Und Es War Einmal:

A Comparative Analysis of Character Depiction in the Grimms' *Kinder-und Hausmärchen* and Modern Fairytale Adaptations

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This thesis examines the depiction of archetypal characters such as the step-mother, the old crone/witch, the trickster, the hero, and the heroine within *Kinder-und Hausmärchen*, first published in 1812 by Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, and the influence that German culture had on this portrayal. This analysis of the tales will then be contrasted with an examination of the ways that modern authors and directors have adapted the presentation of these characters to better appeal to today's audience in recent (1980-2014) adaptations of the stories. Our cultural values and ideals determine how characters within the tales are depicted and, conversely, the characterization of these stock characters can show what traits a society condemns, condones, and deifies. A thorough examination of the material and the cultures in which it is firmly rooted will reveal more about the tales as well as expose facets of nineteenth-century German and contemporary American societies that may not be immediately apparent. This thesis also attempts to answer the question of why adaptations of the Grimms' fairytales have recently surged in popularity and what this means about the similarities between the two cultures.

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For all who encouraged me and endlessly read draft after draft.

Introduction: German Nationalism and the Grimm Fairytales

During the height of the Third Reich's power, Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm's *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Children's and Household Tales) was a required textbook in all German elementary schools. The tales were valued as quintessential examples of German culture and history that would teach the next generation of *das Volk* (the folk) how to fulfill their cultural roles. The Nazi regime argued that the fairytales collected by the Grimm brothers were the perfect way to teach children German legends in order to them understand the complex political situation around them.[i] This attempt to feed the Nazi doctrine to children was not particularly unique. The *Hitlerjugend* (Hitler Youth), *Deutches Jungvolk* (German Young People), and *Bund Deutsches Mädel* (League of German Maidens) were all groups geared toward the indoctrination of children into the Nazi party. By raising a new generation of racists loyal to the party, the Nazis could guarantee that their ideology would live on.[ii] Indeed, some of the children within these groups were even suspected of war crimes at the conclusion of the Second World War; however, they were never tried.[iii]

The Grimms' fairytales were an important feature of German popular culture since the early nineteenth-century, but the reappropriation of these tales into propaganda appears relatively benign in comparison to the use of children as fighters for the nation. However, it is the tales' nonthreatening nature that allowed them to be used so successfully by scholars within the Third Reich who offered warped interpretations of the tales that better represented the party's ideals. The most commonly used example is that of the tale "Rötkappchen" or "Little Red Riding Hood." In the Nazi interpretation of the

story, Rotkäppchen represents the innocent, victimized German people; the Wolf represented the Jewish "other" that was responsible for the oppression of *das Volk*, and the Huntsman who saves Little Red was, naturally, identified with Hitler.[iv]

After World War II, the Grimms' fairytales quickly gained notoriety within Germany. For several decades after the fall of the Third Reich, Germans viewed them as forever tainted by the Nazis and representative of the racism and hate that existed during their regime. The stories were even blamed for the atrocities committed during the war. Julia Meinerzhagen cites one German psychologist as saying in her 1948 article questioning whether children should be allowed to read fairytales:

> Never again shall we enter with our children the environs of the gruesome, the scary and the crazy in the Märchenland… In an age that saw so many horrors come true, and experienced so many terrible things like ours, the child is more imperiled by bad influences than in an epoch of secure peace and respected laws of humanity. (qtd Dégh 4)

As a result, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* was removed from classrooms and libraries alike. This perception of the tales lasted for a long period after the conclusion of the second World War. In modern Germany, the Grimm fairytales are still marked with the stigma of Nazi propaganda in many people's eyes but the taint has eased somewhat over the years.[v] This is likely the reason why adaptations of the Grimm fairytales are relatively rare within German society when compared with the plethora of them found in the United States, where they are still widely circulated and read; however, they are far less popular in the land in which they originated than they are abroad.

Fairytales can have an immense psychological impact on children, as they show the power of the disadvantaged and help to shape the way a child views the simplified dichotomy between "good" and "evil." The characters depicted within them captivate audiences and ensure that the tales are appealing to a wide audience, as both children and adults are invited to become invested in the fate of the protagonists of these tales. The Grimm brothers were cognizant of the power of the tales that they were transcribing and editing, and worked to guarantee that many of the tales contained lessons that would be beneficial for children to learn. As Maria Tatar describes in her book *Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales*, the brothers ensured that some of the stories within their collection "endorse conventional ethical values and social norms" and promoted qualities such as "thrift, honesty, obedience, diligence, patience, and other noble civic virtues" (120). They recognized the value of their collection as a guide to moral and socially acceptable behavior in an era of tumultuous cultural and political unrest caused by the grave economic situation of Germany, the Napoleonic Wars, and the tension the French Revolution caused throughout Europe. The powerful nature of fairytales and their role as a behavioral guide for children attracted the interest of the Nazi regime. Fairytales and the motifs they contain occupy a very important niche within our culture. This, as well as the powerful hold fairytales have on children, enticed the attention of the Nazi regime, which viewed fairytales as the perfect vehicle for conveying to children their message of hate and intolerance.

Fairytales also allow children to confront their fears and frustrations in a socially acceptable manner, while simultaneously revealing life's hard facts to them. Psychologists such as Bruno Bettelheim have closely examined the positive therapeutic

effects that fairytales can have on a child's psyche. Fairytales function as a way for children to escape the concerns and problems of everyday life. When reading them, children are able to identify with the protagonist (who is just as small and powerless as they are at the start of the tale) and defeat forces much larger than themselves and gain some semblance of power. As Bettelheim explains, "In a fairytale, internal processes are externalized and became comprehensible as represented by the figures of the story and its events" (25). Toddlers make few choices about what they do with their time and are thus powerless, but fairytales show them that those who are most vulnerable can defeat the most frighteningly strong monsters. Fairytales help children understand their world and gain a sense of control that they might not have in their everyday lives. When impressionable children are told repeatedly that these psychologically profound stories demonstrate why the Aryan race must be purified and invited to identify with the "innocent, victimized" Aryans, it is likely that they would eventually believe that Jews truly were the problem within German society. It is the powerful nature of the stories themselves that attracted the focus of the Nazis and thereby caused their defacement.

In order to fully understand the power of fairytales, we must examine the historical context from which they sprang. It is no surprise that the Nazis viewed the Grimms' tales as integral to the German psyche or that the stories themselves could be so easily manipulated to exemplify devout German nationalism, as since they were written during the start of the German nationalistic trend. During the eighteenth century, when Jakob (1785-1863) and Wilhelm (1786-1859) Grimm were growing up in the German village of Hanau, recent changes within Europe had left Germany economically and culturally strained. The Thirty Years War (1618-1648), the Napoleonic Wars (1803-

1815), and the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire (1806) affected Germany far more negatively than it did many of the other European powers.[vi] A variety of circumstances generated these hardships, the most prominent of which were the country's lack of a central, unified government and the highly regionalized nature of the German language at the time. While the rest of Europe continued to live in the Age of Enlightenment, the last of the great German academics—Goethe, Schiller, Herder, Kant, Hegel, etc.—and artists—Bach, Mozart, Schick, Frisch, etc.—were at the ends of their lives. As fairytale scholar John Ellis explains, "Germany in the mid-eighteenth century was culturally backward compared to its neighbors, and consequently afflicted by a national inferiority complex—a circumstance that was to shape and to some extent misshape the character of the great revival soon to come" (3). Hence, when this revival finally arrived, it was characterized by a staunch German nationalism, and consequently, many scholars focused their energies on shedding light upon the positive aspects of German history, language, and culture.

It was the Grimm brothers' goal to contribute to the linguistic unification of the Germanic peoples.[vii] They were active and respected scholars during this period, publishing one of the first German dictionaries to document the entire German language, which consisted of many dialects. Unfinished at the time of the Grimms' deaths, the *Deutsches Wörterbuch (DWB)* was finally completed in 1961; however, contemporary scholars continue to expand and reprint this important work. Currently comprised of thirty-two volumes, it is the largest German dictionary in the world. During the time the Grimms were compiling the *DWB*, Germany was highly regionally segregated and each region had its own unique dialect. Hence, Jakob Grimm took on the task of setting a

regular grammatical structure for the language and developing standard grammar rules. While one of the Grimm brothers' primary goals in compiling the *DWB* was to unite the German people by providing them with a shared language, they also wrote several books and articles focusing on the rediscovery and importance of German legend and culture.[viii] Indeed, the work for which they are most remembered is their collection of fairytales entitled *Kinder-und Hausmärchen*, an illustrated collection of German fairytales more commonly known in English as "Grimms' Fairytales." Although other writers at the time were writing fairytales, the Grimm brothers' tales were among the period's most enduring folk stories in the world.

Wide scholarly interest in the folk culture of Germany erupted after Johann Gottfried Herder published his 1773 essay "Ossian und die Lieder Alter Völker" (Ossian and the Songs of Ancient Peoples), in which he discusses the power of traditional language and artistic works (such as dance, music, and literature) as well as the importance they have in the development of a nation's character. Various writers in several countries throughout Europe published many folktales, several of which were very similar to the ones that the Grimm brothers would later write. During this time, scholars[ix] viewed folk material as unpolished and in need of extreme editing, such as revision of language, reorganization, and plot expansion. However, as the Grimms began their research, they argued against this view, writing that "the plainness of written language" was glaringly obvious "when contrasted with the vigor and color of the folk storyteller's [oral] expression" (Grimm 4). The folk expressions that were present in the oral versions of these tales were typically stripped from published editions, but the

Grimms were adamant that they stay completely true to the original language and sentiment.[x]

In spite of the Grimms' popularity there is much scholarly debate over the extent to which their work was either scholarly or honest. Although the brothers Grimm insisted that they had travelled to rural parts of Germany to interview the woman in each village who was most revered for her story-telling abilities, scholars have been not been able to agree on the validity of their claims. Some scholars hold the Grimms up as early exemplars of academic research and accept what they say without question. Others, however, such as John Ellis, oppose this view and focus on undermining and discrediting the brothers more than a century after their deaths.[xi] While I agree that the Grimms likely embellished the validity of their sources and borrowed from their contemporaries (considering the wide array of earlier, similar collections of folk tales such as Charles Perrault's works), I believe that their contributions to academia and the cultural impact of their tales are far more important than their methods of data collection. Though they may not have collected all of their tales from peasant women or left all of them unedited, the popularity of their tales still reflects the cultural climate of nineteenth-century German society.

The Grimm brothers' expectations for their tales raise many questions, as it seems that they originally planned for the tales to be scholarly works documenting German folk culture. They structure them almost like an ethnography by including scholarly notes and an introduction to the methods of collecting their materials. This collection of fairytales is thought to have been intended as a way of preserving and honoring the German tradition of oral storytelling. The Grimms were the first publishers of folktales to include scholarly

notes and give information about the people they interviewed for their information. In the preface to the first edition of *Kinder-und Hausmärchen,* the brothers specifically mention their dedication to transcribing these stories exactly the way that their sources related them. The Grimms maintained that there was no "actual, at one time extant" form of any of their tales. Instead, there were versions of "an inexhaustible [primal form] that is present only in the mind" which follow "manifold paths" (Grimm X). While they were willing to acknowledge that German tales and those from the rest of Europe had shared roots, they did not entertain the possibility that the all European tales had shared roots. Instead, they considered Germany to be the first place in Europe that the tales reached. The historical connection that the Grimms most strongly advocate was the one between fairytales and ancient German heroic legends and myths. In the preface to the 1847 edition of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen,* the Grimms state that the fact that their tales have "surprising relationships to ancient legends of the gods" proves "the original connection" between them (XXVI). This makes sense in terms of German nationalism because this entails that the tales themselves are quintessentially German and thus deserving of national pride.

The Grimms had envisioned that scholars would use their work, but the people who bought the stories thought of them primarily as tales for children. Nearly all of their readers were unsure of the Grimms' intentions for their newly released manuscript, and this led them to make large edits to the collection in order to meet the desires and expectations of their readers. Achim von Arnim, a fellow scholar and close friend of the brothers, thought that the lack of illustrations and inclusion of scholarly annotations would discourage sales of what he perceived to be a children's book.[xii] The Brothers

Grimm proceeded to release a second volume of tales before they gave in to the pressure to revise all of their stories. Overall these two volumes contained 156 tales and there were seventeen subsequent editions in which many of the tales were removed or edited, depending upon the book's target audience. The content which was considered to be inappropriate for children because it was too violent or intense was removed in these latter editions and anthologies. Later editions also included illustrations, to make them more appealing to children. The Grimm brothers were receptive to their audience's criticism and thus "transformed adult folk materials into a hybrid form of folklore and literature for children" so that they could make a profit from their manuscript.[xiii]

Though the Grimms' fairytales are still frequently read in their original forms, there has been a recent rise in the popularity of film and literary adaptations of them. The tales written by the brothers Grimm are some of the most frequently adapted in history and modern writers look to the Grimms for inspiration. Popular adaptations began to appear in the 1930s, more than a century after the first edition of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* was published, but, interestingly, a majority of these books, television shows, and movies are either American or British. Relatively few adaptations were released between 1930 and 1990 but, after 1990, many adaptations were made. Some of the most widely known of these adaptations are Disney's *The Princess and the Frog*, *Tangled*, *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Snow White*. Similar to the way that *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* appealed to varying audiences from one edition to the next, the recent adaptations are also geared toward different audiences. A majority of these adaptations are geared toward children; however, there are also many which target adults. Each modern adaptation each has a unique relationship to the original text. Some writers

choose to cut out characters or features of the Grimm's version while others decide to add elements. There is a wide spectrum of possibilities for fairytale adaptations, and not all of them keep close to the original text. Some feature a very different setting from the version contained in *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* while others act as a sort of sequel to the original story. In fact, many are quite different from the fairytales written almost two hundred years ago. Moreover, although each adaptation interacts with the Grimms' version of the story differently, there have been certain trends in the changes. These patterns of change and the possible cultural reasons behind them will be discussed over the course of this thesis.

Comparing the Grimms' telling of the tales with recent adaptations can provide insight into both the culture from which the tales arose and contemporary life. The ways writers depict archetypal character types—mother, father, step-mother, old crone/witch, mentor, trickster, hero, and heroine—speaks volumes about what character traits a society condemns, condones, and deifies. While hatred or love of each character type tends to be universal, the features of these characters are very different in each culture's depiction of them. Some may dismiss adaptations of the tales as mere modernizations or the changes within them as artistic enhancements. While this is partially true, something much more complex is also taking place. Modern writers and directors are changing these stories in order to please their audiences and gain a larger profit, just as the Grimms did in their multiple later editions of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*.[xiv] Yes, these stories still thrive today, but gradual changes in culture have made ongoing changes to the texts necessary. By examining both the original texts and popular adaptations from the 1930's onwards, the subtle way the public's expectations of fairytales have changed over time becomes

more evident. Even obvious changes, such as the trend toward gender equality, can have unexpected facets.

This thesis will attempt to examine these changes by first looking at the ways that archetypal characters are depicted in both the Grimmian version[xv] of the tales and modern adaptations. Chapter One "Unraveling the Heroes" will examine the differences between the portrayals of the hero in *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* and the depictions of this archetypal character in modern versions of the tales. Chapter Two "Understanding the Heroines" will do the same for the heroines of the Grimms' fairytales. Chapter Three "Unmasking the Villains" will look at the ways in which the depiction of antagonists such as the malicious step-mother, the witch, and trickster have changed between the time the Grimms were writing and our time. These three chapters will make use of the tales "*Der Froschkönig*" ("The Frog King"), "*Rapunzel,*" "*Hänsel und Gretel,*" "*Aschenputtel*" ("Cinderella"), "*Rotkäppchen*" ("Little Red Riding Hood"), "*Dornröschen*" ("Little Brier-Rose" or "Sleeping Beauty"), "*Sneewittchen*" ("Snow White"), "*Rumplestizchen*," and numerous modern literary and cinematic adaptations of these tales. These three chapters will focus on the finding the differences in character portrayal and analyzing the way that it changes the story. The conclusion of this work "What Do These Changes Mean?" will deal with the ways that these changes reflect upon our culture and why the Grimm fairytales are so easily adapted to fit into our society. The goal of this final section is to understand what the way today's directors and writers adapt these archetypal characters say about modern society.

Though *Kinder-und Hausmärchen* contains over 150 stories, the plots of the tales within the collection tend to follow only a few set patterns and the characters are similar

to one another. Compared to most literature, folktales progress in relatively consistent, set patterns. The tales typically follow the simple trajectory of an underdog who is placed in a difficult situation, then triumphs and is rewarded, though there are some exceptions.[xvi] Characters within the tales fall into several categories such as the one above and do not often stray from these molds. The Grimm brothers contended that their stories so closely resembled everyday existence in Germany that "most readers would have no trouble recognizing them as true to life" (Tatar 49). The magic and outlandish situations within the tales may not seem particularly realistic but other aspects such as the tension which can develop within families, feelings of inadequacy, and the desire for something out of one's reach are easy for anyone to identify with. Characters such as the hero, the heroine, the step-mother, the trickster, and the old woman/witch are familiar to everyone and exist within most genres of literature.

Though the heroes and heroines of the Grimms' fairytales are the main focus of the stories and they are usually the most beloved by audiences, they tend to be remarkably flat. The heroes of folklore tend to fall into several categories or types and they consist of a collection of disparate characteristics rather than a unique, cohesive personality. While most scholars[xvii] separate heroes and heroines into only active and passive categories, I argue that they should be separated further by their social status and age. The reason for this shift is that not all heroes and heroines fall cleanly into one of these categories. Some are passive for the first portion of the tale but become active later on, such as Rapunzel, and should not be simplified to fit into an arbitrary category. Characters with similar social statuses and ages (the deciding factors of the classifications I propose below) often share enough characteristics to justify grouping them into the

same sub-category. Thus, the three types of heroes that this thesis will explore are the "Non-Descript Nobleman," the "Hearty Countryman," and the "Peasant Boy."[xviii] The second chapter of this work will examine the heroines of the Grimms' fairytales by dividing them into the categories "Beautiful Princess," "Hardworking Peasant Woman," and "Questionably Innocent Peasant Girl." Chapter Three will use a more traditional classification system by separating the antagonists (the step-mother, the witch, and the trickster) into groups labeled by the names they hold both within the Grimms' tales and wider literature.

Though children and parents alike often focus on the entertainment value of the Grimms' fairytales, the stories offer more than just amusement. As I've discussed above, both the Grimm brothers' tales and adaptations of them can have a powerful psychological influence and give us insight into cultural values. Some may discount these recent adaptations as merely a modernization or artistic enhancement of the original texts. While this is partially true, something much more complex is also taking place. Modern writers and directors are changing the story in order to please their audiences, just as the Grimms did with their multiple editions of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*. Yes, these stories still thrive today, but gradual changes in culture have also ensured steady alterations in the texts in the form of adaptations.

Many scholars over the years have examined the Grimms' fairytales from a variety of different angles. Kay Stone and Ruth Bottingheimer are known for their examination of the gender roles in the Grimms' tales and their feminist readings of the texts. Maria Tatar, Jack Zipes, and James McGlathery have taken a more culturally-oriented approach by examining the Grimms' fairytales in the context of nineteenth-

century German culture. Bruno Bettelheim has closely examined these tales in a psychoanalytical context that, though it doesn't feature prominently in this thesis, provides a fascinating look into the affect that folklore has on the human mind. Many scholars have examined the Grimms' tales, but none so far have analyzed them alongside modern adaptations as this thesis does. By looking at the two sources together, this thesis endeavors to conduct an in-depth examination of them and draw conclusions about the culture of nineteenth-century Germany and modern America.

Chapter One: Unraveling the Heroes

Over the years many people have focused on the ways that the Grimms' fairytales present women as flat, but this lack of characterization also extends to the male leads, or heroes.[xix] Many heroes are classified by a single character trait (such as “dumb,” "naïve," or “charming”) which constitutes his entire identity. The more negative of these traits, which often add a humorous angle to the story, are generally transformed into positive ones by the end of the tale. This is possible because the negative characteristics the Grimms used were often associated with more positive ones, which allow a hero to be negatively depicted at the start of the story but positively described by the end.[xx] Naïveté, for example, is connected with bravery and cunning. Thus, a hero initially portrayed as naïve can be seen as courageous by the conclusion of the tale. Their flaws also make these characters “underdogs” who manage to prevail despite their shortcomings. Thus, naïve, stupid, or arrogant, these characters undergo a change of character until they are deserving of social advancement.

