractors) took it to mean that there was a very real possibility Elsa would, indeed, be given a girlfriend. With the release of the first teaser trailer of *Frozen 2* in February 2019, the conversation has been fully revived, even though the trailer itself did not in any way reference Elsa's sexuality. It is entirely possible that Elsa will not be revealed as queer, that she might be paired off with a man, or that she will remain single. Perhaps worst of all, it is possible that *Frozen 2* and all involved will remain coy and equivocal about her sexuality, so as not to alienate conservative viewers, but still incur in 'queerbaiting,' which Eve Ng defines as:

> Situations where those officially associated with a media text court viewers interested in LGBT narratives . . . and encourage their interest in the media text without the text ever definitively confirming the nonheterosexuality of the relevant characters. (Ng)

There is also a possibility, however small, given the ferocious opposition such a move would face, that Elsa will be written as queer in the sequel. This would draw definitive attention to the '#GiveElsaAGirlfriend' campaign, not as a fun, fan-led, harmless online movement, but as a sophisticated use of online affordances 'to force industrial attention on issues of inclusion' and 'to secure industrial change in the treatment of LGBTQ+ people' (Navar-Gill and Stanfill, 93). Or, in other words, as a queer counter-discourse, born in distinctly queer online counterpublics, which managed to impact the exclusive, hegemonic fairy tale, perhaps changing it forever. If there is an openly queer fairy-tale princess (or Queen), and, particularly, if it happens to be one of the best-loved characters in Disney history, the effects would be almost too many to list. It would affect children's perception of queerness, which is, of course, why conservative critics are so against the idea; for some of these children, it might even be their first

contact with it. It would be especially decisive for LGBTQI children, who, as Michael Warner puts it, might grow up in 'families that think of themselves and all their members as heterosexual,' which produces in some 'a profound and nameless estrangement, a sense of inner secrets and hidden shame' (*The Trouble with Normal*, 8). Helping LGBTQI children was precisely one of Moncada's (and many of the hashtag's supporters) main objectives. In fact, in an open letter to *MTV*, she stated that no one 'deserves to feel isolated and confused about who they are,' to then allude to her own feelings of isolation growing up, and the potentially restorative and reparative functions of the queer fairy tale for queer children and adults both: 'All we need is someone to show us that there are other options, other kinds of princesses, and other ways to have the happy ending that you deserve' (Moncada). Like Ford in chapter three, Moncada was thus advocating for queer fairy tales as a form of 'cultural therapy.'

Beyond the obvious effects on LGBTQI people, a queer Elsa in *Frozen 2* would conceivably have a deep effect on the fairy tale genre, and fairy-tale studies as a result. This study has variously covered the ways in which Disney has shaped the narrow fairy-tale canon from the twentieth century to the present, in terms of corpus, aesthetics, morals, gender representations, narrative strategies, and so on. As a testament to this stands Lieberman's early feminist criticism of the genre, or, rather, of 'the best-known stories, those that everyone has read or heard, indeed, those that Disney has popularized' (Lieberman 383), but also stand the many retold fairy tales which allude to the Disney fairy-tale tradition, or even take Disney as the contemporary fairy-tale canon-maker. If Disney is the canon-maker of our days, if it dictates what the fairy tale is for a large amount of people globally, to the point that many of us must look past our Disney-given assumptions about the genre in order to see it for what it really is, a queer protagonist would suppose a fundamental revolution. That is to say, if Disney has had the power to flatten some of the most ambiguous edges of the fairy tale, to disguise its queerest possibilities so that they become invisible to many contemporary readers, it is worth considering the possibility that Disney might also have the power to uncover the queerness in the genre. Disney has had a remarkably retroactive effect over the genre, in that it has affected the way we see historical fairy tales, so if this effect could be replicated when, for instance, Elsa is written as queer, Disney might also make the genre as a whole seem less uniformly cisheteronormative.

More immediately, a queer Elsa might make us reconsider 'The Snow Queen,' it might make us look for queer dissonances in Andersen's tale, and it might lead us to closely investigate the intersections between Andersen's own sexuality and his fairy-tale oeuvre. It would likely lead to a new wave of queer retellings, it would get a conversation started, and, hopefully, it would spark renewed interest in considering the genre queerly among academics. I do not mean to overstate the importance that a single fairy-tale film could potentially have—after all, Disney's filmography would remain overwhelmingly cisheterocentric, and that would not be overwritten. However, at this juncture, considering the implications is a productive thought experiment, because this single film could conceivably start a domino effect that would uncover the many queer nooks and crannies already present in the genre.

Writing about fairy tales in 1984, Duncker said that, for all its attachment to feudalistic structures and 'apparently unalterable social realities,' the genre also unlocks 'an unstable world' where magic 'translates, fragments, inverts' (71). Her thesis was that fairy tales were ultimately sexist and inescapably conservative, influenced by a canon- (and Disney-) given vision of the genre, but Duncker was already, unknowingly, pointing to the queer possibilities within the fairy tale. The 'fantastic inverted world' of the fairy tale she describes, 'a world of extremes, excess, and inversion of dailiness' (Duncker 71-72), indeed lends itself to transgressions of all kinds, strange transformations, bizarre settings, fluid identities, non-normative desires and taboo connections. As a testament to this, despite its apparent normativity, the fairy tale genre boasts numerous beastly love stories (e.g. 'Beauty and the Beast'), notoriously incestuous fathers ('Donkeyskin'), cannibalistic mothers (in Perrault's 'Sleeping Beauty'), wild fantasyscapes (the house in 'Hansel and Gretel') and species-defying characters ('The Little Mermaid'), among others. Many of these elements and stories are part of the Disney corpus, so if we were to blow its bowdlerised cover, the wonder mode of the fairy tale would reveal itself to favour unspeakable, puzzling and frightful scenarios in which the strange is largely the norm.

However, for Duncker, as for many readers brought up on disneyfied fairy tales, the dark pleasures of fairy-tale fantasy are ultimately fenced off within 'ritual parentheses' (Duncker 72), which work to contain its more dangerous elements. 'Once upon a time' and 'They lived happily ever after' are, then, like two inoffensive ribbons wrapped around the fairy tale's strange package. The bow on top would be the marriage

plot, which so often marks the happy ending and covers the genre with a veneer of normativity that is difficult to see past. For this reason, fairy-tale critics have worked to show that queerness in fairy tales exists independent of normative markers like the heterosexual happy ending (Greenhill and Turner, 3; Seifert, 'Introduction' 18). But future scholarship would benefit from exploring the ways in which formulaic parentheses can be seen not just as the normative 'limits of fantasy' (Duncker 72), but actually as queer in themselves: they exist outside normative time, and in fact approximate Halberstam's 'queer time.' Notions of past and future are palpably reduced in the vague formulas, which situate the tales in a perpetually distant location, unknown and always out of reach, and ultimately freeze the story in a single instant of happiness. Although this does not undo the heterosexual ending, it certainly troubles normative time-passing and adumbrates the door to an-Other reality, a 'never-never land' (Thompson 103), an abnormal (or perhaps paranormal) world where alternative relations to time, space and, presumably everything else, lie.

Nonetheless, while the veil of normativity still covers the fairy tale, passionate, bottom-up campaigns like #GiveElsaAGirlfriend will ensure that, at the very least, the industry becomes aware of minoritarian voices. Furthermore, online, vernacular creators, independent from institutional control, will keep taking it upon themselves to question and unsettle the normative, hegemonic fairy tale in a more immediate manner. Scholars must thus monitor the fairy-tale web, and especially the barely-explored queer counterpublics within that fairy-tale web, where the queer fairy-tale subgenre is sure to flourish more rapidly and in more diverse, unexpected ways than anywhere else. In that same line, it is necessary for future queer fairy-tale research to go beyond the scope of the present study, so as to include a wider variety of identities. For instance, trans identities and sensibilities have barely impacted the works analysed in this study, but recent retellings suggest there is a growing interest, such as Austin Chant's *Peter Darling* (2017) and *Cinder Ella* by S.T. Lynn and Tami Veldura (2016). The latter includes a trans, black protagonist, and these intersectional identities will require further attention as they become more common in the queer fairy tale. Similarly, different linguistic traditions, within the global web but also in more traditional media (i.e. literature), will have to be considered so as to fully trace the emergence of the queer retold fairy tale and its relation to different historical, political and geographical contexts. Whether Disney takes a big leap forwards with *Frozen 2* and queers its own fairy-tale

tradition, easing the way for a widespread reconsideration of the genre, or it does not, this study has shown that the door has already been opened, and a queer future awaits the fairy tale.

Bibliography

Aaron, Michele. *New Queer Cinema: A Critical Reader*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2004. Print.

Adam, Barry D. *The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987. Print.

Aladdin. Dir. Ron Clements and John Musker. Walt Disney Pictures, 1992. Film.

Alexander, Bryan. 'Backlash Grows over Disney's Gay 'Beauty and the Beast' Character.' *USA Today*, 4 March 2017. N.p. Web. 01 March 2018.

Alwakeel, Ramzy. *Smile If You Dare: Politics and Pointy Hats with the Pet Shop Boys*. London: Repeater Books, 2014. Print.

Andersen, Hans Christian. *The Annotated Hans Christian Andersen (The Annotated Books)*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007. Print.

—. *Mit Livs Eventyr*. Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzel, 1855. Print.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London and New York: Verso, 1991. Print.

Angelides, Steven. *A History of Bisexuality*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001. Print.

Apo, Satu. *The Narrative World of Finnish Fairy Tales: Structure, Agency, and Evaluation in Southwest Finnish Folktales. Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1995*. Print.