The hero often begins the tale as disadvantaged or victimized but concludes the tale as a victor who has punished the villains who previously oppressed him, which serves to make these characters more relatable and show readers that they too can succeed in changing their situation. That being said, this sort of radical transformation and elevation to higher social status was virtually impossible in nineteenth-century Germany. However, these tales provide “consolation to underprivileged sons who lived in an era when primogeniture was custom or law” and “more generally respond to the insecurities of every child” (Tatar 90). In a society in which marked social advancement

was unlikely, these tales served to provide the disadvantaged with hope for future success as well as ease their resentment over their plot in life. All of these heroes are imperfect or lacking in some way but still manage to succeed despite their predicaments. Even the seemingly “perfect” Non-Descript Nobleman is plagued by a lack of a wife despite the fact that he is obsessed with or needs one in order to have children and therefore gain an heir.

Many believe that this lack of characterization is due to the fact that the Grimms' fairytales are set up to only able to revolve around one character. The Grimms’ fairytales are very short (typically between 1,000 and 3,000 words each) because they were passed orally, which ensures that there is very little time for development of more than one character. Noted folktale scholar Maria Tatar argues that only one character in each tale--with the exception of "Hänsel und Gretel"--can be considered the protagonist. As Tatar puts it: the protagonist “stands so firmly rooted at the center of events that all other characters are defined solely by their relationship to him and consequently lack an autonomous sphere of action” (Tatar 92). While I agree that this is often true, I do not think that this standard can be applied to every tale, or even all of the tales examined in this thesis.

I argue that tales such as "Rapunzel" and "Der Froschkönig" showcase both the hero and the heroine as protagonists. Neither of the characters who are central to each of these tales could be classified as wholly "active" or "passive" and we tend to know an equal amount about both characters. In "Rapunzel," the heroine starts out passive but later gains strength and agency while the hero starts out active but becomes passive when he loses his beloved. At varying times throughout the tale, the audience knows more about

one character over another and finally both equally at the conclusion of the story. Thus, the plot does not strictly, exclusively follow one of these two characters. Tatar goes on to argue that "the fate of only a single, central character is at stake as the tale unfolds" (92). However, this is not the case in "Rapunzel." While only Rapunzel's life is in peril at the start of the tale, the heroes' "fate" is also "at stake" by the latter part of the tale. Blind and wandering the forest on his own, mourning the loss of his betrothed, it is hard to believe that neither his life nor the "fate" of his happy ending are at risk. Thus, I argue that there can be two protagonists within a single tale. While most of the heroes descussed in this chapter only occupy supporting roles, Hänsel from "Hänsel und Gretel," the prince in "Rapunzel," and the Frog Prince in "Der Froschkönig" are protagonists alongside their female counterparts.

This tendency to focus on a single character over others is not something that has passed from the Grimmian versions of these tales to recent adaptations of them. While adaptations typically also center upon a main protagonist (who is the most thoroughly rounded and compellingly depicted), they follow and examine supporting characters as well. Most adaptations are quite a bit longer than the Grimms' fairytales, though, which gives their writers and directors time to provide this increased amount of characterization. This, in turn, allows writers and directors to engage in an interesting dialogue with the Grimmian versions of the tales. They can choose to reveal a new perspective of the story or give characters who had previously been underdeveloped a personality and a voice.

This chapter examines the heroes of the Grimms' tales and modern adaptations of them by grouping them into the subcategories "Non-Descript Nobleman," "Hearty Countryman," and "Peasant Boy." Americans will be most familiar with the Non-

Descript Nobleman, as he appears in a majority of the most commonly adapted fairytales. These tales include "Aschenputtel," "Sneewittchen," "Dornröschen," "Rapunzel," and "Der Froshkönig." The tales which have been most successfully integrated into American culture are ones which feature young women who are placed into a terrible situation then rescued or aided by a "Prince Charming" sort of character. He is typically very flat with little to no character development, and pales in comparison to his female counterpart due to her more dynamic depiction. The second category, the Hearty Countryman, is less commonly seen in adaptations, but very frequent in the Grimms' tales. This thesis looks at him in terms of his role as a respectable, working-class hero in the tales "Sneewittchen" and "Rotkäppchen." These first two categories consist of strong characters who are capable of accomplishing impressive feats. Both of these character types tend to occupy a supporting role rather than act as a story's protagonist. The Peasant Boy is the last type of hero examined in this thesis and only in the tale "Hänsel und Gretel." The heroes in the Peasant Boy category tend to be young, naïve, and weak, but through their compassion, humility, or cunning, they improve their situations. This character is the protagonist of his own tale rather than merely being featured as a supporting character in another's. However, he often requires help in order to succeed in accomplishing his goals.

The Non-Descript Nobleman

The Non-Descript Nobleman is an example of a character type that is typically more fleshed out in adaptations. In *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, this type of hero is bland and flat, but he is also endowed with positive qualities and ends up defeating a villain in

order to win himself a wife. Each of these men have some sort of problem that they must use their primary, defining positive quality to solve. Though a modern audience may view them as flawed characters, it is their positive characteristics and the results they achieve which are emphasized in the Grimms' tales. It is very likely that these "character flaws" which are considered negative within our own society were more acceptable during the period in which the Grimm brothers were transcribing these tales.

The prince in "Der Froschkönig" has the most in-depth characterization of all the heroes of these five fairytales. He needs the help of a princess in order to be released from his curse and he brokers a deal with such a princess by promising to fetch a golden ball that she has dropped into a pond in exchange for the opportunity to be close to her. The prince is able to ensure that the princess holds up her end of the bargain by revealing her unwillingness to comply to her father, the king. Though all he seems to desire is the princess' love (whether out of true feeling or as a means of returning to his human form), he also manipulates her. The princess is then forced to bring the frog to her chamber, to allow him into her bed, and to treat him as her beloved. It is her violent and rebellious act of throwing him against a wall that turns him back into a man. At the end of the tale, the prince is rewarded with the love of his princess, the loyalty of his servant, and the return of his princely privileges. He is a character who has been forced into a difficult situation by a powerful and omnipresent power (a witch who is never named or described), then is able to regain all he had previously and obtain a bride through manipulation and determination.

This tale is particularly interesting because it is one of the few tales within *Kinder-und Hausmärchen* with multiple possible titles. An alternate title for "Der

Froschkönig" is "Der Eiserne Heinrich," which translates to "Iron Heinrich." Heinrich is the name of the prince's loyal servant who, upon discovering that his master had been transformed into a frog, wound pieces of iron around his own heart to prevent it from breaking. At the end of the tale when he comes to retrieve his master and the princess, the metal bands around his heart break from the way his heart swells with joy. Heinrich is only in the story's conclusion, but the last lines relay the breaking of Heinrich's iron bands. Why would a story that features almost exclusively royal characters end by describing the happiness of a servant? The inclusion of Iron Heinrich is an anomaly in the tale, but works to reinforce the positivity of the ending. The prince's manipulation and the princess' selfishness might leave readers with the impression that their marriage will be an unhappy one. By ending the story by showing that a more reliable narrator (in the form of a lower-class and more relatable servant), readers are reassured that this tale's ending really is a happy one.

In both James Finn Garner's *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* and Disney's *The Princess and the Frog*, the prince is presented as willing to deal and manipulate to get what he wants. Garner's satirical adaptation, which seeks to incorporate modern ideas of political correctness into retellings of classic fairytales, recasts this character as a greedy real estate developer who cares little for the well-being of animals or the environment. Immediately upon returning to his human form (as the result of a kiss from the princess), he tells her that he intends to build an industrial complex right on the site of the very pond he has lived in as a frog. He waxes on about the amount of money he will be able to make off of this plan and makes his lack of concern for anyone other than himself apparent. When the princess kills him at the end of the tale, it is considered to be one of

her “good deeds” and the reader is left with a sense that the world is somewhat better off without this man and his money-making schemes (Garner). As it is put at the end of the story: “And while someone might have noticed that the frog was gone, no one ever missed the real estate developer” (Garner). This line critiques conventional ideas about which lives are more valuable, showing that the life of a frog that does no wrong is more important than the life of a greedy human. Due to the fact that modern readers would generally condemn the use of manipulation and patriarchal power to force a woman to give up a kiss (which both occurs and is depicted as the right course of action in the Grimmian version), Garner turns a character who is positively depicted within “Der Froschkönig” into the villain of the piece. Thus, he incorporates the stigma against sexual harassment and assault that exists within our society into his tale.

Disney’s *The Princess and the Frog*, which translates this tale into the context of early twentieth-century New Orleans, opposes the manipulation that takes place in the Grimmian tale by simply minimizing its existence in the hero. While Prince Naveen is initially intent upon wooing and marrying a woman simply to regain his wealth after his parents cut him off, he is later redeemed. This need to marry for wealth and status makes him more like the heroines of the Grimms’ fairtyales than a traditional Non-Descript Nobleman. However, his flaws and defining positive characteristics make him fit into the masculine model. Naveen is selfish, arrogant, and has an aversion to hard work at the start of the film but, as he begins to see his own flaws, they fade and are obscured by his more positive qualities. Most of the characters within in the film, with the exception of Tiana, are focused on Naveen’s positive qualities rather than his negative ones. Tiana’s clear aversion to Naveen’s spoiled, princely behavior is what make his flaws apparent to

even himself. He then transforms into a character the audience can empathize and identify with, much like the way that many heroes within the Grimmian versions of these fairytales do. His selfishness becomes selflessness as he puts Tiana's needs and desires ahead of his own. By the end of the film, Naveen is deserving of Tiana's love and thus does not need to manipulate her. This character's flaws disappear almost as magically as the "Der Froschkönig" prince's do once he is transformed back into a man. The Grimmian hero, though, is redeemed when he is able to regain all of his wealth and power. Prince Naveen becomes an honorable character when he becomes willing to give up his money and social status for Tiana. This shift manages to both make the character more likeable and lessen the tale's emphasis on the importance of wealth and power.

The prince within the Grimmian story "Rapunzel" also aspires to be close to a woman out of his reach and is willing to use some manipulation to achieve his goals. When he hears Rapunzel (a young woman who has been locked away in a remote tower by a witch) sing, he becomes obsessed with her. He watches her tower until one day he discovers how the witch who has entrapped her climbs up and inside the tower. Then, he pretends to be the witch so that Rapunzel will let down her hair and pull him up into the tower. This is far less severe than the manipulation orchestrated by the Grimmian Frog Prince, as this prince's sole motive is to see Rapunzel face to face. He immediately professes his love and promises to return nightly with a piece of silk for Rapunzel to weave into a ladder that she can use to climb down from the tower. However when their plan fails and he loses Rapunzel, he is beside himself with grief. The prince throws himself from the tower and is blinded by the roses at its base. He then wanders the forest blindly, crying and mourning the loss of Rapunzel. He is filled with "Schmerzen" (pains)

when the witch tells him that he will never see Rapunzel again then, when wandering the forest, he does nothing but "jammern und weinen über den Verlust seiner liebsten Frau" (whine and cry over the loss of his beloved wife). This wording suggests that he is more troubled by his love's death than his own desperate predicament, which shows that he cares more for Rapunzel than he does himself. Thus, when these two characters miraculously find each other in the forest and are reunited for their happy ending, it seems as though this hero has finally received what he deserves for his dedication to Rapunzel. In the first edition of *Kinder-und Hausmärchen*, the prince impregnates Rapunzel on his first visit. Though later editions do mention their children, they do not depict Rapunzel as pregnant. The Grimms were urged to change this portion of the tale shortly after their collection was released because it was thought to promote premarital sex and thus go against Christian values. This prince is thus tied to themes of anti-Christian and socially taboo behavior despite his noble dedication to Rapunzel.

In her 1993 novel adaptation of this tale entitled *Zel*, Donna Jo Napoli depicts this character as very multi-faceted. Konrad is in many ways a selfish boy, raised in privilege because of his father's position as a count, and he treats all of his servants and the people who live within his father's domain as though they are his inferiors. Thus, he is startled when he is so taken with Zel (Rapunzel) after merely watching her soothe his distressed horse and attempt to help a confused goose. However, he quickly grows obsessed and begins to focus less upon himself and more on others. He throws away the chance to marry two wealthy noblewomen and spends his days searching for the mysterious Zel. By the time he finds her, she has begun to lose her sanity due to the years she has spent lonely and in fear, locked away in a remote tower. However, this doesn't stop Konrad

from professing his love, from promising to take Zel away and marry her, or from sleeping with her. In Napoli's young adult novel, she mirrors the way the Grimms style this moment in their own tale by glossing over it but layering the moment with many implications. Though the reader knows how much Zel has desired and missed Konrad, her waning sanity makes this scene somewhat unsettling. This scene parallels the scene cut from the Grimmian version of the tale and raises questions about whether the sex in that telling was truly consensual. Does a naïve, child-like character who has never been outside of her tower and is unfamiliar with the ways of the world have the ability to consent to sex? While Napoli's character is somewhat more worldly (though unhinged) the Grimms' Rapunzel has been completely sheltered. This scene interacts with the Grimmian text in a way that brings its moral implications to the forefront of the reader's mind. Despite the issues in this scene, his prior and subsequent dedication to Zel as well as her lack of regret over their sexual union overshadow this issue in some ways. Konrad finally gives up his title and wealth in order to gain the freedom to search for her, completing his transition from a selfish youth to a self-sacrificing man. Both Napoli's and the Grimms' versions of the character are willing to search for Rapunzel for years, which highlights their dedication and loyalty.

Disney's *Tangled* presents this hero very differently from both the Grimmian version and Napoli's novel. Eugene Fitzherbert (a.k.a. Flynn Rider) is not a nobleman at all, but a thief. Thus, he starts the play as more of a villain than a traditional hero. He is greedy, disloyal, obsessed with wealth, and vain at the start of the film and these flaws have forced him into a very difficult position. He agrees to take Rapunzel to see the floating lanterns in exchange for the return of the tiara he stole from the palace, but he

begins their journey by attempting to manipulate her into returning to her tower. However, helping Rapunzel achieve her dreams and learning her secrets shows Flynn that he needs to be more open and genuine. He tells Rapunzel his true name and begins to understand that he cannot always put himself first after she helps him come to terms with himself and his past.

Disney makes Flynn a likeable character by ensuring that he reforms himself, like prince Naveen in *The Princess and the Frog*, but also by explaining his origins. As he tells his story to Rapunzel, he refers to himself as "poor orphan Eugene Fitzherbert" and describes how he adopted the persona of the hero from an adventure story that he used to read to the other kids at the orphanage (Greno). He explains why he did this, saying: "For a kid with nothing, that seemed like the better option" (Greno). Flynn Rider's background is nearly the exact reverse of the Grimmian version of his character's, but it interacts with the Grimmian idea of class conflict. He is not born to privilege and assumes a new identity, using his bravado and charm to mask his feelings of inadequacy. His presumed insufficiency parallel the pains that the Grimms' tales sought to alleviate in their audience, and he is shown to elevate his social status through through romance just as a traditional heroine might. Thus, Flynn is rendered a very relatable character. By the conclusion of the film, Flynn has transformed into a completely selfless figure by risking his life to safe Rapunzel's. He does not seem like a hero at the start of the story, but his true nature and inner heroism are revealed by the end.

The Prince from the story "Aschenputtel" is one of the most well-known and beloved heroes within our society despite the fact that he is originally depicted with a prominent villainous streak. The Grimmian version of this character is possessive of

Aschenputtel and determined to figure out her identity and take her as his wife. He refuses to let her dance with anyone else and dances only with her throughout all three nights of the festival he has invited the entire kingdom to. At the end of each night, she runs off so that he will not see to which home she returns and learn of her true identity as a servant. The first night she leaps into a pigeon coop, but he cuts the walls of it down with an axe. The second night she climbs up a tree, which he chops down. On the third night of the festival, the prince hopes to prevent Aschenputtel from disappearing again by pouring pitch, similar to tar, over the steps leading out of the ballroom so that she will get stuck in it and be unable to escape him.

When Aschenputtel evades him a third time he, like the hero from "Rapunzel," must then search for his beloved. However, his ability to recognize his love is far less reliable than the prince from "Rapunzel." He rides away with both of the step-sisters, convinced each of them is the woman he has fallen in love with. Only after the shoe fits Aschenputtel does he recognize her as the woman he has spent the last several nights dancing with. This moment in the text leaves the audience wondering exactly how devoted to and in love with Aschenputtel the prince really is. How has this prince, who retains the powers of all his senses, been able to misidentify the woman he professes to love not once, but twice? There is an element of brutality in this character's determination to win his princess. He destroys both a pigeon coop and a tree then risks injuring Aschenputtel (and other guests) by pouring a dangerously sticky substance over the stairs. He is a privileged individual who seems willing to do anything to get what he desires. The idea of a nobleman who abuses his power for his own selfish reasons was not something that would have been particularly unique during the time that the Grimms

were transcribing these tales, as this period was characterized by tension between the upper and lower classes.

Margaret Peterson Haddix examines the prince's negative qualities in her novel *Just Ella*, which acts as a sequel to the Grimmian tale. The novel begins several weeks after Prince Charming has found and proposed to his beloved, when Ella is preparing for her life as a princess and for her upcoming nuptials. However, she comes to realize that the man to whom she is engaged is completely lacking in personality and that all of the castle's residents are petty and focused on solely the frivolous facets of life. "How had I ever loved him? Now when I looked into those perfect blue eyes, I saw only the vacancy behind them. Had he ever had a thought in his entire life?" (Haddix 119). After this change of heart, Ella falls in love with the court minister's son, Jed, and tries to find a way to break off her engagement to the prince without offending him or causing a royal scandal. When she finally does reveal her desire to cancel their wedding, the prince attacks her and locks her in the dungeon until she agrees to marry him. He even assigns Quog, a convicted rapist, to guard Ella's cell.

> I now knew the real Prince Charming to be, at best, an insensitive dullard, or perhaps even a callous monster only barely better than Quog himself. But I still felt a pang for the ideal I'd thought I'd loved, the perfect male I'd made up in my mind with the image of the prince's face. (164)

Haddix uses the prince's name here to juxtapose the image he projects to the world with his inner self. Prince Charming is handsome, wealthy, and privileged but also a cruel-hearted "dullard." Though this prince is outwardly perfect, he is morally appalling. The

novel emphasizes the prince's handsomeness by frequently describing his appearance in great detail. However, this beauty is shown to be a mask which distracts and deceives observers. Thus, Haddix flips the stereotype of the perfect prince on its head by presenting Prince Charming as a villain rather than a hero.

The 1998 film *Ever After: A Cinderella Story* takes a far less severe look at the character of the prince. Prince Henry is depicted as youthful and irresponsible, but genuinely good at heart. At the start of the film he is unaware of the conditions of his people and does not understand that a servant's life is as meaningful as his own. He continually ducks his responsibilities, choosing instead to disguise himself and sneak out of the castle. However, he admires Danielle (Aschenputtel) for her bravery and commitment to treating all people fairly. As the two grow closer, he begins to accept his princely duties and work toward making his kingdom a better place. This depiction is very hopeful, operating under the idea that those in power would treat their citizens well if they were just made to understand reality. When he discovers that Danielle has lied about her noble status and is really only a servant, Prince Henry rejects and denounces her. He proves his dedication to her, though, when he finds her to apologize and ask her to become his wife.

His character steadily (aside from the small lapse upon discovering Danielle's true identity, which can be somewhat excused as the effect of surprise and embarrassment) shifts from immature and arrogant to gallant and just over the course of the film. Despite his flaws, it is clear that Prince Henry is a good, though sometimes misguided and thoughtless, man. He actively seeks Danielle's company, but never tries to force her to stay with him as his character does in both Haddix's and the Grimms'

versions of the tale. Like Haddix's Prince Charming, Prince Henry originally lacks the ability to think beyond himself and what he knows in order to consider others' thoughts and feelings. However, Danielle is able to help Prince Henry progress while Prince Charming's character remains stagnant and static throughout Haddix's novel. It is his ability to change—and not his wealth or social status—which makes Prince Henry both a hero and a worthy match for the strong, independent Danielle. If he had attempted to force her to stay with him like his counterparts, he would have lost the chance at a "happily ever after."