—, and David Hackson. 'The Relationship between Oral and Literary Tradition as a Challenge in Fairy-Tale Research: The Case of Finnish Folktales.' *Marvels & Tales*, vol. 21 no. 1, 2007, 19-33. *Project MUSE*. Web. 12 February 2017.

Armstrong, Elizabeth A. *Forginghalbe Gay Identities: Organizing Sexuality in San Francisco*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002. Print.

Ashliman, D. L. *Folk and Fairy Tales: A Handbook*. Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004. Print.

—. 'Rapunzel by the Grimm Brothers: A Comparison of the Versions of 1812 and 1857.' *Pitt Edu*. Web. 11 Dec 2017.

—. 'The Frog King or Iron Heinrich.' *Pitt Edu*. Web. 11 Dec 2017.

Atwood, Margaret. 'Bluebeard's Egg.' *The Classic Fairy Tales*. Ed. Maria Tatar. New York: WW Norton & Company, 1999. 156-78. Print.

Aulnoy, Marie-Catherine d'. 'Belle-Belle or the Knight Fortuné.' *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm*. Ed. Jack Zipes. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001. 174-205. Print.

—. ‘Finette Cendron.’ *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm*. Ed. Jack Zipes. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001. 454-68. Print.

Babuscio, Jack. ‘Camp and the Gay Sensibility.’ C*amp Grounds: Style and Homosexuality*. Ed. David Bergman. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993. 19-38. Print.

Bacchilega, Cristina. ‘An Introduction to the “Innocent Persecuted Heroine” Fairy Tale.’ *Western Folklore 52*, no. 1, 1993, 1–12. Web. 18 Nov 2018.

—. ‘Cracking the Mirror: Three Re-Visions of "Snow White".’ *Boundary 2*, vol. 15, no. 3, 1988, 1-25. Web. 2 Feb 2019.

—. ‘Fairy-tale Adaptations and Economies of Desire.’ *The Cambridge Companion to Fairy Tales*. Ed. Maria Tatar. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. 79-96. Print.

—. *Fairy Tales Transformed? Twenty-First-Century Adaptations and the Politics of Wonder*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013. Print.

—, and John Rieder. ‘Mixing it Up: Generic Complexity and Gender Ideology in Early Twenty-first Century Fairy Tale Films.’ *Fairy Tale Films: Visions of Ambiguity*. Eds. Pauline Greenhill and Sidney Eve Matrix. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2010. 23-41. Print

—. *Postmodern Fairy Tales: Gender and Narrative Strategies*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997. Print.

Bacchus, Tom. ‘Lily Boy.’ *Happily Ever After: Erotic Fairy Tales for Men*. Ed. Michael Ford. New York: Masquerade Books, 1996. 329-52. Print.

Baker, Dallas J. 'Monstrous fairytales: Towards an Écriture Queer', *Colloquy: Text Theory Critique* , vol. 20, 2000, 79-103. Web. 18 Nov 2018.

Barrett, Rusty. *From Drag Queens to Leathermen: Language, Gender and Gay Male Subcultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. Print.

Basic Instinct. Dir. Paul Verhoeven. Carolco Pictures, 1992. Film.

Basile, Giambattista, and Nancy L. Canepa. *Giambattista Basile's the Tale of Tales, Or, Entertainment for Little Ones*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007. Print.

Bauer, Robin. *Queer BDSM Intimacies: Critical Consent and Pushing Boundaries*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. Print.

BBC. *BBC Equality Information Report 2017/18*. London: BBC, 2017. Web. 18 Nov 2018.

Beachy, Robert. ‘The German Invention of Homosexuality.’ *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 82, no. 4, 2010, 801-38. *JSTOR*. 21 Sept 2018.

Beauty and the Beast. Dir. Kirk Wise and Gary Trousdale. Walt Disney Pictures, 2017. Film.

Beauty and the Beast. Dir. Bill Condon. Walt Disney Pictures, 1991. Film.

Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Trans. Howard Parshley. New York: Bantam Books inc., reprint, 1970. Print.

Bell, Elizabeth, Lynda Haas and Laura Sells.. *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. Print.

Benderson, Bruce. 'Pinocchio in the Port Authority.' *Happily Ever After: Erotic Fairy Tales for Men*. Ed. Michael Ford. New York: Masquerade Books, 1996. 5-16. Print.

Benshoff, Harry M. *Monsters in the Closet: Homosexuality and the Horror Film*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997. Print.

Benson, Stephen, ed. 'Introduction.' *Contemporary Fiction and the Fairy Tale*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008. 1-19. Print.

Bergman, David. *Gaiety Transfigured: Gay Self-Representation in American Literature*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991. Print.

Bergman, David. 'Introduction.' *Camp Grounds: Style and Homosexuality*. Ed. David Bergman. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993. 1–16. Print.

Berlant, Lauren, and Michael Warner. 'What Does Queer Theory Teach Us About X?' *PMLA*, vol. 1, no. 110, 1995, 343-49. Web. 2 Feb 2019.

Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. New York: Vintage Books (Random House), 1976. Print.

Beukes, Lauren, and Bill Willingham. 'The Hidden Kingdom.' *Fairest* vol. 2. Illus. Iñaki Miranda. New York: Vertigo, 2013. Print.

Blank, Trevor. 'Toward a Conceptual Framework for the Study of Folklore and the Internet.' *Folklore and the Internet Vernacular Expression in a Digital World*. Ed. Trevor Blank. Logan: Utah University Press, 2009. Print.

Bloomer, Jeffrey. 'When Gays Decried *Silence of the Lambs*, Jonathan Demme Became an Early Student of Modern Backlash.' *Slate*, 28 April 2017. N.p. Web. 18 Nov 2018.

Boklage, Evgeniya. 'Safe Space, Dangerous Space: Counterpublic Discourses in the Russian LGBT Blogging Community.' *LGBTQs, Media and Culture in Europe*. Eds. Alexander Dhoest, Lukasz Szulc and Bart Eeckhout. New York: Routledge, 2017. Print.

Bottigheimer, Ruth B. *Fairy Godfather: Straparola, Venice, and the Fairy Tale Tradition*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013. 119-134. Print.

—. *Fairy Tales: A New History*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009. Print.

—, ed. *Fairy Tales Framed: Early Forewords, Afterwords, and Critical Words*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012. Print.

—. 'Fractured Fairy Tales.' *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*. Ed. Jack Zipes. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. 209-10. Print.

—. ‘The Publishing History of the Grimms’ Tales: Reception at the Cash Register.’ *The Reception of Grimms’ Fairy Tales: Responses, Reactions, Revisions*. Ed. Donald Haase. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993. 78-101. Print.

Boyer, Tina Marie. *The Giant Hero in Medieval Literature*. Leiden: Brill, 2016. Print.

Bradley, Bill. ‘*Frozen* Director Gives Glimmer of Hope Elsa Could Get a Girlfriend.’ *Huffington Post*, 26 February 2018. N.p. Web. 20 February 2019.

Brammer, John Paul. ‘'I fear loss of community': Tumblr's new 'adult content' rules worry LGBTQ users.’ *NBC News*, 5 Dec 2018. Web. Feb 2019.

Brandes, Georg. ‘Hans Christian Andersen.’ *Eminent Authors of Nineteenth Century*. Trans. R. B. Anderson. New York: Cowell, 1886. 104-05. Print.

Breines, Wini. ‘Sarah Evans’ Personal Politics.’ *Feminist Studies*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1979, 496. Web. 16 April 2018.

Bresler, Robert J. *Us Vs. Them: American Political and Cultural Conflict from WWII to Watergate*. Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2000. Print.

Brewer, Derek. ‘Interpretation of Fairy Tales.’ *A Companion to the Fairy Tale*. Eds. Hilda Roderick Ellis Davidson and Anna Chaudhri. Suffolk: D. S. Brewer, 2006. Print.

Bride of Frankenstein. Dir. James Whale. Universal Studios, 1935. Film.

Brier, Jennifer. *Infectious Ideas: U.S. Political Responses to the AIDS Crisis*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 2009. Print.

Bronski, Michael. *Culture Clash: The Making of a Gay Sensibility*. Boston: South End Press, 1984. Print.

Broumas, Olga. *Beginning With O*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977. Print.

Brownmiller, Susan. *Against Our Will : Men, Women and Rape*. New York: Simon, 1975. Print.

Bruhm, Steven, and Natasha Hurley. *Curiouser: On the Queerness of Children*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004. Print.

Brundage, James. ‘Playing by the Rules: Sexual Behaviour and Legal Norms in Medieval Europe.’ *Desire and Discipline: Sex and Sexuality in the Premodern West*.’ Eds. Jacqueline Murray and Konrad Eisenbichler. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996. 23-42. Print.

Buckley, Michael. *The Fairy-Tale Detectives*. New York: Amulet Books, 2005. Print.

Bullough, Vern. ‘Sex in History: A Redux.’ *Desire and Discipline: Sex and Sexuality in the Premodern West*.’ Eds. Jacqueline Murray and Konrad Eisenbichler. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996. 3-22. Print.

Burt, Stephen. *The Forms of Youth: Twentieth-Century Poetry and Adolescence*. New York: Columbia UP, 2007. Print.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London and New York: Routledge, 1990. Print.

—. *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge, 2004. Print.

BuzzFeedVideo. 'Lesbian Princess.' Online video clip. *YouTube*, 11 Oct 2015. Web. 3 Feb 2019.

Cage, Ken. *Gayle: The Language of Kinks and Queens*. Houghton: Jacana Media, 2003. Print.