This film shifts much of the story's focus onto questions of class conflict, a focus that I argue is very apparent in the Grimms' texts. Every character—no matter their class—must choose whether or not to operate as a morally upright character. While the lower classes are demanded to show compassion and generosity to others, the upper class characters are depicted as possessing a responsibility to use the power that society has bestowed upon them justly. The impact of the poorer characters upon society is smaller, but their goodness is praised nonetheless. Even characters from parts of society that one might not expect to exude morality often show their kindness in this film. An example of this is the group of bandits that attack Danielle and Prince Henry who, though thieves, are able to respect Danielle's courage and audacity enough to release the two of them. The moral turpitude of the upper class is shown to have a wider impact, though, which makes it necessary for the people in these privileged positions to make the most of their authority. Characters such as the Baroness Rodmilla de Ghent, Pierre le Pieu, and Leonardo Da Vinci are shown to be in positions of authority which they can either use correctly by treating those beneath them with mercy and kindness or misuse by treating

the people who rely on them as disposable property. This examination extends to the aristocracy as the film also questions what qualities make a good and worthy ruler.

The prince from the Grimms' "Sneewittchen" is also depicted as less than chivalrous. He appears very late in the tale, which is one of the longest ones that the Grimm brothers included in their collection. His late appearance along with the fact that a majority of his action takes place while Sneewittchen is asleep makes their eventual romance startling. This prince only encounters Sneewittchen after she has been cursed by her step-mother and placed into a glass coffin by the dwarves. Hypnotized by her beauty, he falls instantly in love with her and begs the dwarves to allow him to take her body with him, saying: "ich kann nicht leben, ohne Sneewittchen zu sehen, ich will es ehren und hochachten wie mein Liebstes" (Grimm). The prince tells them that he "kann nicht leben" (cannot live) without being able to "sehen" (see) Sneewittchen. He is completely besotted with her appearance, becoming obsessed with her lifeless body without ever meeting her. The prince then orders his servants to carry her glass coffin with him as he continues on his way. However odd this action is, it *is* what saves Sneewittchen's life. When one of the prince's servants trips and drops the coffin, Sneewittchen coughs up the apple she had swallowed and is revived. Indeed, it is the prince's tendency towards obsessive necrophilia that allows both of these characters to get their happy endings.

The relationship between Snow White and her Non-Descript Nobleman of a hero, Prince Charming, is a large part of the focus of ABC's television series *Once Upon A Time*. This "prince" starts out as a poor shepherd named David who lives on a farm alone with his mother. When he was an infant, his parents traded his twin brother to the king for their land. His twin brother later dies in battle and the king blackmails David,

threatening to kill his mother and take their farm in order to force him to pretend to be his twin. These two first meet when Snow White hijacks the carriage he and his fiancé are in and steals a bag of jewels. Prince Charming then pursues Snow White and captures her so that he can get back his mother's engagement ring. The two then work together to get the jewels back from the group of trolls Snow White pawned them to. After they save each other's lives, the two begin to fall in love. The fact that theirs is "true love"--something which is apparently very magical and rare--is an important part of the series' plot as it both affirms the morality of their actions and allows for future magical implications to rise when their daughter (the product of true love) is born.

Despite everything against them—David's "father" the king, his impending arranged marriage, and Snow White's malicious step-mother—the two marry. They repeatedly tell each other that they "will always find" one another and pour everything they have into building and maintaining their relationship. When Snow White decides that she cannot abandon her people to the Evil Queen, David agrees to do all that he can to help her regain her kingdom. This adaptation presents Prince Charming as a man who is devoted to his beloved and to doing good. David is (arguably) the most thoroughly heroic character of the entire series, as he continuously does whatever he can to help others and never falters in his morality. Though David is not born into royalty, he is able to assume the role of a political leader with grace and honor. This depiction of him makes him both more relateable and respectable than the Grimm's version of this character. Unlike his Grimmian counterpart, David also meets Snow White before she is cursed, which erases the stigma of necrophilia as well as makes their love more substantial.

As demonstrated in the above paragraph, the relationship between Sneewittchen and the prince is typically altered in modern adaptations so that these two characters meet and their feelings for one another begin before Sneewittchen is cursed. In the 2012 film *Snow White and the Huntsman*, Snow White and William (son of the Duke of Hammon) are depicted as childhood friends. Though they are separated when they are still children, they meet again and reconnect before Snow White is cursed. Though he appears in the beginning of the film, he does not reappear until much later on. This is similar to the Grimmian version of the tale and prevents Snow White and William from becoming as close as they might have otherwise. William began looking for Snow White as soon as he realized that she was still alive. He also saves her life several times over the course of the film and proves that he is willing to risk his life for her and the good of their kingdom. However, those missing years in which Snow White was imprisoned by her step-mother and William was not searching for her are not erased, and so he is not exactly the hero that he could have been. Though there are hints of a future romance between the two, a future relationship is not certain at the end of the film. This adaptation shifts the emphasis of the tale away from romance and more towards the health and well-being of the kingdom. Snow White is united to her kingdom and her people at the end of the film rather than any individual love interest. When the queen gives Snow White the poisoned apple, she disguises herself as William in order to gain her step-daughter's trust. Thus, William is unwillingly—yet irrevocably—associated with evil despite is gallant actions. He is not even credited with awakening Snow White, as his kiss does nothing to rouse her.

Similarly, the prince whose kiss supposedly awakens the sleeping princess in the tale "Dornröschen" is surprisingly ineffectual at resolving the story's conflict. He does not deliberately search out his future wife, placed under a spell by a spurned fairy, but instead happens to travel to a nearby kingdom. He hears the "Dornröschen" legend and recalls his grandfather's stories about the many princes who had tried to awaken the princess and died painful, tragic deaths entangled in the thick rose hedge surrounding the castle. The prince then decides that he will also try to save Dornröschen. This naïvety and unwillingness to learn from the mistakes of others (which are seemingly flaws) are transformed into heroic attributes when he both survives the venture and gains a wife. Coincidentally, the day that the prince arrives at the castle is exactly one hundred years after Dornröschen pricked her finger on the spinning wheel and fell victim to the fairy's curse and thus the day that she was intended to awaken. It was not the prince's kiss that lifts the curse; it just naturally ends on its own. This makes the prince's position as "hero" somewhat questionable, as he doesn't actually cause any change to come about or solve a problem. He is merely in the right place at the right time.

Modern adaptations often interact with the prince's apparent lack of heroism by highlighting the character's flaws and ineffectiveness at lifting the curse. In the 2014 film *Maleficent*,[xxi] the characterization of Prince Philip is largely removed and replaced with a greater focus on the Grimmian villain Maleficent. Prince Philip only appears in a few scenes, but these scenes portray him as young and innocent. When he first meets Aurora (Dornröschen), he is lost in the woods and needs her directions to be able to find the king's castle. The next time the audience sees him, he is enchanted into a deep sleep by Maleficent and guided magically to the castle in hopes that he will be able to awaken the

princess from her curse. It is a challenge for Maleficent, Diaval (Maleficent's side-kick), and the prince to sneak into the castle and make it past the guards to the princess' chambers. Prince Philip contributes nothing to this effort, though, as he is still asleep. When Maleficent removes the spell, Prince Philip is naturally confused, and he is quickly dragged into Aurora's room and told to kiss her, which he does after some hesitation. Even after all of the work it took to get him to the right place, Prince Philip's kiss does not succeed in reviving the princess. This character makes very few decisions and accomplishes very little over the course of the film. He is instead portrayed as somewhat naïve and weak, as needs continuous help from others to even make it to a castle (an ordinary, non-magically hidden castle) on his own. His character is charming and cares for Aurora, but he is not the hero of the film. Instead, this film shifts the heroism onto the characters of Aurora and Maleficent which gives it an overall air of female empowerment.

Though the number of noble and royal heroes found in the Grimms' tales may be surprising to a modern audience, the frequency of this type of character is not surprising when one takes into account the social structure and climate of nineteenth-century Germany. There was no central government, but the emperor of Austria Hungary exercised some control over the various principalities, dynasties, monarchies, duchies, and grand duchies in the region.[xxii] The feudal system had not yet fully lost its power in Germany, which ensured a vast gap in power and wealth between the nobility and the peasants. As members of the growing middle class, the Grimms were positioned to be able to witness the foibles of both extremes. The Grimm brothers were among a group of professors known as the "Göttinger Sieben" (Göttingen Seven) who were stripped of their

posts in 1837 and banished from Hanover because they openly opposed and refused to swear loyalty to the region's king.[xxiii] There was tension all over Europe following the French Revolution of the late eighteenth century, as the lower classes were encouraged by the situation in France and the nobles feared an uprising.[xxiv] In this social context, it is unsurprising that so many of these tales feature selfish, out-of-touch nobles who are set upon getting their way no matter the consequences. These tales were thus an outlet for the lower classes, a safe way to mock nobility. It was important that this was a subtle move, though, as harsh criticism of nobility was punishable by law if done too openly.[xxv] In modern America this character type tends not to evoke the same contempt that it did at the time these tales were transcribed. Thus, many adaptations seek to make this character more relatable by giving him forgivable flaws and stripping him of his title.

The Hearty Countryman

The Non-Descript Nobleman, while the most commonly adapted hero, is not the only type of Grimmian hero to be reexamined in adaptations. The Hearty Countryman is an interesting character who appears in some of the Grimms' fairytales and acts as a rural, non-noble hero. He is an adult man who has learned and mastered a trade, earning himself a title such as "Woodcutter," "Huntsman," or "Blacksmith." If this type of hero is not the main character of the tale (as is the case with all of the tales he appears in which are examined in this thesis), he is referred to simply by his trade and not given a name. Thus, like the Non-Descript Nobleman who is labelled by his most memorable quality, his entire identity is summed up with a single word. His role in society thus becomes his

primary identifying feature. This type of character briefly appears in the tales "Sneewittchen" and "Rotkäppchen" in the form of the Huntsman.

This character's portrayal in "Sneewittchen" is somewhat confusing, as he has no clear loyalties or goals. The Huntsman is summoned by the queen, Sneewittchen's step-mother, and ordered to kill her step-daughter. He has no clear motivation to do the queen's bidding except that she has authority over him as she does not offer him any reward for killing the girl or threaten him for not obeying her. He takes Sneewittchen into the woods to kill her, but she is "so schön" (so beautiful) that he cannot bring himself to kill her (Grimm). This wording implies that that the girl's beauty is the only thing that really prevents him from killing her. The Huntsman then reasons that "die wilden Tiere werden [sich] bald gefressen haben" (the wild animals will soon eat the girl) and leaves her in the woods to die (Grimm). Though callous, this could be considered a far more natural death than murder, which is likely why he was so comfortable abandoning a small child to predators. In fact, leaving people to die in nature was a relatively commonplace practice at the time. The Huntsman is clearly capable of pity, but he is also willing to leave her to suffer a painful death in the forest. Thus, he becomes an in between character who is too cowardly to oppose the queen and be a hero but too sensitive to be a villain. Since his character is so ambiguous, many adaptations attempt to make him a stronger and more memorable character by casting him as either a hero or a villain.

In the television series *Once Upon A Time*, the Huntsman (also called Graham) is a character who is deeply moral and connected to nature. The Evil Queen wrongly assumes that he is cruel and pitiless because he kills to earn a living, but this is not the case. When the Huntsman kills he cries and prays for the animal, thanking it for its

sacrifice. He is disconnected from humanity, unable to understand the malice and greed of men. Instead, he lives in the forest and his closest friend is a wolf. The queen offers him money and power in exchange for killing Snow White (Sneewittchen), but Graham asks only that the queen only repay him by decreeing wolves to be a protected species. When he finally tries to kill Snow White and cannot bring himself to, he advises her to run. He then tries to hide this deception from the queen either to save Snow White's life or to ensure the safety of wolves, but is unsuccessful. Finally, he is forced to do the queen's bidding when she takes his heart and gains complete control of him. Despite her power over him, Graham still attempts to remain moral and true until the day that the Evil Queen kills him. This adaptation seeks to explain the reasons behind Graham's evil actions while still making him a heroic character. This version of the Huntsman is a good man who is forced to commit evil acts. *Once Upon A Time* blurs the lines between good and evil, showing that the dichotomy between the two is not as marked as many believe it to be. Graham fills the role of both hero and villain despite the fact that he is quintessentially a moral character.

The film *Snow White and the Huntsman*, on the other hand, casts this character firmly as a hero. Eric (the Huntsman) is a widower who spends most of his time getting into drunken fights. He is asked to guide a group of soldiers through a dangerous forest so that they can track Snow White and kill her. In exchange, the queen promises that she will bring his wife back to life. When the group finds Snow White, Eric realizes that the queen has lied to him and that she will not bring his wife back. He then fights the soldiers who he led into the woods, giving Snow White the chance to run away to safety. He falls into helping her on her journey to fortress where she will be safe and even follows her

into battle when she returns to take back her kingdom. After the death of his beloved wife—who had been able to help him overcome his vices—Eric fell into a state of intense grieving. As he explains: "I became myself again, a self I never cared for. Until you. You remind me of her: her heart, her spirit" (Sanders). He dedicates his life to Snow White because she is the first person who has been able to break through to him since his wife passed away. It is even his kiss, not William Hammon's (who is discussed above) which awakens Snow White from her curse. The Huntsman is completely loyal to Snow White and he grows to love and respect her. While he does not seem to desire Snow White romantically, he loves her because she brings out the best in him and reminds him of his lost wife. Despite his previous suffering and inclination toward vice, this character always has good intentions which are informed by a strong moral code. He is more decisively a hero than either Graham from *Once Upon A Time* or the Grimmian Huntsman are, as he never abandons Snow White or her cause.

The Huntsman within "Rotkäppchen" is more visibly a hero than the one in "Sneewittchen." Though this character appears late in the story, he is familiar with both Rotkäppchen's grandmother and the wolf. He comes into the story merely by coincidence, as he happens to be walking in the right place at the right time, but immediately recognizes that something is wrong within the grandmother's cabin. When he enters and sees the wolf sleeping, he realizes that he may still be able to save both the grandmother and Rotkäppchen by cutting the wolf open and allowing them to climb out. While simply shooting the wolf while he slept would have likely been both safer and easier for the Huntsman, he risks himself to help others. However, it is not he that kills the wolf in the end, but Rotkäppchen. She comes up with and executes the plan to fill the

wolf with stones, thereby killing him. The Huntsman's lack of action here is somewhat puzzling, as he could have easily shot and killed the still sleeping wwolf after having freed Rotkäppchen and her grandmother. Instead, he allows the young girl to kill the wolf in a far more dangerous and difficult manner. He is then rewarded for his help when he is allowed to skin the wolf and take his pelt. The Huntsman is introduced late in the story and only in it briefly, but he is responsible for saving the lives of Rotkäppchen and her grandmother.

Politically Correct Bedtime Stories by James Finn Garner greatly revises this character's role in the story. As he does with all of the tales adapted in this novel, Garner gives this tale a twenty-first century makeover to ensure that it is completely politically correct. In this version, similar to the Grimmian version, the Huntsman arrives late in the tale. He enters the cottage after hearing the sounds of Red Riding Hood (Rotkäppchen) and the wolf fighting. When he bursts open the door in an attempt to save Red Riding Hood and her grandmother, raising his axe to fight off the wolf, the two immediately stop fighting each other and band together against him. Red Riding Hood criticizes him, saying: "Bursting in here like a Neanderthal, trusting your weapon to do your thinking for you! … Sexist! Speciesist! How dare you assume that a women and wolves can't solve their own problems without a man's help!" (Garner). With this quote Garner (through Red Riding Hood) critiques the Huntsman for interfering in a situation without knowing the circumstances leading up to it. This presentation of the Huntsman's character paints him as more of a villain than a hero. He is quick to act without thinking, discounting the idea that Red Riding Hood or her grandmother might be capable of defending themselves and assuming that the wolf must be the villain of the situation. While he is courageous, he

acts without thinking and assumes that Red Riding Hood needs him to save her. This adaptation villainizes not just the Huntsman, but the oppressive patriarchy he represents. He is neither needed nor wanted in this short story, as both Red Riding Hood and the wolf are intelligent, strong beings capable of compromise.

Though the Hearty Countryman may appear relatively plain and uninspiring to modern audiences, he was likely very popular among the Grimm brothers' contemporary audiences. These tradesmen would have been easy for nineteenth-century lower to middle class Germans to identify with and respect. People such as these would have also been important parts of village life despite the fact that their jobs were not glamourous. The fact that their roles involved manual labor also contributed to the respect they received, as willingness to take on arduous work was considered to be a virtue. Our society has less respect for manual laborers than the Grimms' did, which leads to changes in the way this character is depicted in modern adaptations. Many cinematic and literary adaptations turn this character into a romantic figure and thus emphasize his role in a personal, domestic sphere over his position in society.

The Peasant Boy

Tales set in more realistic folk settings feature common, non-noble heroes and tend contain fewer magical elements than folktales set in other locations. The Hearty Countryman and Peasant Boy are two such heroes. The former tends to be older with a steady job while the latter is younger and his troubles begin with family issues. The Peasant Boy and the Hearty Countryman are similar in some respects, but different in that the Peasant Boy is typically the protagonist of his own tale rather than being featured as a

supporting character like the Hearty Countryman often is. Though the Peasant Boy appears under-qualified for the role of hero at the beginning of the tale, he proves himself by the end. He is able to defeat those who are stronger and more powerful than him through compassion, courage, or cunning that no one expects of him. Others (often animals) typically assist this hero in accomplishing difficult tasks and defeating powerful enemies. The most well-known (and the only one adapted regularly enough to be discussed in this thesis) example of this type of hero is Hänsel from "Hänsel und Gretel."

This tale focuses on two children whose father and step-mother abandon them in the middle of the woods because they can no longer afford to feed them. This was a fairly common practice in Germany from the early Middle Ages through the nineteenth-century. When a family could not support itself, young children might be sent away to apprentice with a tradesman or simply left to die. The first time that the children are left in the forest, Hänsel leaves a trail of white pebbles behind them so that they can find their way back home. This action shows how resourceful and clever Hänsel is, as he realizes that he needs to mark their path in order for them to survive. His step-mother and father underestimate him, just as every Peasant Boy hero is underestimated by those around him, and are very surprised when the two children return home. The second time that he and his sister are left in the woods, Hänsel can only find breadcrumbs to drop behind them. This time birds eat the bread, though, ensuring that the children are not able to follow the trail back. When they are captured by a witch who plans to fatten up Hänsel and eat him, the boy sticks "ein Knöchlein" (a small bone) out of through the bar of his cage so that the witch believes that he has not gained any weight (Grimm). Throughout their ordeal Hänsel cares for his younger sister, comforting her when she is frightened

that they will die in the forest. But, he needs Gretel as much as she needs him and the two of them must work together to escape the witch who traps them. While he is not the sole protagonist of this tale, Hänsel acts as its hero.

The film *Hansel and Gretel: Witch Hunters* acts as a sequel to the events of the Grimmian tale and takes place when Hansel and Gretel are adults. Though they managed to escape the witch who captured them in childhood, these two characters remain haunted by this trauma for the rest of their lives. They turn to witch-hunting to make a living rather than returning to the family that abandoned them. Neither character is able to forgive their parents for this callous act, which is very different from their reactions in the Grimmian tale. In the Grimms' tale, Hänsel and Gretel return home and forgive their father, whereas these adapted characters cannot bring themselves to do that. The differences between these two reactions are due to our society's adverse views of child endangerment and abuse. The children in the Grimmian tale (and like its readers) were able to absolve the parents because their actions were considered understandable and justified. The film's versions of these characters, like modern viewers, are unable to excuse this act. Thus, in order to depict the parents as positive figures, this film offers an alternative explanation for their act of abandonment, showing it as an attempt to protect Hansel and Gretel. Hansel is protective of his sister Gretel, who is fully capable of taking care of herself. He is less trusting than his sister and exerts less effort defending strangers than she does. When one woman thanks him for proving that she is not a witch and thus preventing her fellow townspeople from burning her at the stake, he replies: "I probably would have let them, but I'm old fashioned that way. My sister, however, requires a little more evidence before someone gets roasted" (Wirkola). Despite this apparently negligent

behavior, he does risk his life for others many times throughout the film. The Hansel of this adaptation has a severe weakness, though: his diabetes. The time he spent locked in a cage continuously being fed sweets by the witch he and his sister encountered in childhood rendered him a severe diabetic, and he must treat himself regularly with insulin shots. While this is merely uncomfortable and inconvenient for a majority of the film, it nearly costs him his life when he battles a witch at the end of the film. It is Hansel's ability to overcome this challenge (as well as his trust issues which stem from the events of *Hänsel und Gretel*) in order to battle witches and protect the innocent that makes Hansel heroic.

In her novel *The Magic Circle*, Donna Jo Napoli reexamines the Grimmian tale through the witch's perspective, portraying her as the victim of greedy demons which urge her to do evil. Hänsel is depicted as a young boy who is eager to please, which is a very different portrayal than the one offered in *Hansel and Gretel: Witch Hunters*. Napoli changes the story, making Hänsel younger than Gretel. His character is very naïve and he relies on Gretel to advise and protect him. Though Hänsel's cleverness is praised in the Grimmian version, Napoli's Gretel ridicules her brother's decision to use breadcrumbs to form a trail back to their house as short-sighted and useless. When they arrive at the witch's house—where she has hidden herself away from people so that she will not be tempted to eat children as the demons inside her urge her to—Hänsel trusts their host immediately. He eagerly accepts food from the witch and tries to earn her affection by performing helpful tasks for her. His sister is far more reluctant, while Hänsel innocently attempts to learn more about their mysterious host. Though he heavily relies on Gretel for nearly everything in this version of the tale, Hänsel is kind-hearted and trusting. This

depiction of the character makes him similar to other Peasant Boy heroes who need many helpers to enable them to succeed and overcome hardship. While these qualities are not typically associated with a hero, they can be found in the Peasant Boy hero as he often inspires others to help him succeed by demonstrating innocence and goodness.

The Peasant Boy's youth and lack of worldly experience make his ability to succeed in his adventures and overcome his adversaries all the more remarkable. These features also make this type of character very appealing to children, as they can easily identify with him. He is particularly inspiring for underprivileged or powerless readers, as he is the epitome of an "underdog" who is able to triumph despite the odds against him. This type of hero appears in many of the Grimms' fairytales, which makes it somewhat surprising that more Grimmian tales with Peasant Boy heroes are not adapted into modern works of film and literature. With his unlikely success, his need of helpers, and his innocence, the Peasant Boy is an intermediary between the many types of hero and heroine. Though he possesses some stereotypically feminine characters, his tale plays out the way most heroes' do.

The three types of heroes discussed in this chapter are very different from one another, but each is characterized by a single quality which they carry with them throughout the course of their tale. Though these Grimmian heroes may come to be viewed differently by others, none of them demonstrate profound character change. Heroes who fit into the Non-Descript Nobleman category tend to receive little characterization, but are typically shown to be spoiled and manipulative. The Hearty Countryman, on the other hand, is typically portrayed as very respectable and heroic. Characters who can be classified as Peasant Boys are often weak, but compassionate and

cunning heroes who are easy for many to identify with. The adaptations examined above work to make these heroes more dynamic. Many do this by depicting the hero as flawed, as it makes him more realistic and relatable, while others take an even more demarcated stance by reappropriating a Grimmian hero to the role of villain. The adaptations that do this show that the outward qualities that heroes possess do not always reflect their inner qualities. The heroes who remain in their archetypal position are the ones who demonstrate the ability to change as well as kindness, loyalty, and compassion.

One over-arching similarity between all of these characters is the importance that economic and social class play in their identity. Each is defined by the role he plays in society and his relationship to those socially above and below him. The Peasant Boy is low in the social order and the Hearty Countryman is higher. The latter of these two is necessary for society to function and his role in the social order allows him to act as a hero to those in need. The Non-Descript Nobleman, on the other hand, is shown to be at the absolute top of the social order. However, he uses all of this power and privilege to benefit himself and to get what he wants, which in most cases is the heroine's hand in marriage. This depiction of royalty seems to point to social unrest within nineteenth-century German culture. Louis Snyder, a noted historian who predicted the events of the Holocaust in a book he published in 1932, argues in his 1978 book *Roots of German Nationalism* that in the Grimms' tales "The social classes were set apart: the king, the count, the leader, the hero are glorified, while the lower lass, the servants and peasants dependent on them and obediently executing their commands, is praised" (36). Snyder's argument seems very unlikely considering the period the Grimms were writing in. The French Revolution had inspired ideas of rebellion in lower-class Germans who were

oppressed under the feudal system. As historian David Blackbourn explains: "The revolution in France was a singular occurrence, the product of a particular combination of social stress, fiscal crisis, noble intransigence, mounting opposition, and loss of confidence in the political system. Some of those elements were present in all parts of Germany, and all of them in some" (52). With this cultural climate and the Grimms' own opposition to the absolute authority of the monarchy (as demonstrated by their roles in the "Göttinger Sieben"), it is unsurprising that the depiction of these heroes brings social and economic class issues to the forefront.

Chapter Two: Understanding the Heroines

Though the heroes discussed in the previous chapter are vital to each tale's plot, they tend to be overshadowed by their female counterparts. The stories which are popularized and continually adapted into American culture are typically the ones that feature a female protagonist who is plagued by difficulties but who succeeds in returning to her previous status or rising to an even better one by the end of the tale. These stories were able to fit so well into our culture because they express similar values and the characters embody certain stereotypical ideals within our society. Stories such as "Rapunzel," "Aschenputtel" ("Cinderella"), "Rotkäppchen" ("Little Red Riding Hood"), "Dornröschen" ("Little Brier-Rose" or "Sleeping Beauty"), "Sneewittchen" ("Snow White"), and "Rumplestizchen" all contain virtuous, attractive young women and charming, heroic young men. Though modern American culture has attempted to correct and broaden this unbalanced view of gender characteristics, these ideals still pervade American mass media in the form of magazines, books, television, and movies. Despite the advances our society has made toward gender equality, these tales still fit into the niche created by these antiquated concepts. Many of the adaptations that will be discussed in this chapter work to unravel these gender stereotypes and thus integrate the tales better into our evolving culture.

Heroines are depicted and treated very differently from their male counterparts in the Grimm's fairytales. As occurs with heroes, the tale begins with an exaggerated focus on one particular characteristic of the heroine. However, while a personality trait is emphasized in the case of the hero, it is a physical characteristic that is emphasized with

respect to the heroine. In most cases it is the heroine's beauty which defines her and somehow contributes to or helps resolve her situation. As with heroes, these heroines' names often express their characteristics outright. Rapunzel and Dornröschen (Brier Rose) are both named after plants with beautiful flowers, while Sneewittchen (Little Snow White) is named thus because of her lovely, pale complexion. All three of these names function to physically describe the characters as well as give them a title. Aschenputtel (Ashes) and Rotkäppchen (Little Red Hood), on the other hand, are named after objects they wear. The princess from "Der Froschkönig" is not even given a name but is described as the most beautiful and youngest daughter of a king. All of these heroines, despite their different backgrounds and situations, are valued above all for their beauty. It is their main, defining characteristic and is emphasized above all personality traits. By the end of their tales, as with the heroes of other Grimms' tales, these heroines are known by another character trait, such as hardworking or obedient. It is this character trait that earns them their "happily ever after."

Beyond this difference in depiction, a heroine's path through her desperate situation is very different from a hero's. While both may start out in a reasonably good situation in life, both face peril in the form of a villain. Male characters typically accomplish tasks or challenges because of this, while female characters face imprisonment, servitude, or death when confronted by their antagonist. Heroes need to prove themselves by showing their humility and kindness to reverse their situations and gain a reward. Heroines, however, must be humiliated and victimized to show their positive qualities and achieve a happy ending.[xxvi] Often a female character betters her situation and rises again through marriage. Heroes, on the other hand, improve their

station because of their own innate strength and virtuousness. Heroines within the Grimms' fairytales require assistance in order to achieve redemption, and thus they *need* a hero.

As mentioned above, heroines gain a new character trait over the course of the story, which they must prove over the course of their humiliation. The most common of these virtuous traits are industriousness and the fortitude to survive an intolerable situation. By demonstrating these traits, the heroine earns social promotion or redemption, just as a male hero's bravery or compassion earn him a reward. Many of these heroines are shown as determined and dedicated workers who are skilled in arenas of domestic labor. Their skill in spinning, weaving, cooking, and cleaning are depicted both as a sign of virtue and a means of survival. As Tatar explains:

> Vanity and laziness are cardinal vices in all these tales; modesty and industry figure as signs of distinction… If male protagonists must routinely submit to character tests and demonstrate compassion, their female counterparts are subjected to tests of their competence in the domestic arena—tests that turn into tasks usually carried out without the aid of helpers. (Tatar 116)

While I agree a heroine's ability and willingness to work hard are important characteristics worthy of analysis, I would argue that this explanation does not cover heroines, such as Dornröschen, who are not forced to accomplish domestic tasks. As an amendment to Tatar's argument, I would add that some heroines must show heartiness or the ability to survive impossible circumstances in order to prove their virtuousness. Dornröschen, for instance, was cursed to sleep for one hundred years and had to endure

adversity and continue on with her life once she was past it. In terms of the tales' role as a mode of moral and social instruction for young children, this presentation of hard domestic work and heartiness as desirable virtues to was very important in nineteenth-century Germany. Many of these tales were passed orally among lower to middle class and rural families, because parents believed these characteristics were important for their children to learn. A child who understood that dedicated domestic labor and heartiness, despite adversity, were the keys to survival was far more likely to succeed in life.

Though there has been an expansive collection of different types of fairytale scholarship, feminist readings and interpretations of the Grimms' tales are some of the most commonly found. Scholars such as Kay Stone, Maria Tatar, and Ruth Bottingheimer have explored the subjugation and lack of agency attributed to most heroines. Many authors such as Anne Sexton and Ethel Phelps have written feminist adaptations of the tales in an effort to explore the female empowerment that is absent in the Grimmian versions of them. While I ardently agree that the Grimms' tales under represent and demean women, I would argue that the same thing occurs for both genders. As discussed in Chapter One, many of the Grimms' heroes are presented as flat, flawed characters defined by a single character trait. As Margaret Atwood comments in her tribute to the Grimms entitled "Grimms Remembered," which is featured in Donald Haase's *The Reception of Grimms' Fairy Tales: Responses, Reactions, Revisions*, "It seems to me that various traits were quite evenly spread. There were wicked wizards as well as wicked witches, stupid women as well as stupid men, slovenly husbands as well as slovenly wives" (292). While the treatment of female characters is more noticeable to the today's reader due to the modern focus on feminism and women's rights issues, it is

important to note that both genders are stereotyped and satirized within the Grimms' tales. This is why it is integral that we adapt and expand the depiction of the tales' male and female characters equally.

Though not all of the heroines depicted in the Grimms' tales are protagonists, this thesis only looks at heroines who are the central protagonist of a tale because they are the ones whose stories are commonly adapted. There are many types of heroines depicted within the Grimms' fairytales, and this chapter will examine three of these categories—the Beautiful Princess, the Hardworking Peasant Woman, and the Questionably Innocent Peasant Girl[xxvii]—as depicted within both the Grimmian version of each tale and modern adaptations. Characters such as Dornröschen, Sneewittchen, and the princess from "Der Froschkönig" fall into the first category because they are born as princesses. They are only able to become queen, and thus receive a social promotion, by marrying a prince. Rapunzel, Aschenputtel, and the miller's daughter from "Rumplestitzchen" inhabit the second category because they are born into a lower social class but are able to elevate their social status through marriage to princes. Finally, Gretel and Rotkäppchen are innocent young girls of low social class who succeed in murdering their oppressors.

The Beautiful Princess

This particular type of heroine is very familiar to Americans as she has been greatly popularized—elevated to the point of being iconic—by Disney and other entertainment moguls. Heroines who fall into this category are, as one might naturally assume by the name of the category, the daughters of kings. Their beauty is greatly emphasized and is often their defining characteristic, overshadowing all other traits. This

characteristic combined with their wealth and their father's power make these heroines the subjects of many other characters' admiration and desire, both to possess *her* and to own her material or physical assets. Oftentimes within both the Grimms' fairytales and modern adaptations, the situation the Beautiful Princess must escape, also involves a risk to her father's kingdom. The Beautiful Princess is depicted as particularly helpless, unable to prevent any vicious action targeted against her. This type of heroine only fully succeeds if she marries a prince and is thus able to elevate her social standing by becoming a future queen. The idea of female rulers was still somewhat radical in Germany during the time the Grimm brothers were transcribing these tales, as is evident by the fact that there were no female rulers at the time. The only way for these princesses to become queen was for them to marry an eligible prince and thus gain power in his kingdom. The romantic subplots of these tales were an important factor in this type of heroine's ability to climb socially.

The Beautiful Princess in the tale "Dornröschen" is particularly helpless against the evil that befall her, as she is only in infancy when she receives her curse from a fairy. When she is fifteen years old, Dornröschen (despite her parents' attempts to protect her) encounters a spindle, innocently picks it up, and pricks her finger thus fulfilling the curse that dictates she will sleep for one hundred years. At the end of this period, she immediately agrees to marry the prince who awoke her from her slumber and receives her happily ever after. This character is a very passive heroine with little agency, only acting reactively rather than proactively. Her most independent thoughts and actions lead her to prick her finger on this phallic object which draws blood, resulting in both her loss of innocence and the enactment the curse. Though the narrator does not directly condemn

Dornröschen, the depiction of her as naively touching a mysterious, sharp object—despite the fact that she was likely warned repeatedly throughout childhood to be cautious of such objects—paints her as harmfully oblivious and naïve.

This tale, like many other narratives, depicts women as more susceptible to temptation than men. Numerous examples of historical, and even modern, literature portray women as failing to resist temptation and as fundamentally weaker than men in this regard. Just as Eve gives into her naïve urges and gets humanity cast from the Garden of Eden, Dornröschen's curiosity tempts her to touch the spindle and therefore doom her entire kingdom to one hundred years of sleep. This likely would have destroyed her kingdom as the passing of one hundred years would have led to the dissolution of trade connections, shifting political alliances, and the degradation of agricultural resources. The princess in the tale does not need to worry about any of these critical issues, though, as she is immediately whisked away to her future husband's kingdom, leaving her newly awakened parents and subjects to find a way to rectify the precarious situation she has brought upon them. This presentation of the "heroine" of a tale who manages to endanger her kingdom through one naïve act is unsurprisingly difficult for modern audiences to understand, and many adaptations choose to vindicate Dornröschen by showing her actions to be dictated by fate.

The film *Maleficent* is an example of modern filmmaker's shifting the focus of the tale away from demonizing women for giving into dangerous temptations and toward the idea of predetermination. After Maleficent places her curse on the young princess, Aurora (Dornröschen), the citizens of her father's kingdom take many steps to avoid the curse ever coming to fruition. The King and Queen ask three fairies to take their daughter

into the woods to raise her, hoping that these magical women will be able to keep her safe until the curse fails to afflict the girl by her sixteenth birthday. The royal couple even goes so far as to outlaw the existence of spindles in the kingdom, ordering them all to be brought to the dungeon of the castle and burned. However, many characters acknowledge that this is a hopeless effort, doomed to fail because of the power of the curse. When Maleficent tries to break the curse, it is revealed that "This curse will last till the end of time. No power on Earth can change it." (Stromberg). The curse dictates that Aurora *will* prick her finger; therefore, this event *must* come to pass. There is no ambiguity here, as it is depicted as completely certain that the young princess will succumb to the curse. This erases the stigma of temptation leading a woman to fall and ruin the lives of others because Aurora could not have possibly prevented her fate. Indeed, the scene in which she pricks her finger on the spindle shows Aurora to be in a haze-like state, completely taken over by the curse she has avoided for so long.

Thus, Aurora is depicted as more innocent than naïve. She is quick to trust because she doesn't understand why another person would wish her harm. Aurora is incredibly kind and possesses the ability to see the good in everyone. Any naïvety she possesses could be justified by her experience growing up in a rural area with only three ditzy fairies, Maleficent (who acts as the protagonist in this film), and Diaval to teach her about the world. This character's physical depiction does a great deal to reveal her nature. She has bright blond hair, fair skin and always wears light, natural colors. Aurora is also frequently depicted as standing in a beam of light even when the area around her is in shadow. Thus, she is aligned with nature and light, which both serve to reiterate her innocence and goodness. This adaptation depicts the heroine of this tale as kind and

virtuous, rather than as associated with the taint of evil and temptation as the Grimmian version of her character is.

Another tale contained in *Kinder-und Hausmärchen* that refers to the original sin is “Sneewittchen.” These allusions to the Bible are not particularly surprising when one considers the social climate of Germany at the time the Grimms were collecting these tales. Though the Protestant reformation began in Germany, both Catholicism and Protestantism were flourished in the country by the time that the brothers Grimm were working. As feminist fairytale scholar Ruth Bottingheimer states, “German and Christian are two concepts that have been inextricably linked in Germany for centuries” (144). To be a proper German citizen, one had to also be Christian. Church authorities during the period that the Grimms were writing had immense power over society and their influence even extended into the publishing industry. As Blackbourn reports, "In 1851, one sixth of all the books published in Germany was a work of theology..." (285). It was inevitable the *Kinder-und Hausmärchen* also bore the mark of religion. Several of the Grimms’ fairytales were changed after the first edition because religious authorities viewed them as too radical and protested their continual release without edits.

Sneewittchen is another example of a heroine who the Grimm brothers portray as naïve and unable to resist temptation. She is the only daughter of a king whose first wife died in childbirth and whose second wife is vain and envious of others. As Sneewittchen grows older she becomes more beautiful than the queen, which makes the latter jealous enough to wish her step-daughter’s death. When the princess is seven years old, she is “so schön wie der klare Tag,” or as beautiful as a clear day (Grimm). Sneewittchen’s beauty is her most discussed and praised quality to the point that it seems to be her only

"important" feature. Her beauty puts her in danger, but also saves her multiple times. The Huntsman and the Prince each do their part to help her because they are amazed by her physical appearance. Even the Dwarves are in awe of her beauty, and this is the reason they allow her to stay with them and labor as their housekeeper.

This beauty, however, comes with an astonishing amount of naïvety. The Queen nearly kills Sneewittchen once because she adopts a disguise and sells her a bodice, lacing it tight enough to prevent the girl from breathing. The heroine is fooled by this ruse despite the fact that the Dwarves have warned her not to allow anyone into the cottage. Sneewittchen survives this ordeal and the Dwarves once again caution her not to trust anyone while they are gone for the day. However, despite her past experience and these warnings, Sneewittchen once again allows someone into the cottage. The queen curses the girl by brushing her hair with a poisoned comb. After she is once again revived and warned, Sneewittchen is fooled a third time when she accepts a cursed apple and falls into a deathlike sleep. The heroine's actions in this third incident go beyond youth or innocence and stray into the territory of idiocy. She is not only unable to heed the warnings of her friends, but she is also apparently unable to learn from her past mistakes.

After she is saved from her curse, Sneewittchen immediately agrees to marry the stranger who has been carrying her coffin with him. By marring this prince the heroine elevates her social status and become queen. The last few sentences of the story depict the queen's punishment (she is forced to dance in smoldering iron shoes until she dies), but it is unclear who inflicts the torture she undergoes. In the original German, these sentences are all written in the passive tense and lack an active agent. Thus, it is unclear whether Sneewittchen takes revenge on her step-mother or whether someone else

avenges the girl's suffering. Modern adaptations frequently make drastic changes to this character in order to ensure that she is more compatible with modern feminist views. In most adaptations, Sneewittchen is only fooled by the queen once rather than three times which ensures that she is not portrayed as horrifyingly naïve. Many modern writers and directors also choose to make Sneewittchen a more active agent by depicting her as becoming the queen of her own kingdom, rather than her husband's, and by making her the cause of her step-mother's death.