Call Me By Your Name. Dir. Luca Guadagnino. Frensy Film Company, 2017. Film.

Canepa, Nancy L. 'Basile.' *The Teller's Tale: Lives of the Classic Fairy Tale Writers*. Ed. Sophie Raynard. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012. 25-37. Print.

—. *From Court to Forest: Giambattista Basile's Lo Cunto De Li Cunti and the Birth of the Literary Fairy Tale*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999. Print.

—. 'From Court to Forest: The Literary Itineraries of Giambattista Basile.' *Italica*, vol. 71, no. 3, 1994, 291-310. Web. 20 April 2017.

Capitanio, John P. and Gregory M. Herek. 'AIDS Stigma and Sexual Prejudice.' *American Behavioural Scientist*, vol. 42, no. 7, 1999, 1130-147. Web. 25 April 2018.

Carlson, Amy. 'Kissing the Mermaid: Resistance, Adaptation, Popular Cultural Memory, and Maya Kern's Webcomic How to be a Mermaid.' *Marvels & Tales*, forthcoming.

Carter, Angela. 'Notes from the Front Line.' *Shaking a Leg: Journalism and Writings*. Ed. Jenny Uglow. London: Chatto & Windus, 1997. 37-43. Print.

—, editor. *Strange Things Still Sometimes Happen: Fairy Tales From Around the World*. London: Faber & Faber, 1993. Print.

—, and Jennifer S. Uglow. *Shaking a Leg: Collected Writings*. New York: Penguin, 1997. Print.

—. *The Bloody Chamber and Other Tales*. New York: Vintage, 1995. Print.

—. *The Passion of New Eve*. London: Virago Press, 1977. Print.

—, editor. *The Virago Book of Fairy-Tales*. London: Virago Press, 1990. Print.

Carver Carpasso, Ruth. 'Isles of Felicity.' *Utopian and Science Fiction by Women: Worlds of Difference*. Eds. Jane L. Donawerth and Carol A. Kolmerten. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994. 35-53. Print.

Cashorali, Peter. *Fairy Tales: Traditional Stories Retold for Gay Men*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1995. Print.

—. *Gay Fairy & Folk Tales: More Traditional Stories Retold for Gay Men*. Boston: Faber & Faber, 1997. Print.

—. ‘Let Me Tell You the Story I Heard You Tell: Fairy Tales in Therapy.’ *GoodTherapy.org*,
18 January 2018. N.p. Web. 09 May 2018.

Chalaby, Jean K. ‘American Cultural Primacy in a New Media Order: A European Perspective.’ *International Communication Gazette*, vol. 68, no. 1, 33-51, Feb, 2006. Web. 18 Nov 2018.

Chauncey, George. Chauncey, George. *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940.* New York: Basic Books, 1994. Print.

—. ‘The Long Road to Marriage Equality.’ *The New York Times*. 26 June 2013. N.p. Web. 28 May 2018.

Chesterton, C. K. *Tremendous Trifles*. New York: Cosimo, 2007. Print.

Chun, John M. ‘Musical Theater and Film.’ *The Queer Encyclopedia of Music, Dance, and Musical Theater*. Ed. Claude J. Summens. San Francisco: Cleis Press, 2004. 181-184. Print.

Cinderella. Dir. Clyde Geronimi, Hamilton Luske and Wilfred Jackson. *Walt Disney Productions*, 1950. Film.

Cohen, Jeffrey J. *Medieval Identity Machines*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003. Print.

—. ‘Monster Culture: Seven Theses.’ *Monster Theory*. Ed. Jeffrey J. Cohen. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996. 3-25. Print.

Cox, Dan. ‘Are There No LGBT Characters in the Entire Fables Universe?.’ *Digital Ephemera*, 25 Oct 2013. N.p. Web. 18 Nov 2018.

Craft-Fairchild, Catherine. ‘Cross-Dressing and the Novel: Women Warriors and Domestic Femininity.’ *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, vol. 10 no. 2, 1998, 171-202. *Project MUSE*. Web. 21 Sept 2018.

Crage, Suzanna M., and Elizabeth A. Armstrong. ‘Movements and Memory: The Making of the Stonewall Myth.’ *American Sociological Review*, vol. 71, October 2006, 724–51. Web. 18 April 2018.

Creekmur, Corey K and Alexander Doty. ‘Introduction.’ *Out in Culture: Gay, Lesbian, and Queer Essays on Popular Culture*. Eds. Corey K. Creekmur and Alexander Doty. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995. 1-11. Print.

Cruising. Dir. William Friedkin. Lorimar Film Entertainment, 1980. Film.

Dame, Avery. ‘Making a Name for Yourself: Tagging as Transgender Ontological Practice on Tumblr.’ *Queer Technologies: Affordances, Affect, Ambivalence*. Eds. Katherine Bender, Adrienne Shaw. New York: Routledge, 2017. 23-37. Print.

Davidson, Hilda Roderick Ellis, and Anna Chaudhri. ‘Introduction.’ *A Companion to the Fairy Tale*. Eds. Hilda Roderick Ellis Davidson and Anna Chaudhri. Suffolk: D. S. Brewer, 2006. Print.

D'Emilio, John. *The World Turned: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002. Print.

Denton, Michelle. *Rape Culture: How Can We End It?*. New York: Lucent Press, 2018. Print.

Dokey, Cameron. *The Wild Orchid: A Retelling of The Ballad of Mulan*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009. Print.

Donadio, Rachel. 'On Gay Priests, Pope Francis Asks, 'Who Am I to Judge?'.' *The New York Times*, 29 Jul 2013. Web. 3 Feb 2019.

Donoghue, Emma. *Kissing the Witch: Old Tales in New Skins*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1997. Print.

Dose, Ralph. *Magnus Hirschfeld and the Origins of the Gay Liberation Movement*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2014. Print.

Doty, Alexander. *Making Things Perfectly Queer: Interpreting Mass Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993. Print.

Dubin, Zan. 'Poets Will Tell a Different Story: All-male Fairy Tale Is Part of a Program at Chapman University that will Explore Traditional Gender Roles.' *Los Angeles Times*, 13 March 1992. N.p. Web. 09 May 2018.

Duggan, Anne. 'Charles Perrault.' *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairy Tales*. Vol. 2. Ed. Donald Haase. Santa Barbara: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2008. 738-40. Print.

—. 'Feminine Genealogy, Matriarchy, and Utopia in the Fairy Tale of Marie-Catherine D'Aulnoy.' *Neophilologus*, vol. 82, no. 2, April 1998, 199-208. Web. 23 Jan. 2018.

—. 'Gender.' *The Routledge Companion to Media and Fairy-Tale Studies*. Eds. Pauline Greenhill and Jill Terry Rudy. New York: Routledge, 2018. N.p. Kindle Edition.

—. 'Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy.' *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairy Tales*, vol. 1. Ed. Donald Haase. Santa Barbara: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2008. 79-81. Print.

—. *Queer Enchantments: Gender, Sexuality, and Class in the Fairy-Tale Cinema of Jacques Demy*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013. Print.

—. 'The Reception of the Grimms in Nineteenth-Century France.' *Fabula*, vol. 55, no. 3/4, 2014, 260-85. Web. 25 March 2018.

Duggan, Lisa. *The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2003. Print.

Duncan, Pamela. 'Gay Relationships Are Still Criminalised in 72 Countries, Report Finds.' *The Guardian*, 26 June 2013. N.p. Web. 28 May 2018.

Duncker, Patricia. 'Re-Imagining the Fairy Tales: Angela Carter's Bloody Chambers.' *Writing on the Wall: Selected Essays.* London: Pandora, 2002. 67-83. Print.

Dundes, Alan. ‘Fairy Tales from a Folkloristic Perspective.’ *Fairy Tales and Society: Illusion, Allusion, and Paradigm*. Ed. Ruth Bottigheimer. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986. 259-69. Print.

—. *Interpreting Folklore*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980. Print.

—, editor. *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989. Print.

Dworkin, Andrea. *Woman Hating*. New York: Dutton, 1974. Print.

Dyer, Richard. ‘Introduction.’ *Gays and Film*. Ed. Richard Dyer. London: British Film Institute, 1977. Print.

Edelman, Lee. *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004. Print.

Ellis, John. *One Fairy Story Too Many: The Brothers Grimm and Their Tales*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985. Print.

Enchanted. Dir. Kevin Lima. Walt Disney Pictures, 2007. Film.

Esteban Muñoz, José. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999. Print.

Evans, Mel. ’10,000 Sign Petition to Stop Elsa Getting a Girlfriend in DisneyFrozen Sequel.’ *Metro*, 14 March 2018. Web. 20 February 2019.

Ever After. Dir. Andy Tennant. Flower Films, 1998. Film.

Eynat-Confino, Irene. *On the Use of the Fantastic in Modern Theatre*. Ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. Print.

Fabian, Renée. ‘6 of the Safest Spaces for LGBT Youth to Hang Online.’ *The Daily Dot*, 11 May 2016. Web. 3 Feb 2019.

Fantasia. Dir. James Algar, Samuel Armstrong, Ford Beebe et al. Walt Disney Pictures, 1940. Film.

Farrel, Marcy. ‘The Heroine's Violent Compromise: Two Fairy Tales by Madame d'Aulnoy.’ *Violence in French and Francophone Literature and Film*. Ed. James Day. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008. 27-43. Print.

Farwell, Marilyn R. *Heterosexual Plots and Lesbian Narratives*. New York: New York UP, 1996. Print.

Fink, Marty and Quinn Miller. ‘Trans Media Moments: Tumblr, 2011–2013.’ *Television & New Media*, vol. 15, no. 7, 2014, 611-26. Web. 3 Feb 2019.

Ford, Michael. ‘Introduction.’ *Happily Ever After: Erotic Fairy Tales for Men*. New York: Masquerade Books, 1996. 1-4. Print.

—. ed. *Once Upon a Time: Erotic Fairy Tales for Women*. New York: Masquerade Books, 1996.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality – Volume I: An Introduction.* Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, 1990. Print.

Frank, Dian Crone and Jeffrey Frank. *The Stories of Hans Christian Andersen*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003. Print.

Fraser, Nancy. 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy.' *Social Text*, No. 25/26, 1990, 56-80. Print.

Freeman, Elizabeth. 'Queer Belongings: Kinship Theory and Queer Theory.' *A Companion to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Studies*. Eds George E. Haggerty and Molly McGarry. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2015. Print.

Frozen. Dir. Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee. Walt Disney Pictures, 2013. Film.

Gabler, Neil. *Walt Disney: The Triumph of the American Imagination*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006. Print.

Gaiman, Neil. *The Sleeper and the Spindle*. Illustrated by Chris Riddell. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014. Print.

Gambone, Philip. *Something Inside: Conversations with Gay Fiction Writers*. Ed. Philip Gambone. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1999. Print.

Garber, Marjorie. *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*. New York: Routledge, 1997. Print.

Gavin, Steve. 'Consciousness Raising Exposes the Orwellian Lies of Sexist Amerika.' *Come Out!*, vol. 2, no.7b, 19. Web. 18 April 2018.

Geczy, Adam and Vicki Karaminas. *Queer Style*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013. Print.

Gianotta,

Giddens, Anthony. *Politics, Sociology and Social Theory: Encounters with Classical and Contemporary Social Thought*. Cambridge: Polity, 1995. Print.

Giffney, Noreen and Myra J. Hird. 'Introduction: Queering the Non/Human.' *Queering the Non/Human*. Eds. Noreen Giffney and Myra J. Hird. Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008. 1–16. Print.

Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979. Print.

Giroux, Henry. 'Animating Youth: The Disneyfication of Children's Culture.' *Socialist Review*, vol. 24, no.3, 1995, 23-55. Print.

GLAAD. 'Walt Disney Studios.' *2016 GLAAD Studio Responsibility Index. GLAAD*, May 2016. N.p. Web. 24 February 2019.

Goodman, Matt and Seth Adam. 'GLAAD rates ABC Family and FOX as "Excellent" in ninth annual Network Responsibility Index.' *GLAAD*, 3 September 2015. N.p. Web. 18 Nov 2018.

Gould, Deborah B. *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight against AIDS*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009. Print.

Gqola, Pumla Dineo. *Rape: The South African Nightmare*. Johannesburg: MF Books, 2015. Print.

Gray, Emma. 'Fairy Tales for Twenty Somethings Tumblr Reveals the Truth about Growing Up.' *The Huffington Post*, 18 Oct 2012. Web. 2 Feb 2019.

Greenhill, Pauline, and Sidney Eve Matrix. 'Introduction: Envisioning Ambiguity: Fairy Tale Films.' *Fairy Tale Films: Visions of Ambiguity*. Eds. Pauline Greenhill and Sidney Eve Matrix. Logan: Utah State UP.. 1–22. Print.

Greenhill, Pauline and Kay Turner. 'Introduction.' *Transgressive Tales: Queering the Grimms*. Eds. Pauline Greenhill and Kay Turner. Detroit: Wayne University Press, 2012. 1-23. Print.

Greenhill, Pauline. 'Sexualities.' *The Routledge Companion to Media and Fairy-Tale Studies*. Eds. Pauline Greenhill and Jill Terry Rudy. New York: Routledge, 2018. N.p. Kindle Edition.

—. 'Team Snow Queen: Feminist Cinematic 'Misinterpretations' of a Fairy Tale.' *Studies in European Cinema*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2016, 32-49. Web. 04 Apr. 2018.

—. "The Snow Queen": Queer Coding in Male Directors' Films. *Marvels & Tales*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2015, 110-34. Web. 04 April 2018.

Grimm, Jakob and Wilhelm. *Grimm's Household Tales*. Vol. 2. Trans. Margaret Hunt. London: William Clowes and Sons, 1884. Print.

—. 'Little Red Cap,' Trans. D.L. Ashliman. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 2005. Web. 18 Nov 2018.

—. 'Little Snow-White.' Trans. D.L. Ashliman. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 2005. Web. 1 Mar 2018.

Griswold, Jerry. *The Meanings of 'Beauty and the Beast:' A Handbook*. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2004. Print.

Grué, Mélanie. 'Celebrating Queer Lesbian Lesbian Desires with Dorothy Allison: From Moral Monstrosity to the Beautiful Materiality of the Body.' *Ilha do Desterro*, vol. 2, no. 68, 127-140. Web. 18 Nov 2018.

Haase, Donald. 'Fairy Tales.' *Folktales and Fairy Tales: Traditions and Texts from around the World*. Eds. Hellen Callow, Anne Duggan and Donald Haase. Santa Barbara: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2015. 219-22. Print.

—. 'Feminist Fairy-Tale Scholarship: A Critical Survey and Bibliography.' *Marvels & Tales*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2000, 15-63. Web. 25 Feb 2018.

—. 'Framing the Brothers Grimm: Paratexts and Intercultural Transmission in Postwar English Language Editions of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*.' *Fabula*, vol. 44, no. 1, May 2003, 55-69. Web. 02 Feb 2018.

—. ‘Hypertextual Gutenberg: The Textual and Hypertextual Life of Folktales and Fairy Tales in English-Language Popular Print Editions.’ *Fabula*, vol. 47, no. 3-4, 2006, 222-30. Web. 23 Jan. 2018.

Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989. Print.

Hakucosplay. ‘Elsa (Male Version Genderbend), Disney's Frozen.’ *DeviantArt*. Web. 2 Feb 2019.

Halberstam, Jack (published Judith). *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York: New York University Press, 2005. Print.

—. *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995. Print.

Hall, Todrick. ‘Beauty and the Beat.’ Online video clip. *YouTube*, 6 May 2015. Web. 3 Feb 2019.

—. ‘Britney and the Beast.’ Online video clip. *YouTube*, 7 Jun 2016. Web. 3 Feb 2019.

—. ‘CinderFella.’ Online video clip. *YouTube*, 24 Jul 2012. Web. 3 Feb 2019.

—. ‘Cinderoncé.’ Online video clip. *YouTube*, 20 Aug 2013. Web. 3 Feb 2019.

Halperin, David M. ‘REFLECTIONS: The Normalization of Queer Theory.’ *Journal of Homosexuality*, vol. 45, no. 2-4, 2003, 339-43. Web. 30 Jul 2018.

Hannon, Patricia and Anne Duggan. ‘French Tales.’ *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairy Tales*. Vol. 1. Ed. Donald Haase. Santa Barbara: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2008. 379-88. Print.

Happy N’ Ever After. Dir. Paul J. Bolger and Yvette Kaplan. Vanguard Animation, 2007. Film.

Harries, Elizabeth Wanning. *Twice Upon a Time: Women Writers and the History of the Fairy Tale*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003. Print.

Hartinger, Brent. ‘Ask the Flying Monkey.’ *After Elton*, 19 August 2008. Web. 30 Oct. 2018.

Hazte Oír. ‘Una Princesa Lesbiana en Disney.’ *Hazte Oír*, 9 May 2016. N.p. Web. 20 February 2019.

Heilbrun, Carolyn G. *Reinventing Womanhood*. 1979. New York: Norton. 1993. Print.

Hemmings, Robert. ‘A Taste of Nostalgia: Children’s Books from the Golden Age—Carroll, Grahame, and Milne.’ Children’s Literature 35, 2007, 54–79. Web. 3 July 2018.

Hettinga, Donald R. ‘Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm.’ *The Teller’s Tale: Lives of the Classic Fairy Tale Writers*. Ed. Sophie Raynard. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012. 135-51. Print.

Hines, Jim C. *The Stepsister Scheme*. New York: DAW, 2009. Print

Hobson, Emily K. *Lavender and Red: Liberation and Solidarity in the Gay and Lesbian Left*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2016. Print.

Holbek, Bengt. *Interpretation of Fairy Tales: Danish Folklore in a European Perspective*. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1987. Print.

Hoodwinked!. Dir. Cory Edwards, Todd Edwards and Tony Leeck. Blue Yonder Film, 2005. Film

Hourihan, Margery. *Deconstructing the Hero: Literary Theory and Children's Literature*. New York: Routledge, 1997. Print.

Hunt, Elle. '*Frozen* Fans Urge Disney to Give Elsa a Girlfriend in Sequel.' *The Guardian*, 3 May 2016. Web. 20 Feb 2019.

—. 'LGBT Community Anger Over YouTube Restrictions Which Make their Videos Invisible.' *The Guardian*, 20 Mar 2017. Web. 3 Feb 2019.

Hutcheon, Linda. *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms*. Champaign: University of Illinois, 2000. Print.

—. *The Politics of Postmodernism*. New York: Routledge, 1989. Print.

—. 'The Politics of Postmodernism: Parody and History Linda Hutcheon Cultural Critique.' *Modernity and Modernism, Postmodernity and Postmodernism*, No. 5, Winter, 1986-1987, 179-207. Print.

In the Flesh. Created by Dominic Mitchell. BBC Three, 2013-14. Television Show.