The film *Snow White and the Huntsman* makes strides toward presenting women as simultaneously strong and intelligent. Snow White (Sneewittchen) is portrayed as remarkably self-sufficient and knowledgeable about the world considering that she spent about half a decade locked in her step-mother's dungeon. One could argue that her diversion from the Grimmian Sneewittchen begins before her conception with the wish her mother makes for a daughter. While Sneewittchen's mother wishes only for a daughter who is beautiful, Snow White's daughter hopes to have a daughter who is beautiful, strong, and kind. Both mothers base their specifications on the qualities of a rosebush in the winter, but one sees only loveliness where the other also sees strength. At the start of the film it is explained that as a child Snow White "was adored throughout the kingdom as much for her defiant spirit as for her beauty" (Sanders). Thus, the staunch emphasis on beauty is shifted in this adaptation and refocused on internal qualities as well. This "defiant spirit" leads Snow White to break out of her cell after so many years of oppression and search for the group of rebels who still resist the queen. However, she cannot accomplish these feats alone and needs the assistance of the Huntsman, the Dwarves, and William Hammon to survive. Though a fighter herself, she is often

portrayed as too delicate and sheltered to succeed on her own. This is made clear shortly after she escapes when she is alone in a dense forest and rendered dazed and delirious by the magic of the place. This scene uses many high-angle shots, which look down on Snow White and present her as weak and powerless in her current situation. The camera then zooms out to show how deep in the woods she is, foreshadowing the hopelessness of her predicament. It is only the knowledgeable Huntsman's arrival that makes it clear that Snow White will make it out of the woods alive.

Despite this reliance on men, the film presents Snow White as gifted individual who is dedicated to her people. She is depicted as the rightful ruler and the one who will be able to bring prosperity back to her people. This is the reason that the Dwarves—a group of men who are forced to become thieves because of the economic state of the kingdom, but who are also deeply connected with nature and magic—agree to help her. The eldest of them, Muir, describes Snow White as "life itself," foretelling that "she will heal the land," which has become broken and desolate under the Queen's rule (Sanders). Thus, it is presented as essential to her people's survival and the balance of the world that Snow White retake her kingdom. This Snow White leads soldiers into a battle to overthrow the Queen and take back her throne, rather than passively becoming a queen through marriage, as the Grimmian version of this character does. The film ends with Snow White killing the Queen herself, which is very different from the ambiguity at the conclusion of the Grimms' tale. The Queen's death is no longer a passive event, but an example of Snow White (an active agent) exerting her strength and fighting for the good of her people.

The television series *Once Upon a Time* takes a different approach to give power and strength to a previously passive and naïve character. This adaptation's Snow White (also sometimes referred to as Mary Margaret) is a gentle, kind individual who is forced into the position of needing to be a fighter. This character was extremely close to her mother, who died when she was around eight years old. Snow White's mother always emphasized a dedication to kindness and benevolence. She expressly endeavors to show her daughter what it means to be a just and righteous ruler, explaining that Snow White must never think herself to be above her subjects because of her fortunate position. Throughout her life, Snow White adapts to her mothers' ideology and carries this focus on the power of hope and the belief that one will always win as long as she is wholly good. She even refuses to kill her step-mother, Regina, because to do so would be to stoop to her level. She believes that there is good deep within Regina and that one day her step-mother will choose to do the right thing. This faith in an individual who repeatedly does evil could be interpreted as naïvety, except that it eventually proves to have been well-founded when Regina finally tries to make up for all the wrong she has done. [xxviii]

This adaptation takes Snow White's strength to an even more pronounced level by adding independence to it. After the Queen demands Snow White's heart, the heroine runs away into the woods. After her plan fails, Regina endeavors to tarnish Snow White's reputation while she sends her soldiers continually searching for Snow White, who must go into hiding. She remains in the woods on her own, stealing from wealthy travelers in order to save enough money to buy passage to another land. Thus, Snow White can survive as an independent young woman, who is wholly self-sufficient. The allies and friends that she later meets then motivate her to stay in her own kingdom and fight to

regain her throne. When she finally is able to take back her throne from her step-mother, Snow White becomes the main ruler of the land as its queen. Despite her marriage to David, himself a "prince," she is the kingdom's primary ruler, not him. This strength and independence, as well as her extreme goodness, perseverance, and hope, are emphasized far above Snow White's beauty. Though her beauty is mentioned over the course of the series, it neither ignites jealousy in her step-mother nor motivates others to help her as it does in the Grimmian version of the tale.

The representation of this type of heroine in "Der Froschkönig" differs greatly from its depiction in both "Dornröschen" and "Sneewittchen." The Beautiful Princess in this tale is neither a model of moral behavior nor of female independence, but she does seem markedly less naïve than either Dornröschen or Sneewittchen. Little information is given about this princess except that she is the youngest and most beautiful daughter of a king. This description of rank and appearance solely defines this character, as she even lacks a name. At the start of the tale, the princess is tossing her golden ball up into the air until she accidentally drops it into a pond, "da fang sie an zu weinen und weinte immer lauter und konnte sich gar nicht trösten" (Grimm). This act of crying inconsolably at increasing volume over the loss of a toy shows this character's ridiculousness. It makes her resemble the princes from the previous chapter whose rank and level of absurdity can be read as a critique of a stereotypical royal trait. Thus, this princess comes to embody pettiness and selfishness. She is also manipulative, though, as she agrees to always keep the frog who helps her by her side then breaks this promise when she abandons him near the pond and returns to her castle. When her father orders her to fulfill the bargain and allow the frog to eat from her plate and sleep in her bed, the princess docilely obeys him.

She is completely subservient to him at this point in the story. When she finally rebels against this oppressive patriarchy, it is to hurl the frog, to whom she is still indebted, against a wall. The princess is lucky, though, because this thoughtless and malicious action actually breaks the frog's curse and returns him to his former princely form. She immediately accepts the affections that she had previously rejected and he just as quickly declares that the two of them will return to his kingdom to be married. This princess does not exhibit a single positive characteristic over the course of the tale, and yet she is rewarded with marriage and social improvement at its conclusion. Thus, this tale seems to promote beauty and status over emotional and moral substance.

Disney's *The Princess and the Frog* makes major revisions to this tale, especially when it comes to the portrayal of this character. Tiana, the heroine who is not yet a princess, has little in common with her Grimmian counterpart. While the Grimms' version of this character is shown to be petty and unwilling to do anything that would reduce her comfort, Tiana has had to work hard her entire life. A cook and a maid, Tiana works as hard as she can in order to save up enough money to buy her own restaurant. Despite the unlikelihood of this dream, she refuses to give it up and perseveres in her hope. This dedication to working toward her goal keeps Tiana from experiencing the fun in life, though, as she is forced to make many sacrifices. She is not interested in ensnaring a prince or any sort of magical happy ending (as her friend Charlotte is), and instead focuses on making her own dreams come true. In many ways, this character fits the Grimmian idea of hard work as a virtue more than the princess in the Grimms' own tale does. When she and Naveen fall in love after they have both been transformed into frogs, they each relinquish their original dreams in order to be together. They are willing to

make the most of a life together as frogs rather than give each other up in search of wealth in Naveen's case and business success in Tiana's. It is this acceptance that actually allows their dreams to come true. When the two marry as frogs, Tiana technically does become a princess and thus their first kiss transforms them both back into humans. This adaptation goes against the stereotypical idea that wealth and status ensure happiness which is presented in the Grimm brothers' version of the tale. Hard work, determination, and love are presented as far more important than the more shallow ideals exalted by the Grimms.

Heroines who fall into the Beautiful Princess model are depicted as pinnacles of perfection. Though the other characters in these tales—and many members of the Grimms' audience—see these characters in such a light, most modern readers will not. These characters are placed into serious predicaments by their economic, social, and physical desirability and require help to escape their situation. Though these characters have many positive qualities, they lack several as well. Modern adaptations frequently seek to make these characters more self-sufficient and powerful in their own right. Depicting these heroines as independent and capable of defending themselves is a large part of this shift, but giving them something to *own* is also very important. In all of the adaptations discussed above, in which the heroines are princesses from birth, they inherit their own kingdom to rule. Tiana, the only one who is not depicted as a princess from the start, is able to own her own "kingdom" in the form of her long-awaited restaurant. Modern adaptations transform these oppressed, passive Grimmian princesses into active agents who are capable of controlling their own fates.

The Hardworking Peasant Woman

This type of heroine is also very commonly adapted within our culture, and is frequently integrated with the previous category because many of the characters rise to the social position of royalty through marriage. There is often an emphasis on their humble social and economic beginnings because, they are depicted as working very vigorously, a marked deviation from the first type of heroine. While the Beautiful Princess is presented as above manual labor of any kind and can only be lowered to that level by a (temporary) loss of her political station, the Hardworking Peasant begins at this level and thus can only rise socially. In fact, it is manual labor that ensures these heroines their happy endings, as it is a way of showcasing their heartiness and virtue. Manual labor can take several different forms within these types of tales. It can take the form of a job that women were allowed to perform at the time such as Aschenputtel's work as a servant in her step-mother's household, or of a continuation of their family's profession like the Miller's daughter's work within her father's business and household, or even the act of motherhood such as the role that Rapunzel is suddenly thrust into after losing everything she had ever known. No matter the work, these heroines are shown to be in a situation that can only be remedied by an auspicious marriage and social advancement.

The Hardworking Peasant is epitomized in the figure of Aschenputtel. This tale has strong religious roots and it specifically praises piety as a virtue toward which to aspire. Immediately before she dies, Aschenputtel's mother advises the heroine to always act piously promising that both she and God will protect the girl from hardship. When Aschenputtel's father remarries, the girl is forced to act as a servant to her Step-Mother and Step-Sisters who, though beautiful, are "garstig und schwarz von Herzen" or ugly

and black of heart. However, she does all she is commanded to do without complaint. Three times a day Aschenputtel devotedly prays at her mother's grave, which she has planted a tree next to. Any time that Aschenputtel desires anything, a white bird that is always in the tree whenever she visits throws it down for her. The Grimmian version of this tale lacks all of the magic and wonder with which Americans typically associate it. Instead, Aschenputtel is rewarded for all of her devotion and piety by a religious force, and it is this same powerful entity that makes it possible for her to go to the Prince's festival. Aschenputtel quickly earns the Prince's adoration, but she is unwilling to let him see where she is from and thus repeatedly runs away from him. When her future husband comes to search for her at the conclusion of the festival and mistakenly rides off with each of her Step-Sisters instead, two doves make him aware of his mistake by cooing to him from the side of the road. The fact that doves, which are often considered to symbolize the Holy Spirit, ensure that Aschenputtel gets her happy ending shows that she is indeed favored by God for her piety and humility. These doves even act as avenging angels, in a sense, when they tear out the eyes of Aschenputtel's step-sisters during the royal wedding. More than any of the other tales examined in this thesis, this tale promotes willingness to perform manual labor and religious devotion. It almost reads as a guide to upright and moral behavior, which is likely exactly what the Grimms wanted it to be.

The film *Ever After* reorients this tale to reflect the reward that kindness and strength, rather than religion, elicit. The film very deliberately interacts with the Grimm brother's version, as the main action of the film is framed in the context of Danielle's (Aschenputtel's) descendent explaining the *real* story to the folklorist brothers so they

can correct their retelling of it. Danielle is an orphan who lost her mother at an early age then lost her father, which whom she was very close, as a young child. Unlike the Grimmian tale which presents Aschenputtel as isolated and essentially lacking a family despite the fact that her father still lives, Danielle does seem to have a family. She is very close to the group of servants that her parents had hired many years earlier, and the four of them form a close-knit family. Though Danielle's situation is desperate, she has people to support and care for her through difficult times. Like Aschenputtel who visits her mother's grave as a way of being close to her, Danielle stays close to her deceased parents through material objects as well. These objects—her mother's wedding outfit and the last book her father ever added to his library—are Danielle's dearest possessions. At one point during the film, her Step-Mother, the Baroness Rodmilla de Ghent, forces Danielle to decide which of the two she values more by holding the book over the fire while one of her Step-Sisters reaches for the dress and shoes. Even once Danielle relinquishes her mother's clothing and holds out her hand for the book, her Step-Mother drops it into the fire. This is one of the most emotional parts of the movie as it shows just how ruthless Rodmilla de Ghent is, as she finds joy in severing the last connection that Danielle has to either of her parents. At the end of the film, rather than allowing them to be mutilated on her behalf as Aschenputtel does and as her new family offers to do, Danielle declares that she will treat them as well as they have treated her. Thus, her Step-Mother and the worse of her step-sisters are forced to work in the castle's laundry room. Not only does this reveal Danielle's fairness and foreshadow her success as a ruler, but it also shows a subversion of social hierarchy which is an important feature of this adaptation.

This adaptation contrasts many characters based upon their social position as well as their morality. While many of the upper class are depicted as beautiful and delicate, those of a lower class are shown to be stronger and heartier. The clearest example of this is the contrast between the characters of Danielle and her step-sister Marguerite. Danielle is kind and places great value on justice and humanity whereas Marguerite is petty, self-centered, and cruel. The two girls are also separated physically, as Marguerite is very delicately, luxuriously pretty while Danielle possesses a more hearty, strong sort of attractiveness. There are character who are shown to breach this gap between the ideal for their class and their true nature as well as ones who emotionally bridge it by treating all people kindly. Jacqueline, Danielle's other step-sister, embodies this idea. She is larger than either her sister or her mother and there are frequent comments from her family that a woman of her status should not eat as she does and they often mock her for her weight. She also works to act like an upright noblewoman, as her mother and sister do, but does so with kindness rather than the cruelty that they possess. Jacqueline physically strays from the idealized appearance for a noblewoman while simultaneously bridging the gap between social classes by treating people of all classes as her equals. This idea of class relations and the importance of being kind and merciful to people of other classes as well as your own pervades the entirety of the film. Danielle is depicted as caring for all people and valuing the role that nobility play as responsible for the welfare of those beneath them. Her rebellion against her step-mother when she goes to the ball thus takes on a note of social rebellion, as she hopes to bring about social change and tolerance. At the start of the movie she morally attempts to smooth the divide between classes despite the fact that she has little power, but she is able to actually accomplish this at the end when she

changes social stations by marrying the Prince Henry. This adaptation takes the religious message within the Grimmian tale and transforms it into a social and political examination of goodness.

Margaret Peterson Haddix's novel *Just Ella* also sets up dichotomies based upon class. Unlike *Ever After*, though, few individuals are shown as capable of exiting the role that they have been ascribed by society and of bridging the gap between different social classes. Even Ella (Aschenputtel) is not capable of this shift despite the fact that she is living in the palace and slated to marry Prince Charming. This is evidenced by the fact that her past is kept hidden from the country and the official story is that she is a princess from a far-away foreign land. Though she has been brought into the royal household and family, she has not been truly accepted for who she is. Throughout the novel many people within the palace attempt to change Ella to make her fit the model of what a perfect princess should be. However, this is not possible because Ella is very different from everyone else in her new social class. One of the characteristics of life within the royal palace is a fascination with and devotion to societal customs and trends. Many of the characters in this social class act as though they have a hive mind and do things that are harmful to themselves in order to be like everyone else in the group. Ella is disgusted by this behavior, rejecting these elements of society in favor of more substantial pursuits, but is continual told that this behavior is integral to being a member of the royal family.

Ella is separated from the palace community by her disregard for propriety in favor of compassion and emotional fulfillment. One example of this is the moment in which Lord Reston, her religion tutor, suffers from a heart attack and collapses in the middle of one of their lessons. Ella saves his life by falling to her knees beside him and

undoing the buttons of his shirt in order to help him get air. The other women of the castle are disgusted by this behavior, as it is considered inappropriate. They encourage her to forget the entire incident and to not let herself be troubled by such a negative occurrence. As Madame Bisset, Ella's etiquette tutor, explains to her: "His Excellency's illness is of a particularly unpleasant nature... As you know, our duty as women is to be protected from unpleasantness, so that our minds and souls--and our brows--shall be unsullied by worry" (Haddix 22) The upper class is shown here to value propriety and tradition over everything, even the human life. Ella, however, is shocked by this thoughtlessness and worries about Lord Reston's health even though she does not particularly like him. Despite the fact that she is now a member of the uppermost class, Ella does not act or think like one of them. Thus, she cannot ever truly *be* one of them. It is repeatedly expressed over the course of the novel that Ella took her destiny into her own hands and changed her own future, which is depicted as very unique. She does this a second time when she chooses to leave the castle and give up the opportunity to be queen in order to search for freedom and love.

This novel also looks at the depiction of beauty within the Grimms' fairytales and extends the depiction of Aschenputtel's stepsisters as beautiful outside but ugly within to more characters in order to more thoroughly examine it. This adaptation seeks to unravel the perceived connection between beauty and goodness and to show the distinction between love and infatuation. For the first part of the novel, Ella truly believes that she is in love with Prince Charming and longs to be able to spend more time with him. However, she comes to realize that she never had any real feelings for him and was merely attracted to his good looks and infatuated with the idea of him. Though she didn't

know him well, she believed him to be a morally upright, interesting man and was able to fall in love with this idea of him. In both the Grimmian version and the background that is set up in *Just Ella*, the idealized couple only know each other for a brief amount of time before committing to marriage. By drawing attention to Ella's folly in agreeing to such a hasty marriage, Haddix calls into question the idea that anyone could know another person well enough to love and marry them after only knowing them for one evening. She is deceived by his attractiveness, assuming that it ensures moral goodness, because it masks a callous and thoughtless mind. This inner darkness is not something that Ella is willing to accept in her future husband, as she values goodness over beauty. Other characters do not, however, and it is made clear that the only reason that Prince Charming asked her to marry him was because she is beautiful. He, and the rest of his court, do not care about her personality or mind.

The class conflict that is only hinted at in "Aschenputtel" is fully explored within the tale "Rumplestizchen." The Miller's Daughter from this tale is described as beautiful, but this feature is only trivial because she was born to a poor family in a relatively low social station. Her father brags to a king, hoping to impress him, that his daughter is able to spin straw into gold. The king then takes the daughter to his palace and orders her to spin increasingly large amounts of straw into gold for three nights in a row, threatening to kill her before he locks her into a room each night. This is a seemingly hopeless situation for a character who cannot actually accomplish such a task, but she is saved by the imp Rumplestizchen who *is* able to do the impossible and turn straw into gold. Each night he asks for payment and, on the last night when she has nothing left to pay with, he demands her first born child once she is queen. Unsure what her future holds and afraid for her

own life, the Miller's Daughter agrees to his bargain. This character is not as passive as many of the other heroines discussed within this chapter, as she manages to pass Rumplestizchen's labor off as her own to the king and later fool her previous savior in order to keep her child.

The tale follows a pattern which continual repeats itself until the young heroine is able to defeat her antagonist herself. There is no real hero within this story because every protector or helper that the Miller's Daughter has turns into an antagonist at one point. First she is under her father's protection, but he falsely brags about her abilities then abandons her to the situation he has gotten her into. The king, who should theoretically act responsibly and justly as her ruler, threatens her and demands that she work for then marry him. Rumplestizchen saves her from the king then turns around and becomes her antagonist by demanding her first-born child as payment. This heroine is continually antagonized from all sides and there is no character that she can ever truly trust. Even once she is married to the king and bears him a child, she alone (with the help of servants) must face down Rumplestizchen in order to protect their newborn. This action of defeating her current oppressor is what breaks this cycle. It is important to note that her clever act of breaking her deal with Rumplestizchen by discovering his real name would not have been possible without the help of one of her servants. It is he who discovers the imp's name and tells it to his queen. Thus, he must also be credited for the bringing about the tale's happy conclusion.

This tale is also interesting because of the way social lines are traversed. There is very little interaction shown between people of the same station and much interaction shown between individuals of radically different social classes. At the start of the story,

the Miller just happens to have occasion to speak with the King. The King's position of wealth is inverted when he must rely on the Miller's Daughter for money. This could, in the context of nineteenth-century Germany, serve to comment on the fact that the nobility are fully reliant on those below them for food, resources, and other services. Considering that the French Revolution had only ended a little over a decade before *Kinder-und Hausmärchen* was published, it is likely that the potential power of the lower classes was on everybody's mind. This theme of royalty needing the assistance of those below them is repeated when the new Queen must trust her servants to find out Rumplestizchen's name. Only a servant's clever listening at the entrance of a cave saves the newborn heir from whatever fate it had been destined to suffer.

The theme of class conflict and the relationships between individuals of different social classes is somewhat lessened—but still present—in the television series *Once Upon A Time*'s adaptation of it. In this version, the Miller's Daughter is named Cora and she herself brags of her non-existent ability to change straw into gold to the King. Cora is very proud despite her social position. She has not accepted what is seemingly her lot in life and wants to punish anyone who has ever looked down on or humiliated her. Unlike the Grimmian Miller's Daughter, Cora makes a bargain with Rumpelstiltskin (Rumplestizchen) that requires him to teach her how to spin straw into gold rather than him simply performing the task himself. While this makes her a much stronger and more clever character than the Grimms' character, it also results in a surprising twist from heroine to villain. The secret to the magic required to complete the task of creating gold from straw is not what one might expect, though, as its basis appears to be in rage. Cora

cannot create gold until she acknowledges the source of her rage and its effect on her. As she relates to Rumpelstiltskin while she spins:

> They made me kneel. I didn't do anything wrong, but they made me apologize to a *child*. I realized no matter how good I was or how hard I worked, I was never going to be more than I am now…. I want to make them bow. I want their kneecaps to crack and freeze on the stones. I want their necks to break from bending. (Horowitz)

This fury and desire for suffering finally enables Cora to accomplish her task. This shared passion for power and the pain of others unites Rumpelstiltskin and Cora and the two become illicit lovers after Cora's engagement to the prince is announced. Over the course of their relationship, Rumpelstiltskin changes their contract to ensure that she only owes him any child that they might have together. Thus, when Cora breaks off their relationship in order to achieve social and political power through marriage, she has managed to finesse her way out of their contract without anyone else's assistance.

Both of the other tales discussed within this section have contained a heroine who has the ability to change her own situation to some degree. The third tale which contains a Hardworking Peasant Woman type of heroine, "Rapunzel," does not possess this same emphasis on female empowerment. Rapunzel is passive and continually suppressed by her surroundings for the entirety of the tale. The very unpleasant situation of being locked within a tower by a witch (Frau Gothel) that she is in at the start of the tale is made even worse after the arrival of her future husband. When she naïvely reveals that the prince has been visiting her, the witch sends her away into the woods. In the seventh edition of *Kinder-und Hausmärchen,* Rapunzel directly asks her captor why she is heavier than the

prince who visits. While this lack of understanding about her true situation and the importance of her secret certainly reveals naïvety, it is less severe of a lack of understanding than is depicted in the first edition. Within this version, Rapunzel asks the witch why her clothing has stopped fitting her correctly. The answer to this question is that she is pregnant as a result of the prince's nightly visits to her tower. Rapunzel is innocent, revealing a child-like vulnerability, as she does not even understand that her activities with the prince were likely to get her pregnant or what this state means for her in the long run. She definitely does not consider the social implications of her actions, which are great considering that she has likely ruined any chance of ever marrying anyone other than the prince (if he even chooses to marry her) as well as her reputation within society as a morally upright woman. Instead, she is worried about short-term concerns such as the tightness of her clothing. This naïvety is erased when she must endure the suffering and labor of motherhood on her own. She must raise twins in the middle of a forest with no resources or survival training. This labor to keep herself and her children alive is what ensures her happy ending after the prince finds them once more.

The novel *Zel* by Donna Jo Napoli follows the plot of the original story closely, and most of the changes are merely to fill in some gaps within the narrative as well as show various characters' thoughts within situations pertaining to them. The most significant change of this novel is the idea to introduce Rapunzel and Konrad before the former is locked in her tower. This difference makes the later sexual encounter between the two far less problematic, as they have each had feelings for the other for years. Napoli's Zel (Rapunzel) grows up believing Frau Gothel to be her real mother. The two

live a very comfortable, though largely isolated, life together. Zel is incredibly kind and intuitive. This is exemplified by the amount of grief Zel feels for a goose that lives in their yard that is never able to lay any eggs. Zel is driven to find the goose an egg to place amongst the collection of stones that the goose treats like eggs. When Konrad offers her anything as repayment for helping calm his horse, she only asks him to get her a fertilized goose egg. She thinks nothing of her own needs and desires, instead placing an addled goose's wants above her own. This kindness, though, leads her to trust everyone she encounters and whole-heartedly believe that her "mother" has only locked her up in a tower out of concern for her welfare. After years of being locked away in the isolated tower, she (understandably) begins to lose her mind. Thus, her naïvety when it comes to the repercussions of having sex with Konrad can be explained away by her waning grasp on reality. Zel, like the Grimms' Rapunzel, is not a particularly strong character until after she gives birth to her twins. Zel's kindness is her strength, as it is what draws others to her and makes them want to trust and help her. She regains her sanity after she is thrown from the tower and ends up in a small community far from her home. Zel receives support, help, and acceptance from the community and is thus able to move past her former trauma and grow into a stronger character.

Disney's *Tangled* is a more loose adaptation, which depicts Rapunzel as possessing far more strength than either Napoli's Zel or the Grimms' Rapunzel. This heroine is shown to fulfill the role of obedient, hard-working daughter at the beginning of the film. The continuous string of her daily domestic and artistic accomplishments shows that she is willing to put in effort and work despite her stifling circumstances. In this adaptation, Frau Gotel stole Rapunzel away from the castle when she was only a small

child (because the young princess' hair has the power to heal and maintain youth) and raised her as her own. She demands that Rapunzel stay in the tower (the only home the girl has ever known) and claims that it is the only place that she will ever be safe. Rapunzel, though she loves and is dedicated to her "mother," is determined to fulfill her long-time dream of seeing the lanterns that light up the night sky on her birthday close up. This desire leads her to leave the tower with Flynn Rider and make the long journey. This decision to leave all that she has ever known shows Rapunzel's courage. She is a surprisingly strong character who is intent on doing right and fulfilling her dream. Rapunzel carries a cast-iron frying pan with her on her journey and wields it as though it is a weapon. This use of an object associated with cooking and domesticity reveals the complexity of her character as she is simultaneously delicately feminine and strong. She is willing to stand up to her mother in order to gain her independence then later to save Flynn's life. She tells Frau Gotel that, if she doesn't allow her to heal her friend, "every minute for the rest of my life, I'll fight" (Greno). She knows exactly how to convince her captor to let her heal Flynn and is willing to spend the rest of her life struggling against her "mother's" oppression. Finally, in the end, it is her hair that saves both her and Flynn from Frau Gotel.

This strength is somewhat surprising considering her innocence and lack of experience with the world outside of her tower. She has never known anything else, unlike both the Grimm's and Napoli's version of her character, and this explains her brief moments of naïvety. This character is both open and kind to all she encounters and this induces them to help her whenever possible. Her kindness and innocence do not lead any character, with the exception of Frau Gotel, to seriously try to take advantage of her. This

is somewhat surprising, but makes sense in the context of her ability to bring out the good in others. Her kindness and goodness seems to inspire those around her and encourage them to pursue their own dreams in a way that is morally upright. These qualities gain her allies who are willing to risk their own freedom and safety to protect her. A significant way that this version of the tale diverges from the others discussed in this thesis is that, at the end, Rapunzel is reunited with her parents in this adaptation. Thus, she does not create her own new family but is able to rediscover her long-lost one. This emphasizes Rapunzel's youth as well as avoids the questionably moral situation that befalls her in other versions.

The Hardworking Peasant Woman is easy for many audience members to identify with because of her humble origins and acts as a figure which embodies the hope of social and economic advancement. All of these characters, as they are portrayed in the Grimms' versions of the tales, marry royalty and are thus able to rise to one of the highest ranks within society. This type of heroine also acts as a moral guide through her dedication to societal values, her uncomplaining effort in her work, and her unwavering religious devotion. While their beauty is discussed, it is depicted as less important than their morally upright behavior. This makes this type of heroine markedly different from The Beautiful Princess. Heroines who fall into the category of the Hardworking Peasant are characterized by their goodness, suffering at the hands of others, and their ability to inspire others to help them. Adaptations depict these characters in a variety of ways, but the most common change is to make these characters more independent and strong in their own right. This strength can be shown through their rebellion against social ideals, their hunger for power, or even their continued goodness despite their situation.

Questionably Innocent Peasant Girl

Related to the Hardworing Peasant Woman is the Questionably Innocent Peasant Girl, as both come from lower class backgrounds and face adversity which they must overcome to survive. The latter type of heroine is typically depicted as very young and comes off as exceedingly innocent at the start of the tale. Tales which feature this type of character are often set in a rural scene and the danger contained in nature is often an important factor in the child's situation. The image of a young child traveling alone, where a much more powerful foe lurks, leads audiences to view this character as both guileless and vulnerable. This idea is called into question, though, as the tale progresses and the heroine herself responds to her changing situation. The two most well-known characters who fall into this category are Gretel and Rotkäppchen.

The tale "Hänsel und Gretel" begins with a relatively common situation in nineteenth-century rural Germany: the impending starvation of a poor family. In order to prevent herself and her husband from starving, the step-mother encourages her husband to abandon his children in the forest. There they will likely die of starvation or exposure to the elements, if they are not killed by wild animals first. The Grimms' version of this tale presents Hänsel as a responsible, protective older brother who must take care of his little sister. She is quick to cry and panic over their situation, which makes her brother's comfort a necessity. This presentation of Gretel as a character that needs to be taken care of and soothed leads the audience to view her as a very young child. Gretel needs to grow up very suddenly, though, when her brother is locked up by a witch who plans to eat him. The witch then forces Gretel to work for her by cooking and cleaning. Thus, like the

heroines within the Hardworking Peasant type, Gretel is forced to perform manual labor in order to prove herself worthy of a happy ending. When the witch tries to kill Gretel by baking her, the young girl manages to shove the witch into the oven and kill her. Gretel continues her heroism when she manages to convince a duck to help them cross a wide body of water which blocks their way home. Thus, Gretel herself(who previously relied so heavily upon her older brother) saves both of their lives. Despite the fact that this murder is an act of self-defense, it does not change the fact that it will likely shock readers to read about a young girl cooking someone alive. Gretel's strength comes from her cunning and her ability to get them out of the dangerous situation in which they had found themselves. However, this violent act does reduce the clarity of Gretel's former innocence.

Each adaptation has a different way of portraying the severity of this act. Donna Jo Napoli's novel *Ugly One*, which is told from the witch's perspective, depicts this conflict in a very unique way. When the witch (only called Ugly One) asks the children to stay with her in her cottage, Gretel does not immediately trust her. Of the two siblings, Gretel is the far more street-savvy and cautious. Gretel neither wants to accept food from or turn her back on Ugly One. While she tries not to offend their savior, she is also unwilling to fully trust her until this trust is earned. This makes her a very sensible and cautious character, not at all naïve. Protecting her brother (who seems to be younger) is one of her main priorities. Gretel's strength and independence make Ugly One come to love and respect the girl, willing to do anything to please her. Finally, Gretel lets down her guard. When Ugly One succumbs to the power of the demons that control her, Gretel is reluctant to believe that their former caregiver truly means them harm. Even as the

witch does everything in her power to convey to Gretel that the girl must shove her in the oven if she hopes to survive, Gretel hesitates. However, to save her brother and herself, she finally kills Ugly One. The fact that the witch *wants* Gretel to kill her, and even chooses her own mode of death, alleviates the corruption of innocence that is implied in the Grimmian version of this moment. One might wonder, though, whether Napoli's Gretel is truly innocent at any point in the novel, considering how conscious she is of the evil in the world around her.

The film *Hansel and Gretel: Witch Hunters* also questions the depth of Gretel's innocence by portraying her as a worldly and dangerous witch hunter. She is a skilled fighter who arms herself with a multitude of weapons. Both Gretel and Hansel are respected by the members of communities tormented by witches due to their reputation as efficient hunters with an excellent track record against monsters of this sort. This role as a fighter and protector help her to navigate both social and political channels that might not have been open to her otherwise. Despite the fact that some men refuse to listen to her advice or obey her commands because she is a woman, her and her brother's physical power as well as the strength that comes from a community of supporters prevent these types of male characters from ever managing to take away any of her social power. She is also endowed with sexual power, though, and she uses her sexuality as a weapon to both seduce and disarm men. Her only weakness appears to be her compassion for other, especially her brother, and her desire to prevent harm from befalling the defenseless. As a protector of innocence, she is placed outside of its influence. She further shows her lack of naïvety and innocence through her choice of dress, battle experience, and coarse language. She is only rendered helpless and child-like when she learns more about her

childhood abandonment and discovers her parent's true motives for leaving her and her brother in the woods. This knowledge forces her to relive and reexamine parts of her childhood and renders her a more tender, innocent character.

The tale "Rotkäppchen" is similar to "Hänsel und Gretel" in that it depicts a family situation which makes it necessary that children be sent into the woods on their own. While Hänsel and Gretel are abandoned by their parents, however, Rotkäppchen is asked to deliver some supplies to her sick grandmother. She is told that she must make a direct journey and that she should not leave the path at all. Unaware of the fact that others may wish to do her harm, she tells a wolf she encounters exactly where she is going and why, then follows his advice when he tells her that she should enter a meadow on the side of the path and appreciate the flowers there. The wolf uses this distraction to race to the grandmother's house, eat her, and dress in her clothing. This slight disguise is enough to deceive Rotkäppchen into thinking that the large, hairy, deep-voiced wolf in front of her is actually her grandmother. The wolf takes advantage of this and eats her up as well. After she is saved by the huntsman, Rotkäppchen appreciates her mother's earlier advice not to leave the path and decides that she will never disregard such a command again. This story serves the very practical purpose of showing children the possible repercussions should they disobey their parents, but also carries some darker connotations.

"Rotkäppchen" is one of the tales most commonly analyzed by scholars and many focus on the more mature subtext of the tale. Many scholars argue that the tale describes Rotkäppchen's sexual awakening. In this context, the red of her cloak takes on the stigma of adultery and her temptation to leave the path her mother advises her to take could

symbolize her enticement to engage in behavior that would lead to her own stigmatization in society. While I agree that this tale represents the seduction of sin, I posit that this sin is both sexual and violent. Rotkäppchen is not only tempted to stray from the socially accepted path by a stronger male character, but she is also unable to resist the urge to force a cruel and painful death upon her antagonist. Near the end of the tale it is clear that the wolf must be killed to protect others from the same fate that Rotkäppchen and her grandmother suffered, but it is also mentioned that the huntsman has a gun which would kill the wolf quickly and mercifully. However, the three heroes of this story do not choose this course of action. Instead, Rotkäppchen finds large stones and places them inside the wolf's abdomen. When the wolf awakens and stands, he collapses and dies. This way of murdering a person is reminiscent of torture tactics such as stoning, crushing, and disembowelment, which makes the act decidedly violent. According to the interpretation of this tale as an allegory for sexual awakening, both inappropriately sexual and violent behaviors tempt Rotkäppchen, and she most definitely allows her own vicious and murderous urges to win out.

Modern adaptations must find a way to interact with these aspects of the text, and each does so differently. The 2011 film *Red Riding Hood* depicts a small, rural village which has been plagued by a werewolf intermittently for as long as anyone can remember. They sacrifice lambs and enforce a strict curfew on all citizens in an attempt to appease the wolf, but this tactic stops working when one day the wolf kills a young woman. Amidst the chaos that ensues after a werewolf hunter comes to town, it becomes clear that the wolf is focused on Valerie (Rotkäppchen), the first victim's sister. The film leaves the identity of the werewolf ambiguous, only giving the audience clues as to who

it might be. Valerie searches her village, trying to determine who exactly could be the wolf and coming up with numerous suspects in her immediate circle alone. Though she is close to her family and depends upon them for support, she is also a very active heroine. She is brave enough to stand up for herself and to keep digging for secrets within her family history, despite the fact that they will likely complicate her current situation. Valerie is strong and independent, which can be seen in her unwillingness to allow others to dictate who she will marry. This leads into the sexual tension which is depicted within the movie between Peter (a character similar to the huntsman) and Valerie. The two of them indulge in sexual acts even though Valerie is engaged to another and their entire town is currently in mortal danger. However, her strong devotion to Peter and her reluctance to marry the man her parents have chosen alleviate the stigma of this unfaithful act somewhat. The question of whether this heroine is guilty of murder is addressed in this film when the entire town comes to wrongly suspect that Valerie herself is the wolf. The fact that she is innocent of this is clear throughout the entire film, though. This issue is raised once more when Valerie kills the real wolf in order to defend herself and Peter. After she stabs the wolf, the couple fills him with stones and places him in a lake so that his body will never be discovered. The cruelty and malice of this act is reduced by both the quick death that Valerie inflicts upon the wolf and the fact that this was the only way that either she or Peter would have made it out of the situation alive. Though the character of Valerie commits several sins over the course of the film, her guilt is lessened by the circumstances that surround each event.

The television series *Once Upon a Time* presents this questionable innocence by blurring the line separating the character of the wolf from Red (Rotkäppchen). In this

adaptation, Red and the werewolf are one in the same. Within this universe, the curse that turns one into a werewolf can be either passed to someone else by a bite or transmitted genetically from parent to offspring. Since Red's parents were both werewolves, she is one as well. She has no idea, however, that this is the case, as she blacks out every time she turns into the wolf and only returns to full consciousness when she transforms back into her human self. Her grandmother, her sole guardian, has never told her the truth. Red starts out as naïve and innocent; her main goal is to secretly meet her boyfriend without her grandmother finding out. When she kills him, though, she is forced to confront the truth about herself. This adaptation deals with the idea of Rotkäppchen as a murderess very uniquely, as she herself is the beast that has killed many of her fellow villagers. Despite the fact that she was completely unaware of her actions, Red carries this guilt with her throughout the series. She is afraid of her wolf half, but tries to use it to do good in the world at the same time. She learns to control the werewolf and uses this power to help Snow White (Sneewittchen) in her attempt to regain her lost kingdom.

Though the version of Red that exists in the Enchanted Forest (before Regina casts the curse that banishes them all to our world to live ordinary lives with false memories) is not particularly sexualized, her alter ego in Storybrooke is. In this land she is known as Ruby and is thought to be one of the most attractive, and easy, women in town. Ruby dresses provocatively in heels, barely-there shorts, and a crop-top, and is depicted as constantly flirting with any man who comes into her grandmother's diner. This is wildly different from the serious and easily frightened girl whose life in the Enchanted Forest was characterized by guilt over her beloved's death. It is important to note, though, that this identity as a sensual, sexualized woman was not her choice but

Regina's, as she created a backstory for each of them within her curse. Though this adaptation does interact with the idea of Red as undergoing an important awakening, it is not merely a sexual one. This heroine discovers her true nature and must learn to control her animalistic urges in order to live a more moral life. Red experiences bloodlust, but is disgusted by and turns away from it. This echoes the moment in "Rotkäppchen" in which the young heroine turns away from both sexual temptation and the scene of the vicious murder she committed in order to return to the moral society of her mother's house. Red, however, has learned a moral lesson which will help her evolve into a better person whereas Rotkäppchen has merely learned to heed her mother's future warnings.

The responses of the heroines who fall into the first two categories discussed in this chapter to their situations differs greatly from the way that the Questionably Innocent Peasant Girl does. While the other heroines discussed in this chapter (with the exception of the princess in "Der Froschkönig") do not resort to violence and thus defeat their opponents more passively. The two heroines looked at in this section do nothing like that. Instead, they are willing to act physically to kill their oppressors in order to survive. Though the ability and willingness to defend yourself from physical harm is something that we typically praise within our society, it is fairly shocking to us to find a young girl who is capable of murder. Gretel's act of murdering her antagonist can be somewhat excused as self-defense, but Rotkäppchen's actions are far more serious. Gretel only uses the closest "weapon" at her disposal, whereas Rotkäppchen actively searches for stones with which to kill the wolf rather than simply using the gun the huntsman is already holding. The modern adaptations discussed above choose to interact with these issues within the tales by presenting the murders that each of these characters commits as

somehow justified or unpreventable. The idea of children committing acts such as the ones the Grimms portrayed is so much more shocking to our society than it was to theirs that these tales must be rewritten in order to gain popular success today.

The Questionably Innocent Peasant Girl is different from the other types of heroine discussed in this chapter in that she possesses active agency and is able to defeat her antagonist on her own. Both the Beautiful Princess and the Hardworking Peasant woman lack this clear, decisive agency and instead must rely on others to help them resolve their problems. These two types of heroines are often presented as models of obedience, domesticity, and beauty, whose characteristics (to some degree) should be emulated. Despite its practicality during the Grimms' time, it is unsurprising that this portrayal of women useful only as domestic workers and as beautiful prizes for men to fight for is difficult for many within our society to tolerate. This depiction is often challenged in adaptations, but not always to the extent that scholars and audiences would like. As Kay Stone, a feminist folklorist states, "…the popularized heroines of the Grimms and Disney are not only passive and pretty, but also unusually patient, obedient, industrious, and quiet. A woman who failed to be any of these could not become a heroine" (qtd McGlathery 22). The tales depict these heroines as perfect and lacking the flaws that many heroes possess, which sets impossibly high standards for young girls and women to reach. Thus, recent adaptations often try to revise the depiction of these characters to make them both better role models for modern women and to make them easier for audiences to identify with. Many of the adaptations discussed in this chapter do this by presenting their heroines as strong, independent, intelligent, and capable of bringing about their own happy endings.