Jackson, K. M. 'Walt Disney and Its Persuasive Products and Cultural Contexts.' *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, vol. 24, 1996, 83-84. Print.

Jarvis, Shawn C. and Jeannine Blackwell, editors. *The Queen's Mirror: Fairy Tales by German Women, 1780-1900*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001. Print.

Jasmin, Nadine. 'Sophistication and Modernization of the Fairy Tale: 1690–1709.' *The Teller's Tale Lives of the Classic Fairy Tale Writers*. Ed. Sophie Raynard. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012. 41-47. Print.

—. 'Marie-Catherine Le Jumel de Barneville, Baroness d'Aulnoy: 1650/51?–1705.' *The Teller's Tale Lives of the Classic Fairy Tale Writers*. Ed. Sophie Raynard. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012. 61-69. Print.

Jay, Karla, and Joanne Glasgow. *Lesbian Texts and Contexts: Radical Revisions*. London: Onlywomen Press, 1992. Print.

Jones, Rebecca L. 'Imagining the Unimaginable: Bisexual Roadmaps for Ageing.' *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Ageing: Biographical Approaches for Inclusive Care and Support*. Eds. Richard Ward, Ian Rivers, Mike Sutherland. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2012. 21-38. Print.

Jones, Steven Swann. *The Fairy Tale: The Magic Mirror of the Imagination*. New York; London: Routledge, 2002. Print.

—. ‘The Innocent Persecuted Heroine Genre: An Analysis of Its Structure and Themes.’ *Western Folklore 52*, no. 1, vol. 13-41, 1993. Web. 18 Nov 2018.

Joosen, Vanessa. *Critical and Creative Perspectives on Fairy Tales: An Intertextual Dialogue Between Fairy-Tale Scholarship and Postmodern Retellings*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2011. Print.

Kahlo, Frida. *Las Dos Fridas*. 1939. Painting.

Kapurch, Katie. ‘Rapunzel Loves Merida: Melodramatic Expressions of Lesbian Girlhood and Teen Romance in Tangled, Brave, and Femslash.’ *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, vol. 19 no. 4, 2015, 436-53. Web. 24 Feb 2018.

Kasturi, Sumana. ‘Constructing Childhood in a Corporate World: Cultural Studies, Childhood, and Disney.’ *Kidworld: Childhood Studies, Global Perspectives and Education.* Eds. Gaile Sloan Cannella, Joe L. Kincheloe. New York: Peter Lang, 2002. 39–58. Print.

Katz, Jonathan. *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1976. Print.

Kenney, Zoe. ‘The Play’s the Thing: Representations of Heteronormative Sexuality in a Popular Children’s TV Sitcom.’ *Queer Media Images: LGBT Perspectives*. Eds. Theresa Carilli and Jane Campbell. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013. 71-84. Print.

Kingfisher, T. *The Raven and the Reindeer*. New York: Red Wombat Tea Company, 2016. Print.

Knoepflmacher, Ulrich. ‘Parody.’ *Folktales and Fairy Tales: Traditions and Texts from around the World*. Eds. Hellen Callow, Anne Duggan and Donald Haase. Santa Barbara: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2015. 761-62. Print.

Kohnen, Melanie E.S. ‘Tumblr Pedagogies.’ *A Companion to Media Fandom and Fan Studies*. Ed. Paul Booth. Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, 2018. 351-365. Print.

Kopcke, Robert H. ‘Foreword.’ *Fairy Tales: Traditional Stories Retold for Gay Men*, by Peter Cashorali. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1995. XVII-X. Print.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. 1990. *Epistemology of the Closet.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990. Print.

—. *Tendencies*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993. Print.

Koven, Mikel J. ‘Folklore Studies and Popular Film and Television: A Necessary Critical Survey.’ *The Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 116, no. 460, 2003, 176-195. Print.

Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982. Print.

Kumin, Maxine. ‘The Archaeology of a Marriage.’ *POETRY*, April 1978. Chicago: The Poetry Foundation, 1978. 3-4. Print.

Lambe, Stacey. '*Alice In Tumblr-Land* Author, Tim Manley, On Internet Vices and Queer Fairy Tales.' *Out*, 19 Nov 2013. Web. 3 Feb 2019.

Lang, Nico. 'Evil But Fabulous: In Praise of Films' Complicated, Queer Villains.' *The Guardian*, 8 Nov 2015.

Langdale, Doug, executive producer. *The Adventures of Puss in Boots*. Netflix, 2015-2018. T.V. Show.

Laqueur, Thomas. *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990. Print.

Lark, Jasmine. 'Jose Rodolfo Loaiza Ontiveros.' *Widewalls*, 26 Sept 2017. Web. 3 Feb 2019.

Lassel, Michael. 'Beauty and the Beast: Genius Remembered.' *The Advocate* n. 600, 7 April 1992, 77. Print.

—. 'The Three Bears.' *Happily Ever After: Erotic Fairy Tales for Men*. Ed. Michael Ford. New York: Masquerade Books, 1996. 17-32. Print.

Lee, Tanith. *Red as Blood, Or Tales from the Sisters Grimmer*. New York: DAW Books, 1983. Print.

Le Fanu, Sheridan. *Carmilla* (1872). Urbana: Project Gutenberg, 2003. Web. 18 Nov 2018.

Leonard, Andew. 'How Disney Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Copyright Infringement.' *Salon*, 23 May 2014. N.p. Web. 2 Feb 2018.

Levin, Richard D., Stephan L. Buckingham and Christina B. Hart. 'Gay Men as Caregivers.' *Caring for the HIV/AIDS Caregivers*. Eds. Vincent J. Lynch and Paul A. Wilson. Westport: Auburn House, 1996. 73-90. Print.

Levin, Sam. 'Who can be a Drag Queen? RuPaul's Trans Comments Fuel Calls for Inclusion.' *The Guardian*, 8 March 2018. N.p. Web. 18 June 2018.

Levine, Martin P. *Gay Macho: The Life and Death of the Homosexual Clone*. New York: New York University Press, 1998. Print.

Levy, Michael. 'LGBT/YA/SF.' In 'SFS Symposium: Sexuality in Science Fiction'. *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2009, 394-95. Web. 14 May 2018.

Lewallen, Avis. 'Wayward Girls but Wicked Women?: Female Sexuality in Angela Carter's The Bloody Chamber.' *Perspectives in Pornography: Sexuality in Film and Literature*, ed. Gary Day and Clive Bloom, 144-58. London: Macmillan, 1988. Print.

Lieberman, Marcia R. 'Some Day My Prince Will Come: Female Acculturation through the Fairy Tale.' *College English*, vol. 34, no. 3, 1972, 383-95. *JSTOR*. Web. 22 Feb 2018.

Liming, Sheila. '"Reading for It": Lesbian Readers Constructing Culture and Identity through Textual Experience.' *Queer Popular Culture: Literature, Media, Film and Television*. Ed. Thomas Peele. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. 85-102. Print.

Lin, Ming-Hsun, and Jack Zipes. ‘Fitting the Glass Slipper: A Comparative Study of the Princess’s Role in the Harry Potter Novels and Films.’ *Fairy Tale Films: Visions of Ambiguity*. Eds. Pauline Greenhill and Sidney Eve Matrix. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2010. 79–98. Print.

Loaiza Ontiveros, José Rodolfo. *I’m Toxic*. 2012. Painting.

—. *Like a Virgin*. 2013. Painting.

—. *Paloma Negra*. 2014. Painting.

—. *Reencuentro - Las Dos Blancanieves*. 2012. Painting.

—. *The Incredulity of Saint Donald*. 2014. Painting.

—. *The Veil of Clarabella*. 2014. Painting.

—. *True Ending*. 2011. Painting.

—. *Who Am I to Judge Him?*. 2014. Painting.

Lo, Malinda. *Ash*. New York: Little Brown & Company, 2009.

—. ‘2014 LGBT YA by the Numbers.’ *Diversity in YA*, 10 Dec 2014. N.p. Web. 18 Nov 2018.

Love, Heather. *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History*.Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007. Print.

Lowey, Ian and Suzy Prince. *The Graphic Art of the Underground: A Countercultural History*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014. Print.

Luke, David. ‘Introduction.’ *Selected Tales by Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm*. Ed. and trans. David Luke. London: Penguin., 1982. 9-43. Print.

Lurie, Alison. ‘Fairy Tale Liberation.’ *New York Review of Books*, 17 Dec 1970. 44-2. Print.

—. ‘Witches and Fairies: Fitzgerald to Updike.’ *New York Review of Books*, 2 Dec 1971. 6-11. Print.

Lüthi, Max. *The European Folktale: Form and Nature*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986. Print.

MacDonald, George. ‘The Fantastic Imagination’ (1895). *Victorian Fairy Tales*. Ed. Michael Newton. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. Print.

Maitland, Sara. *Angel Maker*. Brighton: Owl Books, 1996. Print.

Maleficent. Dir. Robert Stromberg. Walt Disney Pictures/Roth Films, 2014. Film.

Manalansan, Martin F. ‘Queer Love in the Time of War and Shopping.’ *A Companion to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Studies*. Eds. George E. Haggerty and Molly McGarry. Malden: John Wiley & Sons, 2007. 77-86. Print.

Manley, Tim. *Alice in Tumblr-land*. New York: Penguin Books, 2013. Print.

—. ‘Writing.’ *Tim Manley*, n.d. N.p. Web. 2 Feb 2019.

Matthiessen, F.O. and Russel Chenney. *Rat & the Devil: Journal Letters of F. O. Matthiessen and Russell Cheney*. Ed. Louis K. Hyde. Hamden: Archon Books, 1978. Print.