Chapter Three: Unmasking the Villains

A frightening and powerful antagonist is an essential element of every tale within the Grimms' collection and is often one of the most memorable facets of the tale. These characters who startle the reader out of their comfortable view of the world. Just as they force protagonists into undesirable situations, they force the reader to confront uncomfortable thoughts and feelings. Antagonists both drive the plot's beginning and bring about its conclusion with their downfall. According to psychologist Bruno Bettelheim, these characters represent forces that are beyond the reader's control and, because we are invited to identify with the protagonist, the defeat of such villains allows us to vicariously attain victory and power that might not be available to us in reality. The antagonists, and the satisfaction that their downfalls elicit, make these tales compelling to audiences.

Though these villains are often very striking, little is typically revealed about their origins and past. The reader is left wondering about such a character's motives and the justification for the heinous acts attributed to them but such details are typically not related over the course of the tale. The ambiguity of the events leading to their transgressions is part of what leads the audience to find the protagonist more sympathetic and justified in their harsh punishment of these villains. Readers typically despise the antagonist despite the fact that protagonist's response is often equally cruel. If the two sides of each situation were thoroughly presented, the reader might reflect upon the existence of moral ambiguity in both the tale and our wider world. The morality of every situation is influenced by the perspective you view it from, and the Grimms' tales deliberately bias their readers against the antagonist. The motives behind the antagonists'

actions are both vague and diverse, ranging from apparent hunger to jealousy to the desire for power.

Interestingly, a majority of the antagonists depicted in the Grimms' tales are women. Of the tales discussed in this thesis, only two ("Rumplestilzchen" and "Rotkäppchen") contain "male" villains. Rumplestilzchen and the wolf are examples of non-human antagonists who are referred to as male. This is not necessarily a complete reflection of these characters' true sexes, however, as the genders inherent in their names is also a large part of this impression of masculinity. The masculine gender of the word "der Wolf" in the original German makes the wolf a thoroughly male character. Rumplestilzchen is also a somewhat sexually ambiguous character, on the other hand, as he is called "das Männchen." The word "das" is a neuter and the ending "chen" is a gender neutral expression of smallness. Though he is referred to as a man, Rumplestilzchen's name is not as decisively masculine as the wolf's is. Though his name translates to "little man," it could have been worded in a way that would make his gender masculine as opposed to neuter, as it is. Though these two are considered to be masculine, they are not wholly traditionally masculine because one is an animal and the other's gender is somewhat ambiguous. All of the other antagonists examined in this thesis are female, and all of them possess power that they wield over other characters. Whether it is social or magical power, these women use it to enforce their will upon others who are less powerful than they are. This depiction of women who abuse their power reveals a fundamental fear of female power within nineteenth-century German society. The Grimms' fairytales portray powerful women as dangerous and insatiable, never content and always in pursuit of more power.[xxix]

At the conclusion of each tale, these villains are always punished for their transgressions and made to suffer. Typically, these scenes are the most gruesome ones of the entire tale. These punishments serve the purpose of demonstrating the consequences of immoral behavior and satisfy the reader by showing the absolute victory of the protagonist. Such retribution can also be interpreted as too extreme, though. While some of the punishments are fitting considering the characters' transgressions, such as the witch who attempts to bake Hänsel and Gretel, but is then baked herself, others are shockingly over the top. Aschenputtel's step-sisters, for example, are punished for mocking and over-working the protagonist by having their eyes plucked out by birds. These moments in the text are troublesome to many modern readers, and they are purged from most adaptations, and must be examined further. Why is this sort of dramatic punishment *necessary*?

Within the context of the Grimmian versions of these tales, the shocking punishments inflicted upon these antagonists are very necessary. Within the context of representing the true spirit and climate of Germany at the time these tales were orally passed and transcribed, antagonists come to represent the serious dangers within society and the disruption of the social order. These varied antagonists also have another aspect in common, which Louis Snyder points out in the his book *The Roots of German Nationalism*. Snyder argues that all of the antagonists depicted in the Grimms's tales can be classified as outsiders, as none of them fit into the society of the tales. The step-mother, witch, trickster, and wolf are all forces from outside the culture (be it familial, local, or national) that impose themselves upon members of accepted society. Snyder highlights this example of staunch nationalism as a sign of the growing xenophobia in

nineteenth-century Germany.[xxx] The punishment of the antagonists is, according to this interpretation, a way of symbolically cleansing society of the threatening presence of outsiders. Many of these punishments actually reflect the characters' transgressions and the cruelty of these penalties functioned in a way to warn people of the terrible consequences that immoral action could lead to. If these punishments were less shocking, the message that the tales were intended to convey would not have been as memorable. These intense sentences, which typically lead to death, represent the abolition of sin and the restoration of social order. While the penalties themselves are significant but explainable, it is still important to note who exactly inflicts this punishment. Who, in each tale, is responsible for the mending of society and how does this role affect our reading of this character?

This chapter will examine the depiction of antagonists in the Grimms' fairytales and the way that they are reappropriated in modern adaptations. In the Grimmian versions of the tales, this type of character has very little backstory and their motives are ambiguous. Most modern adaptations argue against this depiction and attempt to show that no situation is starkly evil versus good, that there is always a gray area in between. The character types that will be examined in this thesis are the Witch, the Step-Mother, and the Trickster.[xxxi] The category of Witch includes any antagonist that makes some use of magical ability or enchantment. The Grimms use multiple terms to describe this kind of character, which in German can refer to fairies of sorceresses. Due to the fact that these antagonists possess the same role in the tale and share many characteristics, I have grouped them together in this thesis. The Step-Mother overlaps with the Witch, and includes one character, the antagonist in "Sneewittchen," who fits into both categories.

However, the Step-Mother possesses the added evil of being cruel to a member of her own family. The Trickster is an interesting type of antagonist because he possesses magic like the Witch, but his use of it is dependent upon successful deception and illusion.

The Witch

Though characters that fit into this category do not exclusively have to be female, a majority of them are. The figure of the witch and the connotation of over empowered women are tied in with the earlier discussion on the fear of female power. The concept of witchcraft throughout history—from Greco-Roman times through the nineteenth century—was entangled with the idea of power within society. The women most commonly accused of being witches were the ones who were attempting to move out of the role that their culture had ascribed to them. They could do this either by owning businesses without the aid of a husband, remaining unmarried and living alone, or even just offering an opinion on non-domestic issues more frequently than was deemed appropriate. Widows who had inherited their husband's property and continued to manage it without remarrying are at the root of the common Western notion that witches look like old crones.[xxxii] Though historically some men were persecuted as witches, primarily women were the victims of this practice.[xxxiii] When the term "witch" is used in reference to folklore, though, it almost exclusively refers to female characters.[xxxiv] During this period there was a very real fear of witches and their power. As Germanic scholar Sigrid Brauner explains in her book *Fearless Wives and Frightened Shrews: The Construction of the Witch in Early Modern Germany*, witch hunts and trials existed throughout Europe up until 1750 and nearly half of the persecution in Europe was in

Germany. This means that women were hung as witches in Germany a little over fifty years before the first volume of *Kinder-und Hausmärchen* was published in 1812. The fear that had existed in Germany since the fifteenth-century was not simply erased after half a century without incident. The anxiety associated with witches would still have been very present during the time that the Grimms were writing and transcribing these tales, which helps explain the number of witches portrayed within them. Though such characters may seem like silly superstitions to modern audiences, these characters would have incited real fear amongst the Grimms' general audience.

Not all of the witches depicted in *Kinder-und Hausmärchen* are extensive magic users. Some of them seem to only use magic in isolated circumstances, such as the witch in "Rapunzel" who is able to raise a daughter for several years without revealing her secret, while others are described as frequent magic users for whom enchantment is a part of daily life, such as the witch in "Hänsel und Gretel" who magically maintains a house made of candy in order to lure children to her. A common element between both groups, though, is the fact that both need magic in order to fight. Without magic the witch in "Rapunzel" would not have been able to blind the prince and the witch "Hänsel und Gretel" would not be able to obscure her wickedness enough to trick children into entering her home. While heroes and heroines can utilize physical and emotional strength, cleverness, beauty, religious devotion, and kindness as a means of overcoming their circumstances, witches can only use their magical and social power. Despite the fact that they are terrifying adversaries, their lack of positive, admirable qualities places them somewhat at a disadvantage to begin with. In the staunchly religious climate of nineteenth-century Germany, these characters also would have been associated with sin

and a connection with the devil because of their magic use.[xxxv] Thus, their very existence was somewhat of an affront to organized religion. These witches also seem to share a complete disregard for human life that the other antagonists discussed in this thesis do not typically possess.

The Witch in the tale "Rapunzel" is a very interesting character because she has no clear motives for her actions at the beginning of the story. She is aligned with nature at the start of the tale by her lush garden, but it also carries connotations of seductive enchantment because the peasant woman in the tale desires the plant rapunzel[xxxvi] so much that her longing makes her physically ill. When her husband steals her some, her hunger is not satiated and thus he must steal even more from the witch's garden. She catches him the second time and demands the couple's unborn child in exchange for sparing both of their lives after they stole from her and for as much rapunzel as they like. Though she tells the man that she will treat the child as her own, she does not give any reason for wanting the child. She raises the child and, as Rapunzel grows more beautiful, the witch decides to lock her in a tower when she is only twelve years old. One can assume that the witch wants to keep Rapunzel to herself, but this is never clearly stated in the text. When she discovers that the girl has been bringing someone else into the tower, the witch is so furious that she cuts off the girl's hair, sends her away, then uses the hair to trick the prince who had been visiting her into entering the tower once more. She thus ensures that the prince is blinded and that Rapunzel is on her own to raise the children she conceived during one of the prince's daily visits.

The witch's choice to keep Rapunzel fully isolated, with only herself as company, is very interesting because it seems to have no point. What makes it so negative is that

Rapunzel is not given any choice in the matter or any opportunity to engage in society. Alone in her tower, the girl will never be able to fulfill the roles that society would normally expect her to. Rather than marrying someone that the Church and her parents approve of and having children in the appropriate time, Rapunzel is cut off from society. Thus, the Witch subverts societal custom and makes Rapunzel's adherence to social norms impossible. However, the tale can also be read as an allegory of sexual awakening. In this case, the tower would symbolize the virgin girl's raised position in society and her removal from it would be analogous to the moral and societal fall of a woman who has had pre-marital sex. This interpretation leaves the Witch's role somewhat confusing, as she is the one to punish Rapunzel and the prince for their transgressions. She seems to be a representative of the Church, and it is important to note that she actually appears to escape without punishment at the end of the tale. Only three of villains within the eight tales discussed in this thesis are not punished for their actions throughout the tale. Though I would not argue that this character is not a villain because she causes harm to several others in the tale, she is also not as thoroughly wicked as some of the other antagonists discussed in this chapter. It is important to note that this witch calls Rapunzel a "gotlosses Kind," or godless child. This wording is very interesting considering that witches would be considered godless during this period. Instead of being applied to the Witch, however, it is applied to the heroine. It is also important to note that this antagonist does not receive any punishment for her transgressions, which is rather unique. This tale almost seems like a critique of the Church, as the character who forces her standards upon others then punishes them for failing to comply to them is demonized.

Donna Jo Napoli's novel *Zel* follows this plotline closely, but seeks to discover the Witch's motives despite their ambiguity in the Grimmian text. The novel is told in a mixture of third and first person narrative style, and switches perspectives between Mother (the Witch), Zel (Rapunzel), and Konrad (the prince). Only Mother's sections are told in the first person, however, and the novel focuses primarily on her thoughts and desires. Mother is the epitome of an over-protective mother. She wants a child but cannot have one. Her desire for one is so strong, though, that she trades her soul to demons, thus becoming a witch to get Rapunzel. The demons only agree to help her if she promises to urge her adopted daughter to also become indebted to them, swearing that mother and daughter will be separated permanently if the girl does not consent. Mother loves Zel dearly, and she wants to keep her to herself so badly that she locks her daughter away in the tower when she realizes that Zel has gotten to an age where she is interested in marriage. Mother views them as connected to the point of almost being one single entity: "I have been enjoying the unity of Mother and Daughter, weaving through the crowds like a single strand of yarn. As I leave Zel with the smith, I feel a sharp loss. I am sacrificing our wholeness, though the sacrifice is all for her sake. The only consolation is that the separation is only temporary" (Napoli, *Zel*, 13). The idea of losing Zel permanently makes Mother act the way she does, and the fact that her actions are influenced by demons only adds to the severity of her actions.

When Mother realizes how much Konrad and Zel love each other and the depth of Zel's insanity, which is brought on by her captivity, she regrets her attempts to keep the two apart. Mother's death comes about when she sacrifices her own life by using all of her power to save Konrad after the demons influence her to throw him from the tower. At

the conclusion of the novel, Mother appears to have gained another life in the form of a barren goose that lives in the yard of the house in which Zel raises her children. Here, the first-person narration resumes after having ended when Mother died. She observes as Zel and Konrad are reunited and narrates that "… they see each other and, yes, oh, yes, we are happy" (Napoli, *Zel*, 227). Once the demons' influence over her has ceased Mother can understand that she and Zel must stop being a single entity if her daughter is ever to grow up and live her own life. She is content with Zel's happiness, and even find her own joy in it. Napoli's Mother is driven by her desire for a child to love and nurture to steal a child then later isolate her in an attempt to keep her to herself.

Mother Gothel--the Witch--in *Tangled* has very different motivations, however. The story begins when this Witch finds a magical flower that can heal and restore youth, then chooses to keep it to herself rather than share it with the world. When the pregnant queen ingests this flower to heal her severe sickness, her child is born with brilliant blond hair that possesses the abilities that the flower had. Mother Gothel kidnaps the young princess because she wants to hoard this gift as she did with the flower, and raises her in a remote tower. This version of the character is not nearly as loving as Napoli's adaptation of her, as she continually verbally abuses Rapunzel in an attempt to make her stay in the tower. When it comes to keeping the girl or giving her the freedom to live her own life, Mother Gothel does whatever is necessary to keep her. She is prepared to manipulate and trick Rapunzel into staying with her willingly but, when that does not work, she resorts to threatening and physically trapping the girl. This adaptation of the tale presents Mother Gothel as a pure antagonist with no redeeming qualities, but also seeks to show her motivations. This character is driven solely by greed and is willing to

do whatever it takes to get what she wants. This is likely due to the fact that this adaptation is targeted toward children, and is simplified in order to make the story and its moral implications less confusing for young audiences

While the Grimms' depiction of the Witch's motives in "Rapunzel" is left ambiguous, that is not the case in "Dornröschen." The conflict in this tale begins when only twelve of a kingdom's thirteen witches are invited to a ceremony to celebrate the birth of the new princess, Dornröschen. One might assume that this sort of feud would be due to something very serious, such as a negative past relationship between the king and the uninvited witch, but the slight actually occurrs because the king only possessed twelve golden plates with which to serve his honored guests. The witch's response to this insult is to come to the celebration and curse the newborn princess, commanding that she will die after pricking her finger on a spindle before she turns sixteen. After she leaves, the other fairies are able to lessen the curse by amending it to say that the entire kingdom will sleep for one hundred years when the princess pricks her finger, but that all will survive. Changing the curse is the only option, as the witch's magic is too strong to fully break. The Witch is not discussed again in the tale, but the effects of her curse continue to be the main conflict within the plot. This antagonist shows a complete disregard for human life, as she is willing to curse a child to death because she is offended by a minute slight committed by the girl's parents.

The film *Maleficent* reworks the plot of this tale in order to give the Witch a stronger motive for this horrible act. A conflict between two neighboring kingdoms (one which is populated by humans and the other which is populated by magical beings) is what starts this feud between Maleficent (the Witch) and King Stefan. At the beginning

of the film, the young Maleficent and Stefan meet and become close friends. Stefan eventually betrays her, though, to gain social power and become king. He cuts off her wings in order to make it look as though he had killed her, then keeps them locked in a glass cabinet as a trophy. The disfigured fairy is motivated by revenge to gain witch-like powers in order to make Stefan suffer as she has, then seeks to wound him by cursing his daughter Aurora (Dornröschen) to die. She amends her own curse, however, so that the girl will only sleep and can be awakened by true love's kiss. This is not as generous as it seems, though, as Maleficent does not believe that true love exists. Maleficent later explains that she was "so lost in hatred and revenge" that her kind and loving nature is clouded by this desire for vengeance and resurfaces again later in the film. (Stromberg)

The king attempts to prevent this fate by burning all of the spindles in the kingdom and hiding his daughter with three immature fairies, who will take on the job of raising her. Maleficent starts protecting the child from harm in order to ensure that the girl does not die before her curse can take effect, but then begins to genuinely care for the girl. She attempts to protect Aurora from the curse, but is ultimately unable. Maleficent then risks her own life to sneak into the castle where Aurora sleeps in order to bring Prince Philip to kiss and hopefully awaken the sleeping princess. It is ultimately not Philip's kiss that awakens Aurora but Maleficent's, as the fairy has come to love the girl like a daughter. While in the castle Maleficent regains her wings but is trapped by Stefan and his men. When she is near victory, Maleficent chooses to let Stefan live despite her hatred of him. Stefan's own thirst for revenge causes his death. This adaptation presents the Witch as a character who, though ultimately gentle and kind, gets caught up in her desire to retaliate against Stefan and make him feel the same amount of loss that he

inflicted upon her. The goodness that the viewer sees in Maleficent is affirmed by Aurora's love and respect for her. At the end of the film, it is revealed that Aurora is the narrator and thus the possible view of the film as a misrepresentation and justification of Maleficent's actions is opposed. With a reliable narrator such as Aurora, the audience can trust that the view of Maleficent as "one who was both hero and villain" presented in the film is genuine (Stromberg). This adaptation, similar to both of Napoli's novels, challenges the straight-forward way we view the dichotomy between right and wrong by transforming the story of a character who has been traditionally shown to be a villain into the hero of her own story.

The Witch depicted in "Hänsel und Gretel" also has very clear motivations for her actions. This character deliberately lures children to her with her house constructed entirely of candy in order to eat them. She pretends to be a kind, elderly woman and thus lulls them into a false sense of safety, then endeavors to fatten them up and eat them as one would do with livestock. She traps Hänsel in a cage and continuously feeds him while she gives Gretel little food and forces her to work. Cannibalism is repugnant to nearly every society and is representative of the dissolution of social order. When individuals are eating each other, society is thrown into chaos; thus, the Witch's death represents the mending of this societal fracture. As discussed above, this character's punishment is seemingly fitting and just because she is killed in the same fashion that she had planned to murder another. There seems to be another motive, however, which is not deeply explored within the tale. The Witch possesses several chests laden with jewels and gold, the origin of which is not explained. Could this character also have financial

motives for her acts or is this just an element of the tale which is necessary to ensure Hänsel's and Gretel's happy ending?

Donna Jo Napoli's novel *The Magic Circle* is similar to her later novel in that both function to reveal the complex motivations and morality of characters that are traditionally viewed as simply, solely evil. Ugly One, the Witch, starts the novel as a gifted midwife and healer who gains her magic from her faith in God. She is driven to give her daughter anything in her power, bestowing beautiful jewels and gold upon the girl as often as possible. The urge to gain a precious ring for her daughter leads to her possession by demons and her transformation into a witch. Once the devils gain control over her, she flees into the forest and builds a house made entirely of candy as a way of remembering her daughter, who loved sweets. Ugly One tries to stay far away from other people so that the devils will not be able to force her to do harm. It is completely by coincidence that Hansel and Gretel find her house, but Ugly One is so touched by their story that she feels the need to protect them.

> So long as no devil knows that these children are here, so long as no devil can speak within my head, these children may live here with me. I can take care of them. I have lived in isolation for nine long years. Surely it is time for me to have companionship again. We can be a family of sorts. (Napoli, *The Magic Circle* 93)

Ugly One is so focused on protecting others that she is willing to sacrifice her own happiness. She has spent several years in isolation and only breaks this resolution when she discovers Hansel's and Gretel's situation. Ugly One genuinely wants to offer the

children protection and love, whereas the Grimms' version of the character only pretends to feel this way.