McIntosh, Mary. ‘Queer Theory and the War of The Sexes.’ *Feminisms*. Eds. Sandra Kemp and Judith Squires. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. 364-68. Print.

McNeill, Lynne. ‘Digital “Blood and Glitter”: Fairy Tales as Text, Texture, and Context in Digital Media.’ *The Routledge Companion to Media and Fairy-Tale Studies*. Eds. Pauline Greenhill and Jill Terry Rudy. New York: Routledge, 2018. N.p. Kindle Edition.

Medhurst, Andy. ‘Batman, Deviance and Camp.’ *The Many Lives of the Batman: Critical Approaches to a Superhero and His Media*. Ed. Roberta E. Pearson. New York: Routledge, 1991. 149–163. Print.

MedlinePlus. ‘Bezoar.’ Web. 2 Feb 2019.

Meyer, Morris. ‘Reclaiming the Discourse of Camp.’ *The Politics and Poetics of Camp*. Ed. Morris Meyer. London and New York: Routledge, 1994. 1-19. Print.

Miller, Neil. *Out of the Past: Gay and Lesbian History from 1869 to the Present*. New York: Vintage Books, 1995. Print.

Miller, Sam J. ‘Assimilation and the Queer Monster.’ *Horror After 911*. Eds. Aviva Briefel and Sam J. Miller. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011. 220-34. Print.

Moncada, Alexis Isabel. ‘Why I Created the Trending #GiveElsaAGirlfriend Hashtag.’ *MTV*, 3 May 2016. N.p. Web. 23 February 2019.

Monteagudo, Jesse. ‘The Prince and the Pauper.’ *Happily Ever After: Erotic Fairy Tales for Men*. Ed. Michael Ford. New York: Masquerade Books, 1996. 283-94. Print.

Moonlight. Dir. Barry Jenkins. A24, 2016. Film.

Morrison, Paul. *The Explanation for Everything: Essays on Sexual Subjectivity*. New York: New York University Press, 2001. Print.

Moynihan, Carolyn. ‘Give Elsa a Girlfriend? No, Give The Kids a Break.’ *Mercatornet*, 18 May 2016. N.p. Web. 20 February 2019.

Mulan. Dir. Barry Cook and Tony Bancroft. Walt Disney Pictures, 1998. Film.

Muñoz, Jose Esteban. *Disidentifications* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999. Print.

Munsch, Robert N. *The Paper Bag Princess*. Toronto: Annick Pr., 1980. Print.

Nagagutsu o Haita Neko. Dir. Kimio Yabuki. Toei Animation, 1964. Film.

Namjoshi, Suniti. *Feminist Fables*. London: Virago, 1994. Print.

Navar-Gill, Annemarie, and Mel Stanfill. '"We Shouldn't Have to Trend to Make You Listen":Queer Fan Hashtag Campaigns as Production Interventions.' *Journal of Film and Video*, vol. 70, no. 3-4, 2018, 85-100. Print.

Nikolajeva, Maria. 'Fairy Tales in Society's Service.' *Marvels & Tales*, vol. 16 no. 2, 2002, 171-87. Web. 13 June 2017.

—. 'Hans Christian Andersen.'*The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*. Ed. Jack Zipes. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. 13-15. Print.

Ng, Eve. 'Between Text, Paratext, and Context: Queerbaiting and the Contemporary Media Landscape.' *Transformative Works and Cultures*, vol. 24, 2017. N.p. Web. 20 February 2019.

Norton, Terry L., and Jonathan W. Vare. 'Literature of Today's Gay and lesbian Teens: Subverting the Culture of Silence.' *English Journal*, vol. 94, 2004, 65-69. Web. 2 Feb 2019.

Nunokawa, Jeff. '"All the Sad Young Men": AIDS and the Work of Mourning.' *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*. Ed. Diana Fuss. New York and London: Routledge, 1991. Print.

Once Upon a Time. Created by Edward Kitsis and Adam Horowitz. ABC Studios, 2011-18. Television Show.

omgstephlol. 'Ever Wonder How Tumblrs Turn into Books? One Writer's Story.' *Inklings*, 19 Nov 2013. Web. 3 Feb 2019.

Orenstein, Catherine. *Little Red Riding Hood Uncloaked: Sex, Morality, and the Evolution of a Fairy Tale*. New York: Basic Books, 2002. Print.

Orme, Jennifer. 'Happily Ever After . . . According to Our Tastes: Jeanette Winterson's "Twelve Dancing Princesses" and Queer Possibility.' *Transgressive Tales: Queering the Grimms*. Eds. Pauline Greenhill and Kay Turner. Detroit: Wayne University Press, 2012. 141-60. Print.

—. 'Mouth to Mouth: Queer Desires in Emma Donoghue's Kissing the Witch.' *Marvels & Tales*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2010, 116-30. Web. 3 Feb 2019.

Ostry, Elaine. *Social Dreaming: Dickens and the Fairy Tale*. New York: Routledge, 2013. Print.

Palmer, Melvin D. 'Madame d'Aulnoy in England.' *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 27, No. 3 Summer 1975, 237-53. Web. 23 Jan 2018.

Palmer, Pauline. 'Lesbian Transformations of Gothic and Fairytale.' *Contemporary British Women Writers*. Ed. Emma Parker. Cambridge: Brewer, 2004. 139-153. Print.

Pasquesi, Carina. 'Of Monsters, Creatures and Other Queer Becomings.' *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, vol. 46/47, vo. 2/1, Fall 2013 - Spring 2014, 119-125. Web. 18 Nov 2018.

PattiCakes Productions. 'Cinderswift.' Online video clip. *YouTube*, 14 Jan 2017. Web 3 Feb 2019.

Pearl, Monica. *AIDS Literature and Gay Identity: The Literature of Loss*. London: Routledge, 2013. Print.

Perrault, Charles. 'Cinderella.' *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm*. Ed. Jack Zipes. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001. 449-54. Print.

—. 'Sleeping Beauty.' *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm*. Ed. Jack Zipes. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001. 688-96.

—. 'The Fairies.' *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm*. Ed. Jack Zipes. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001. 564-67. Print.

Pershing, Linda and Lisa Gablehouse. 'Disney's Enchanted: Patriarchal Backlash and Nostalgia in a Fairy Tale Film.' *Fairy Tale Films: Visions of Ambiguity*. Eds. Pauline Greenhill and Sidney Eve Matrix. Logan: Utah State University Press. 137-56. Print.

Petersen, Kierran. 'Disney's *Frozen* and the "Gay Agenda."' *BBC News*, 27 March 2014. N.p. Web. 04 April 2018.

Picard, André. 'How the Advent of AIDS Advanced Gay Rights.' *The Globe and Mail*, 15 August 2014. N.p. Web. 25 April 2018.

Pirovano, Donato. 'The Literary Fairy Tale of Giovan Francesco Straparola.' *The Romanic Review*, vol. 99, no.3-4, 2008, 283–84. Web. 25 March 2017.

Podmore, Julie, and Manon Tremblay. 'Lesbians, Second-Wave Feminism and Gay Liberation.' *The Ashgate Research Companion to Lesbian and Gay Activism*. Eds. David Paternotte and Manon Tremblay. Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. 121-35. Print.

Poison. Dir. Todd Haynes. Killer films, 1991. Film.

Pretty Woman. Dir. Garry Marshall. Touchstone Pictures, 1990. Film.

Prince, Alison. *Hans Christian Andersen, the Fan Dancer*. London: Allison & Busby, 1998.

Propp, Vladimir. *Morphology of the Folktal*e. 2nd ed. Austin: American Folklore Society, 1970. Print.

Psycho. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Paramount Pictures, 1960. Film.

Pullen, Christopher. 'Preface.' *LGBT Identity and Online New Media*. Eds. Christopher Pullen and Margaret Cooper. New York: Routledge, 2010. Print.

Pulver, Andrew. 'Frozen 2 officially announced.' *The Guardian*, 12 March 2015. N.p. Web. 28 March 2019.

Puss in Boots. Dir. Chris Miller. Dreamworks Animation, 2011. Film.

'Queer Nation Manifesto' (1990). *History is a Weapon*. N.p. Web. 15 May 2018.

Radulovic, Petrana. ‘Tumblr Will Purge Most NSFW Content Under New Guidelines.’ *Polygon*, 3 Dec 2018. Web. 3 Feb 2019.

Ranke, Kurt. *Folktales of Germany*. Trans. Lotte Baumann. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966. Print.

Rankin, Walter. *Grimm Pictures: Fairy Tale Archetypes in Eight Horror and Suspense Films*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2007. Print.

Rich, Adrienne Cecile. ‘Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence (1980).’ *Journal of Women’s History*, vol. 15 no. 3, 2003, 11–48. Web. 29 June 2017.

—. ‘When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision‘. College English, vol. 34, no.1,1972, 18-30. Web. 3 Feb 2019.

Rich, B. Ruby. ‘New Queer Cinema.’ *New Queer Cinema: A Critical Reader*. Ed. Michele Aaron. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004. Print.

Ringu. Dir. Hideo Nakata. Omega, 1998. Film.

Rodríguez, Randy A. ‘Richard Rodriguez Reconsidered: Queering the Sissy (Ethnic) Subject.’ *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, vol. 40, no. 4, Winter 1998, 396-423. Web. 20 April 2018.

Rojek, Chris. ‘Disney Culture.’ *Leisure Studies*, vol. 12, no. 2, 1993, 121–35. Print.

Rozin, Paul, Maureen Markwith and Carol Nemeroff, Carol. ‘Magical Contagion Beliefs and Fear of AIDS.’ *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 22, 2006, 108-92. Web. 3 July 2018.

Rozin, Paul, Carol Nemeroff, Marcia Wane and Amy Sherrod. *Operation of the Sympathetic Magic Law of Contagion in Interpersonal Attitudes among Americans*. Bulletin of the Psychonomic Society, vol. 27, no.4, 1989, 367-70. Web. 1 July 2018.

Rupp, Leila J., Benita Roth and Verta Taylor. ‘Women in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Movement.’ *The Oxford Handbook of U.S. Women’s Social Movement Activism*. Eds. Holly J. McCammon, Verta Taylor, Jo Reger, and Rachel L. Einwohner. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 665-84. Print.

Sakimichan. ‘Snow King.’ *DeviantArt*. Web. 02 Feb 2019.

Saupé, Yvette and Jean-Pierre Collinet. ‘Charles Perrault.’ *The Teller’s Tale: Lives of the Classic Fairy Tale Writers*. Ed. Sophie Raynard. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012. 47-59. Print.

Scared Shrekless!. Dir. Gary Trousdale and Raman Hui. DreamWorks Animation, 2010. Film.

Schallert, Elza. ‘Radio Interview with Walt Disney.’ *NBC* 12 March 1937. Web. 25 Feb 2018.

Schildcrout, Jordan. *Murder Most Queer The Homicidal Homosexual in the American Theater*. Ann Arbor: The University or Michigan Press, 2014. Print.

Schwarz, Benjamin. ‘Walt’s World.’ *Atlantic*, Dec 2006. N.p. Web. 25 Feb 2018.

Seifert, Lewis C. ‘Disguising the Storyteller's 'Voice': Perrault's Recuperation of the Fairy Tale.’ *Cincinnati Romance Review*, vol. 8, 1989, 13-23. Print.

—, and Gretchen Schultz, eds. *Fairy Tales for the Dissillusioned: Enchanted Stories From the French Decadent Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016. Print.

—. *Fairy Tales, Sexuality, and Gender in France, 1690-1715: Nostalgic Utopias*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Print.

—. ‘Gay and Lesbian Tales.’ *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairy Tales*. Vol. 2. Ed. Donald Haase. Santa Barbara: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2008. 400-02. Print.

—. ‘Introduction: Queer(ing) Fairy Tales.’ *Marvels & Tales*, vol.29, no.1, 2015, 15-20. Web. 26 June 2016.

—. ‘Queer Time in Charles Perrault’s “Sleeping Beauty”.’ *Marvels & Tales*, vol. 29 no. 1, 2015, 21-41. *Project MUSE*. 28 June 2018.

—. ‘Sex, Sexuality.’ *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairy Tales*, vol. 3. Ed. Donald Haase. Santa Barbara: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2008. 849-53. Print.

—. ‘The Fairy Tales of France.’ *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*. Ed. Jack Zipes. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. 174-87. Print.

—. ‘The Marvelous in Context: The Place of the Contes de Fées in Late Seventeenth Century France.’ *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm*. Ed. Jack Zipes. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000. 902-33. Print.

Sells, Laura. ‘"Where Do The Mermaids Stand?" Voice and Body in The Little Mermaid.’ *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. 175-92. Print.

Sexton, Anne. *Transformations*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001. Print.

Sheppard, Simon. ‘The Ugly Duckling.’ *Happily Ever After: Erotic Fairy Tales for Men*. Ed. Michael Ford. New York: Masquerade Books, 1996. 91-98. Print.

Shimabukuro, Karra and Kara Andersen. ‘European Horror Games Little Red Riding Hood’s Zombie BBQ and the European Game Industry.’ *Transnational Horror Across Visual Media*. Eds. Dana Orch and Kirsten Strayer. New York: Routledge, 2014. 86-106. Print.

Shippey, Tom. ‘Rewriting the Core: Transformations of the Fairy Tale in Contemporary Writing.’ *The Companion to the Fairy Tal*e. Eds. Hilda Roderick Ellis Davidson and Anna Chaudhri. Suffolk: D. S. Brewer, 2006. 71-83. Print.

Short, Sue. ‘Crime/Justice.’ *The Routledge Companion to Media and Fairy-Tale Studies*. Eds. Pauline Greenhill and Jill Terry Rudy. New York: Routledge, 2018. N.p. Kindle Edition.

—. *Fairy Tale and Film: Old Tales with a New Spi*n. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Print.

Shrek. Dir. Andrew Adamson and Vicky Jenson. DreamWorks Animation, 2001. Film.

Simpson, Alan K., Rodger McDaniel. *Dying for Joe McCarthy's Sins: The Suicide of Wyoming Senator Lester Hunt*. Hertfordshire: WordsWorth Press, 2013. Print.

Sleeping Beauty. Dir. Clyde Geronimi, Les Clark, Eric Larson and Wolfgang Reitherman. Walt Disney Company, 1959. Film.

Snow White. Dir. David Hand, William Cottrell, Larry Morey, Perce Pearce and Ben Sharpsteen. Walt Disney Pictures, 1937. Film.

Soerensen, Peer E. 'Hans Christian Andersen.' *The Teller's Tale: Lives of the Classic Fairy Tale Writers*. Ed. Sophie Raynard. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012. 165-75. Print.

Sontag, Susan. 'Notes on Camp.' *Partisan Review*, vol. 31, no. 4, 515-30. Print.

Spencer, Leland G. 'Performing Transgender Identity in *The Little Mermaid*: From Andersen to Disney.' *Communication Studies*, vol. 65, no. 1, 2014, 112-27. *Taylor and Francis Online*. Web. 14 Feb 2018.

Stein, Mary Beth. 'Oral Tradition and Fairy Tales.' *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales (2 ed.)*. Ed. Jack Zipes. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. n.p. Web. 30 January 2017.

Stockton, Kathryn Bond. *The Queer Child, or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2009.

Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap Publishers, 1897. Print.

Stone, Kyle. 'Aquamarine.' *Happily Ever After: Erotic Fairy Tales for Men*. Ed. Michael Ford. New York: Masquerade Books, 1996. 353-68. Print.

Storer, Mary Elizabeth. 'Madame d'Aulnoy.' *Un Épisode littéraire de la fin du XVIIème siècle : La Mode des contes de fées* (1685–1700). Geneva: Droz, 1972. Print.

Straparola, Giovanni Francesco. *The Pleasant Nights*. Eds. Donald Beecher, and W G. Waters. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012. Print.

Sullivan, Andrew. *Virtually Normal: An Argument About Homosexuality*. London: Picador, 1995. Print.

Sutton, Kelsey. 'BuzzFeed Fires Two Amid Video Push.' *Politico*, 15 Jun 2016. N.p. Web. 3 Feb 2019.

Sutton, Travis and Harry M. Benshoff. '"Forever Family" Values: Twilight and the Modern Mormon Vampire.' *Horror After 911*. Eds. Aviva Briefel and Sam J. Miller. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011. 200-19. Print.

Sweeney, Gael. 'What Do You Want Me to Do? Dress in Drag and Do the Hula?: Timon and Pumbaa's Alternative Lifestyle Dilemma in *The Lion King*.' *Diversity in Disney*

Films: Critical Essays on Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexuality and Disability. Ed. Johnson Cheu. Jefferson: McFarland & Company Publishers, 2013. 129-46. Print.

Tale of Tales. Dir. Matteo Garrone. Archimede Film, HanWay Films and Recorded Picture Company, 2015. Film.

Tashman, Brian. 'Swanson: Disney's *Frozen* Is a Satanic Push to Turn Kids Gay.' *Right Wing Watch*, 10 March 2014. N.p. Web. 20 February 2019.

Tatar, Maria. *The Classic Fairy Tales: Texts, Criticism*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1999. Print.

—. *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987. Print.

Teen Wolf. Created by Jeff Davis. MTV, 2011-17. Television Show.

Tehrani, Jamshid, Quan Nguyen, and Teemu Roos. 'Oral Fairy Tale or Literary Fake? Investigating the Origins of Little Red Riding Hood Using Phylogenetic Network Analysis.' *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities (2015)*. N.p. Web. 26 June 2016.

Teverson, Andrew. *Fairy Tale*. Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, 2013. Print.

Thacker, Eugene. 'After Life: Swarms, Demons and the Antinomies of Immanence.' *Theory After 'Theory.'* Eds. Jane Elliott and Derek Attridge. New York: Routledge, 2011. 181-93. Print.

The Lion King. Dir. Rob Minkoff and Rogers Allers. Walt Disney Pictures, 1994. Film.

The Little Mermaid. Dir. Ron Clements and John Musker. Walt Disney Pictures, 1989. Film.

The Living End. Dir. Gregg Araki. October Films, 1992. Film.

The Rocky Horror Picture Show. Dir. Jim Sharman. Michael White Productions, 1975. Film.

The Silence of the Lambs. Dir. Jonathan Demme. Orion Pictures, 1991. Film.

The Sword in the Stone. Dir. Wolfgang Reitherman. Walt Disney Pictures, 1963. Film.

Thomson, Robert. 'The Traveling Companion.' *Happily Ever After: Erotic Fairy Tales for Men*. Ed. Michael Ford. New York: Masquerade Books, 1996. 369-98. Print.

Thompson, Stith. *The Folktale*. The Folktale. New York: Dryden, 1946. Print.

Thurber, James. 'The Little Girl and the Wolf.' *Fables for Our Time and Famous Poems Illustrated*. New York: Harper Brothers, 1940. Print.

Tiffin, Jessica. 'Film and Video.' *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairy Tales*, vol. 1. Ed. Donald Haase. Santa Barbara: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2008. 342-50. Print.

—. *Marvelous Geometry: Narrative and Metafiction in Modern Fairy Tales*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2009. Print.

Town, Caren. *LGBTQ Young Adult Fiction A Critical Survey, 1970s–2010s*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company Publishers, 2017. Print.

Travers Scott, D. 'Hansel and Gretel.' *Happily Ever After: Erotic Fairy Tales for Men*. Ed. Michael Ford. New York: Masquerade Books, 1996. 311-28. Print.

Treichler, Paula A. 'AIDS, Gender, and Biomedical Discourse: Current Contests for Meaning.' *AIDS: The Burdens of History*. Eds. Elizabeth Fee and Daniel M. Fox. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988. 191-233. Print.

Tribunella, Eric L. 'From Kiddie Lit to Kiddie Porn: The Sexualization of Children's Literature.' Children's Literature Association Quarterly vol. 33 no. 2, 135-55. Web. 3 July 2018.

—. 'Literature for Us "Older Children": *Lost Girls*, Seduction Fantasies, and the Reeducation of Adults.' J Pop Cult, 45, 2012, 628-648. Web. 3 July 2018.

Trinidad, David. 'How Anne Sexton Won the Pulitzer Prize.' *Poetry Foundation*, 17 June 2014. N.p. Web. 04 April 2018.

Turner, Kay. 'Playing with Fire: Transgression as Truth in Grimms' "Frau Trude".' *Transgressive Tales: Queering the Grimms*. Eds. Pauline Greenhill and Kay Turner. Detroit: Wayne University Press, 2012. 245-74. Print.

Ungerman, Alex. 'Idina Menzel Reacts to *Frozen* Petition to Give Elsa a Girlfriend: I think It's Great.' *ET*, 22 May 2016. N.p. Web. 20 February 2019.

Vaid, Urvashi. *Virtual Equality: The Mainstreaming of Gay and Lesbian Liberation*. New York: Anchor Books, 1995. Print.

Valente, Catherynne M. 'Bones Like Black Sugar.' *Sleeping Beauty, Indeed and Other Lesbian Tales*. Ed. JoSelle Vanderhooft. Maple Shade: Lethe Press, 2009.

Van der Veen, Evert. 'A Global View of the Gay and Lesbian Press.' *The Second ILGA Pink Book: A Global View of Lesbian and Gay Liberation*. Ed. The Pink Book Team. Utrecht: Interfacultaire Werk-groep Homostudies, 1988. 15-21. Print.

Vernallis, Carol. *Unruly Media: YouTube, Music Video, and the New Digital Cinema*. New York: Oxford UP, 2013. Print.

Wald, Priscilla. *Contagious: Culture, Carriers and the Outbreak Narrative*. London: Duke University Press, 2008. Print.

Walker, Brian. 'Social Movements as Nationalisms or, On the Very Idea of a Queer Nation.' *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, supp vol. 22, 1997, 505-47. Web. 28 May 2018.

Ward, Donald. 'New Misconceptions about Old Folktales: The Brothers Grimm.' *The Brothers Grimm and Folktale*. Ed. James M. McGlathery. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988. 91-100. Print.

Wargo, Jon Michael. 'Sexual Slipstreams and the Limits of Magic Realism: Why a Bisexual Cinderella May Not Be All That Queer.' *Bookbird: World of Children's Books*, vol.52, no.1, 2014, 43-50. Web. 3 Feb 2019.

Warman, Brittany. ‘I Am the Wolf: Queering “Little Red Riding Hood” and “Snow White and Rose Red” in the Television Show Once Upon a Time.’ *Humanities*, vol. 5.2, no. 41, 2016, 1-11. Web. 18 Nov 2018.

—. ‘YouTube and Internet Video.’ *The Routledge Companion to Media and Fairy-Tale Studies*. Eds. Pauline Greenhill and Jill Terry Rudy. New York: Routledge, 2018. N.p. Kindle Edition.

Warner, Kristen J. ‘In the Time of Plastic Representation.’ *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 71, Number 2, 2017, 32–37. Web. 18 Nov 2018.

Warner, Marina. *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and their Tellers.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994. Print

—. *Once Upon a Time: A Short History of Fairy Tale*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. Print.

—. *Six Myths of our Time*, New York: Vintage Books, 1995. Print.

—, editor. *Wonder Tales: Six Stories of Enchantment*. London: Vintage, 1996. Print.

Warner, Michael. *Publics and Counterpublics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005. Print.

—. *The Trouble with Normal*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999. Print.

Warner, Sharon Oard. ‘The Way We Write Now: The Reality of AIDS in Contemporary Short Fiction.’ *Studies in Short Fiction*, vol. 30, no.4, Fall 1993, 491-500.Web. 5 May 2018.

Weems, Mickey. ‘Gay Communities.’ *Encyclopedia of American Folklife*. Ed. Simon J. Bronner. New York: Routledge, 2006. 477-81. Print.

White, Edmund. ‘Out of the Closet, Onto the Bookshelf.’ *The New York Times*. 16 June 1991. N.p. Web. 18 April 2018.

White, T.H. *The Once and Future King*. London: Collins, 1958. Print.

Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890). Urbana: Project Gutenberg, 2008. Web. 18 Nov 2018.

Wills, John. *Disney Culture*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2017. Print.

Winterson, Jeanette. *Sexing the Cherry*. New York: Grove Atlantic, 2007. Print.

Wittman, Carl. ‘Refugees from Amerika: A Gay Manifesto’ (1970). *History is a Weapon*. N.p. Web. 15 May 2018.

Wittwer, Preston. ‘Don Draper Thinks Your Ad Is Cliché: Fairy Tale Iconography in TV Commercials.’*Humanities, vol. 5, no.* 2, 2016. Web. 29 March 2018.

Wood, Gaby. ‘Neil Gaiman on the Meaning of Fairy Tales.’ *The Telegraph*, 20 Nov 2014. N.p. Web. 18 Nov 2018.

Wood, Naomi. ‘Creating the Sensual Child: Paterian Aesthetics, Pederasty, and Oscar Wilde’s Fairy Tales.’ *Marvels & Tales*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2002, 156-70. *Project MUSE*. Web. 29 June 2015.

Wood, Robin. *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan . . . and Beyond*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008. Print.

Wright, Alexa. *Monstrosity: The Human Monster in Visual Culture*. London: I.B Tauris, 2013. Print.

Wullschlager, Jackie. *Hans Christian Andersen: The Life of a Storyteller*. London: Penguin Books, 2001. Print.

Yamato, Lori. ‘Surgical Humanization in H. C. Andersen’s “The Little Mermaid”.’ *Marvels & Tales*, vol. 30, no. 2, 2017, 295-311. Web. 30 June 2018.

Yingling, Thomas E. ‘Wittgenstein's Tumor: AIDS and the National Body.’ *Textual Practice*, vol. 8, 1994, 97-113. Web. 30 May 2018.

Yoshinaga, Ida. ‘Convergence Culture: Media Convergence, Convergence Culture, and Communicative Capitalism.’ *The Routledge Companion to Media and Fairy-Tale Studies*. Eds. Pauline Greenhill and Jill Terry Rudy. New York: Routledge, 2018. N.p. Kindle Edition.

Zaharuc, Larissa. ‘Tribute Art.’ *Kid-In*, 9 Apr 2014. N.p. Web. 3 Feb 2019.

Zain, Ana Laura. ‘Will Tumblr Bring a Younger Audience to Yahoo! Sites?’. *Comscore*, 22 May 2013. N.p. Web. 3 Feb 2019.

Ziolkowski, Jan M. *Fairy Tales from Before Fairy Tales: The Medieval Latin Past of Wonderful Lies*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010. Print.

Zipes, Jack. ‘Breaking the Disney Spell.’ *The Classic Fairy Tales*. Ed. Elizabeth Bell, Lynd, Haas and Sells. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. 21-42. Print.

—. *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2002. Print.

—. *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization.* 1st. ed. London: Heinemann, 1983. Print.

—. *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization.* 2nd. ed. New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.

—. *Hans Christian Andersen: The Misunderstood Storyteller*. New York: Routledge, 2005. Print.

—. *Happily Ever After: Fairy Tales, Children, and the Culture Industry*. New York: Psychology Press, 1997. Print.

—. ‘How the Grimm Brothers Saved the Fairy Tale.’ *National Endowment for the Humanities*. N.p., n.d. Web. 4 June 2015.

—. ‘Media-Hyping of Fairy Tales.’ *The Cambridge Companion to Fairy Tales*. Ed. Maria Tatar. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. 201-19.

—. ‘Straparola, Giovan Francesco.’ *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales (2 ed.)*. Ed. Jack Zipes. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. Web. 30 January 2017.

—. *The Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forests to the Modern World*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002. Print.

—. *The Enchanted Screen: The Unknown History of Fairy-Tale Films*. New York: Routledge, 2011. Print.

—. *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm: Texts, Criticism*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2001. Print.

—. *The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012. Print.

—. *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood: Versions of the Tale in Sociocultural Context*. South Hadley, Mass: Bergin & Garvey Publishers, 1983. Print.

—. *When Dreams Came True: Classical Fairy Tales and Their Tradition*. New York: Routledge, 2007. Print.

—. *Why Fairy Tales Stick: The Evolution and Relevance of a Genre*. New York: Taylor and Francis, 2006. Print.