Ugly One's fear of the danger of discovery by devils turns out to be justified when they find out that Hansel and Gretel are staying with her. They urge her to kill and eat the children she has come to think of as her own, and she is forced to do it despite the fact that she does not want to. Ugly One still does everything she can to protect them, though. She reasons that she will not be able to tell the children something that will pain them or hurt them physically if she can neither speak nor see. Thus, she bites off her own tongue and freezes her eyes shut in order to shield Hansel and Gretel from danger. When these measures do not work, Ugly One tries to communicate to Gretel that the only way that she and her brother can survive is if she kills their captor. She even lights the fire and positions herself in front of the oven so that the girl can push her in. Ugly One cares so much about others that she goes into hiding, but is driven by maternal instinct to shelter and nurture Hansel and Gretel. Her love for them is so strong that she is willing to die to protect them from herself.

The last antagonist within the Witch category who will be examined in this thesis is the villain from "Sneewittchen." This character is interesting because she is both a Witch and a Step-Mother. After marrying Sneewittchen's father, this witch becomes queen. She is remarkably beautiful, but is also jealous and vain. When she discovers that Sneewittchen has grown to surpass her in beauty, she decides that she must kill the girl. She first tries to kill her through non-magical means but, when that fails, she resorts to using her magic. Her clearest uses of magic are her magic mirror (which tells her who is the most beautiful) and her use of disguises to fool her rival into trusting her. Both of

these uses of magic are appearance based, which shows the extent that appearance is this antagonist's obsession as well as her weapon. Beauty and power are strongly linked in this tale, and this antagonist's punishment is the loss of both of these. She is forced to dance in hot iron shoes, which would effectively disfigure her and rob her of some of her beauty, and is stripped of her crown.

In the film *Snow White and the Huntsman*, this character's fixation on beauty and power are explained by childhood trauma. On the eve of her wedding to Snow White's (Sneewittchen's) father, her army invades the castle and she kills the king. Thus, she is able to take complete power over the kingdom and govern it along with her brother. Her jealousy over the way that Snow White is so beloved by all is apparent from the day of her marriage, and she locks the heroine up in a dungeon at the start of her reign. Over the course of the film, it is revealed that Ravenna, the Witch, grew up very poor and powerless. She believes that her reign is better than that of the king who was in power when she was a child, who made life so difficult for his people. One particular scene shows the moment when Ravenna lost her mother. As their village is invaded, her mother advises Ravenna that beauty is the only way that a woman can possess power. The antagonist states that "men use women," explaining that men only ruin and discard women after they are no longer of use. Her desperate attempt to obtain power and the horrible lengths she goes to in order to maintain her beauty are somewhat understandable in light of this knowledge. While she is shown to be manipulative, cruel, and disregard for human life, the audience is positioned to sympathize with Ravenna.

ABC's *Once Upon a Time* also works to show how Regina's (the Witch) past has influenced her present actions. Unlike Ravenna, Regina is the daughter of a prince who is

low in line to receive the throne and thus grew up wealthy. Her mother is the Miller's Daughter from "Rumplestilzchen," and has always pushed Regina to be the best that she can be. She wants Regina to be the next queen, and manipulates the situation to ensure the possibility of this. Regina has always been pushed to succeed and forced to be something that she isn't. When she becomes queen, she starts to learn magic so that she can be independent and powerful. She becomes so ambitious and so focused on revenge that she loses sight of everything she once loved. When the choice is presented to her, she decides to sacrifice her own father in order to make the curse that will bring about her revenge work. Regina starts out as a kind character who desires independence, but power and anger change her to the extent that she is willing to give up everything she once loved in order to achieve her revenge.

Many of the antagonists who fall into this category are revealed to have complex motives and histories in modern adaptations. Several of them are presented as formerly innocent and kind, but corrupted by power (both magical and political). This would seem to suggest that power is somehow an evil, corruptive force and that only those who are truly dedicated to doing good can handle its weight. The Grimmian depiction of these characters and the way that it ties in with social, religious, and sexual dynamics is very interesting. There is no way to disentangle these witches from the fear of witches in society, the belief that such individuals were closer to the devil, and the fact that witch persecution was a way of suppressing free-thinking women. This type of antagonist is depicted as possessing a ruthless disregard for human life, as they are willing (or forced in the case of Napoli's novels) anyone who gets in the way or their acquisition of power.

The Step-mother

This type of antagonist is unsurprising considering the frequency of women dying young during this period and the subsequent frequency of remarriage. Within the culture that these tales developed, many children had step-mothers who may or may not have their best interest at heart. Louis Snyder argues that the "stepmother's real crime is disruption of the family, the alienation of the children and even the father. She is an alien in the home, an outsider, a foreigner in the state" (49) While I agree that this is a part of her villainization, I would not subordinate it over the brutality she inflicts upon her step-children. The step-mothers depicted in the Grimms' fairytales have the freedom to be as cruel to their step-children as they like because they have remarkable power over their husbands. Wives were typically considered to be in charge of domestic matters such as tending house and child rearing during this time, which meant that husbands often had little involvement in their children's upbringing. The fathers depicted in these tales show little interest in their children's welfare and do not intervene on their behalf in the face of their step-mothers' cruelty. The relatively recent societal shift towards more even distribution of parenting duties makes this part of the texts difficult for modern readers to understand. Thus, many modern adaptations depict the child's father as passing away shortly after he remarries in order to erase the father's negligence from the tale. Another aspect of nineteenth-century society that plays a role in the step-mother's cruelty is the fact that their own children would have had to vie with their step-children for inheritance. With the husband's children from his previous marriage out of the way, it was far more likely that his wealth and property would be passed on to her own children.

The Step-Mother in "Sneewittchen," who is discussed briefly above, is particularly fascinating because the character was not Sneewittchen's step-mother in the first edition. Instead, it was Sneewittchen's own mother who rivaled with and eventually tried to kill her. This version was considered subversive to the natural social order and not reflective of Christian values, however, and the Grimms were thus urged to alter it. The idea that a mother would kill her own child out of vanity was deplorable, but the fact that a step-mother would do such a thing was more acceptable. Even though she is only the princess' step-mother, she has still known the child nearly her entire life since she and the king were married only a year after Sneewittchen was born. Despite this familiarity and time spent together, the Step-Mother is willing to do whatever it takes to achieve her goal of being the most beautiful. The queen can accomplish such heinous things because her husband is absent, presumably off performing diplomatic duties, and Sneewittchen is entirely in her care.

The question of motivation for her terrible treatment of Sneewittchen is raised in the television series *Once Upon a Time*. As discussed above, Regina is corrupted by her pursuit of power and revenge. What does she need to avenge, though? The show uses flashbacks to show the early interactions of Regina and her future step-daughter (who is approximately ten years old at the time) and explain the true reason for the hatred she has for her. The two meet when Regina saves Snow White from a runaway horse and the king soon proposes to her because of the genuine interest she has shown in his daughter. Regina, however, is in love with a stable boy and plans to escape her impending marriage to the king by eloping with her lover. Snow White reveals the secret and the girl's actions result in the death of Regina's fiancé. Shortly after, Regina marries the king and begins to

plan her revenge. After several years of marriage and magical training, the queen has her husband killed and assumes the throne herself. Snow White is forced into hiding because she is constantly hunted by the queen's soldiers. Regina is not content with this small victory, however.

When she enacts the curse that brings all of the fairytale characters depicted in the series to live in Storybrooke, Maine with falsified identities and memories, Regina is briefly satisfied. She soon learns that she wants someone she can love and who can love her in return, and she chooses to adopt a son. She names him Henry, in honor of the father she sacrificed to achieve her goals. Though Regina is cruel and single-mindedly determined to get her revenge at the start of the series, her love for her adopted son begins to evoke change in her. Her love for Henry eventually motivates her to let go of her anger and try to find a more peaceful happy ending. Though this character is depicted as a ruthless and cruel step-mother, she turns into a loving and nurturing mother. This, along with her tender relationship with Snow White before her former fiancé's death, seems to imply that revenge is the only thing that motivates this character to do evil. Had she not been left heart-broken and been tempted by magic, it seems as though she would have been both a loving step-mother and a benevolent queen.

An even more well-known example of this type of antagonist is the Step-Mother in the tale "Aschenputtel." The Step-Mother in this story has two daughters from a previous marriage, who she values over Aschenputtel. While she spoils her own children, she forces her step-daughter to work in exchange for food and lodging. Her husband never stands up for his daughter; he merely accepts anything that his wife says and does not argue for better treatment of Aschenputtel. Her motives for doing this, though never

directly stated, are clear. This Step-Mother works to ensure that her own daughters get everything that her step-daughter might have otherwise received. She does this in the tale when the prince comes to find the woman he had met and lost at the festival by pushing her own daughters forward as likely candidates. She disfigures each of her daughters by cutting off parts of their feet (so that they fit into the shoe the prince has) and sends them off to marry the prince. Theoretically, she also hopes to ensure that her children receive her husband's inheritance. By relegating Aschenputtel's position to that of a servant, it seems likely that her own daughters would be viewed as the natural inheritors of her second husband's estate. Though this antagonist treats her step-daughter abominably, she does nothing to physically harm Aschenputtel and only works to secure better social and economic positions for her own daughters instead. At the end of the tale, she is punished by knowing that all of her schemes have failed. Her daughters are not going to become royalty and are, in fact, now both crippled. Each is blind with chunks of her feet missing, and would likely need much assistance from their mother. Instead of moving her daughters on to higher social positions, she must now care for them as long as she lives.

The Baroness Rodmilla de Ghent from *Ever After* has similar motives for her treatment of Danielle (Aschenputtel). She frequently works to raise her daughters socially, going so far as to work to get the more promising of the two engaged to the prince. The Baroness is, however, deeply in debt and must sell off pieces of her property in order to pay for her extravagant lifestyle. She is willing even to sell her servants, including Danielle, in order to achieve her goals. A significant deviation from the story, though, is that the Baroness appears to have truly loved her husband, Danielle's father. She grieves when he dies early in the film and is even tender to Danielle in moments in

which she remembers him. However, she is also jealous that her husband used his dying breath to tell his daughter that he loved her and not his wife. This jealousy leads her to treat Danielle with contempt. In comparison with many of the other antagonists discussed in this chapter, the Baroness' treatment of Danielle is petty and thoughtless rather than outright cruel. She has multiple motives for her actions such as her desire to do the best by her own daughters, her grief over her late husband's death, and her jealousy of the relationship Danielle and her father shared.

Step-mothers were very common in nineteenth-century Germany and are thus also common in the tales contained in *Kinder-und Hausmärchen*. Antagonists who fall into this category exhibit remarkable control over their husbands and have a variety of motives for their actions. The family dynamics depicted in tales such as these is particularly shocking to modern audiences due to the way that societal expectations of parenting have changed. In a society in which there was economic crisis, in which inheritance could make or break an individual, and in which it was acceptable to abandon children in the woods if you could not afford to keep them, these depictions of the family would not have been as shocking. Our society, on the other hand, expects that parenting to be split more evenly between husband and wife and that a step-mother will treat her husband's children with at least the basics of common courtesy. Thus, in order for tales with this type of antagonist to continue to be popular, motives such as jealousy are added in and the figure of the negligent father is removed from the scenario.

The Trickster

The Trickster is an antagonist who uses intellect and logic to get what he wants. That makes this type of villain very different from the others examined in this thesis, as his strength comes solely from himself whereas the others must gain strength from outside sources such as magical practice and social position. The Trickster uses riddles and complex language to trick other characters into doing exactly what he wants them to do. *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairytales* defines this character as "one who engages in trickery, deceives, and violates the moral codes of the community" (992). He manages to manipulate people and almost acts as a puppet master, controlling a situation in its entirety. Antagonists who fall into the Trickster category are particularly frightening to audiences because so little is known about them. With so little information given about him in tales, there is no way for readers to understand or predict his actions and this unpredictability makes him strange and mysterious. The tales that feature the Trickster make use of the natural human fear of the unknown and use it to alarm audiences.

The only tale analyzed in this thesis that contains this type of antagonist is “Rumpelstilzchen.” As discussed at the start of this chapter, there is some ambiguity surrounding the question of whether or not this character is actually human. He possesses great powers and operates fully outside of societal structure, which seems to indicate that he is something more than human. Though he does not place the heroine in her original predicament, Rumpelstilzchen takes full advantage of a situation that will benefit him. He has knowledge that the heroine wants and he proposes a trade in exchange for his services each time he renders them. He starts out asking only for small pieces of jewelry

that the heroine will not sorely miss in order to trick her into trusting him. Only once there is an end to her ordeal in sight and once she knows that she will die if she refuses him, does he ask for her first-born child. This demand shows that he *knows* as a matter of fact that the heroine will become pregnant with a child and is certain that the child will benefit him in some way. This moment in the text gives readers the impression that Rumpelstilzchen sees the bigger picture surrounding every situation and is able to use his extensive knowledge against others. Similar to the Witch in Rapunzel, his motivations and plans are left very ambiguous. There is no reason given in the tale *why* he would want a newborn baby, but he does mention that he plans to "back" and "brau," or bake and brew, which suggests that he might plan to eat the child. This lack of solidly stated reason and range of possible ones makes his actions somewhat more sinister than they might have been otherwise. His Achilles Heel is the power his name has over him, as it can neutralize his ability. Once another person uses his name against him, Rumplestilzchen dies. His own unguarded use of his name while he is on a remote mountain leads to his downfall as, once the heroine finds it out and uses it, he kills himself by tearing himself in two.

Rumpelstiltskin (Rumpelstilzchen) is featured prominently in the television series *Once Upon A Time*, and he is worked into many of the tales presented. He is one of the most powerful forces of the series and nearly everyone fears him. He does not start out the way, however, as flashbacks reveal that he was once a weak and cowardly peasant who was disrespected and abandoned by nearly everyone around him. This previous abandonment and mistreatment ensure that, when he does gain power, he feels the need to make the world pay for everything he had endured. Rumpelstiltskin originally gains

power and becomes “The Dark One” in order to protect his young son who has been drafted to fight in a terrible war. The power he gains and his very life become tied to a dagger that bears his name. It is the source of his power, a means of controlling him, and the only weapon in the world that can kill him. This transformation from man to magical creature interacts with the question of whether the Grimms’ Rumpelstilzchen is really human, and posits that he once was. Once he possesses the dagger and its powers, though, he is able to do virtually anything he likes and he soon gains the ability to see into the future. When he is able to know and understand all of the tiny details that go into the creation of the future, he is able to manipulate events to ensure that things benefit him. Rumpelstiltskin does this on a great scale, going so far as to plan and influence seemingly unconnected events for years in order to achieve a desired outcome. He is as ruthless as he needs to be to achieve his goals, and is depicted as the most corrupt of all of the central characters.

This adaptation attempts to make his motivations much clearer than they are in the Grimmian tale. Though the reasons for his actions are revealed to the audience through the use of flashbacks, none of the other characters in the series are ever able to fully understand his reasoning and his motives. This narrative technique ensures that the series’ other characters are just as afraid of him as the Grimms’ audience would have been, but he is less mysterious to modern viewers because they know more about him. Many of his actions are based in fatherly love, as he cares about his son very much. He spends years manipulating circumstances to be just right for him to find his son again after the two are separated and he even goes so far as to create the curse that transports all of the characters into another world. However, his love for power is almost as great as his

love for his son and it is what caused the two to be separated. Rumpelstiltskin enjoys having power that he can lord over others and, when his son begs him to give up this great power and come with him to a world without magic, Rumpelstiltskin is not brave enough to let go of his power. Later in the series, this character is also motivated by his love for Belle and his desire for her to see him as a good man. Ironically, it is this desire to shield her from the knowledge of his negative qualities that leads him to commit even more terrible acts. When she discovers the full truth about him, she ensures that the two will never see each other again. These complicated motivations make Rumpelstiltskin a character that does not fit into the box of either hero or villain. Instead, he functions as both and it is difficult for viewers to discern which side he is leaning toward at any particular moment.

The antagonists in the Grimms' fairytales are designed to reveal society's current and potential flaws and to show the negative repercussions that come to those who commit heinous acts. Some tales present the antagonists' motives as ambiguous, which leads readers to fear the unknown possibilities, while others depict the antagonists' motives but show them to be deplorable acts which are thought to be unnatural or immoral by larger society. The punishments that many of these characters undergo represent the repairing of the social order, which the antagonists' actions originally fractured. Modern adaptations of these characters attempt to reveal the complexity of these characters and their motives by giving them a backstory. Several of these sources also push back against the idea that an individual can be solely villainous by presenting these characters as a combination of hero and villain. This type of depiction leads the audience to sympathize with characters previously thought to be solely antagonists.

Perhaps even identify with them more than the traditional protagonists. The adaptations discussed in this chapter manage to both interact with the Grimmian text and provoke new questions and thoughts in their modern audiences.

Conclusion: What Do All of These Changes Mean?

As this thesis has examined thus far, the depiction of characters—such as the hero, heroine, witch, step-mother, and trickster—is firmly rooted in cultural standards, ideals, and conventions. Character depiction in *Kinder-und Hausmärchen* was influenced by factors such as Germany's ardent nationalism, economic hardship, social discord, and the power the Church had over many aspects of life. Thus, these characters can give us insight into life in nineteenth-century Germany. Societal influences are important to note when examining the Grimms' tales, as they can both accent certain aspects of the tales as well as make them more easily understood. Folktales are so integrally tied to the culture in which they developed that they cannot be fully and fairly analyzed without considering this cultural backdrop.

Some may argue that culture is not an important part of why fairytales flourish in some locations because many countries within Europe during this time had their own versions of these tales. Since they all seem to have some unknown common root, how could the stories reflect the culture of any particular country? The answer to this question can be found in the tales themselves, as they've been analyzed in this thesis. There are reasons why these fairytales are readily accepted and adapted into some cultures but rejected by others. The way that these tales are reworked in order to fit into a society's moral and cultural framework gives us insight into this society. The differences between one country's version of a tale and another's might not be particularly great, but it can still help us understand both societies. For example, Charles Perrault's version of "Cinderella" is similar to the Grimms' "Aschenputtel" except that the French version

features magic while the Grimms' version does not. In the French version, Cinderella's magical god-mother helps the girl achieve her happy ending. Conversely, in the German version, her dead mother's spirit and the power of God bring about Aschenputtel's happiness. This might not seem particularly significant, but it can show us that the French were likely to believe and value magic and enchantment while the Germans viewed hard work and religious devotion as the path to happiness.

The same explanation of the connection between culture and the reappropriation of fairytales can be applied to modern adaptations of the tales. As a fairytale is integrated and adapted to a new society, it takes on some of the qualities and values of that society's culture. Though the Grimms' tales were adapted by other cultures shortly after they were written, the marked increase of adaptations in America since the 1980s is particularly significant. There have been hundreds—if not thousands—of different fairytale adaptations printed and produced in the United States over the past thirty years,[xxxvii] and there must be a reason for this noticeable increase. Furthermore, there must be a reason why a majority of the tales that are most commonly reappropriated within American culture fit into the same stereotype. It is likely that many of these tales became popular in America because large companies, like Disney, decided to adapt them. Most of the popular fairytales in America feature a young woman (usually the protagonist) who must be rescued by a nobleman in order for her to escape bad situation and raise her social status through marriage. Analyzing which aspects of the tales are changed and which are not can show us why the Grimm brothers' stories have gained such a firm hold in America as well as reveal the differences between our two cultures.

Media giants like Disney were the first ones to bring the Grimms' fairytales to the attention of the American public. Disney had the monopoly, as some would argue it still does, on American fairytales until the 1980s when more adaptations were released. The advent of the Internet is an important factor to consider when evaluating the increase in American fairytale adaptations, as more and more people are exposed to the Grimms' fairytales through both the internet and our media-driven culture's emphasis on entertainment. More adaptations are published or released, then are later advertised, due to the changes that the Internet has affected within our culture. Our world is increasingly global, which ensures that people in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have shared interests and thoughts which could then lead to collaboration. This new attitude has led to the creation of memes, video web series, and fanfiction,[xxxviii] which allow any member of our modern audience to share their opinions and interpretations of the Grimms' tales. As people learned what others were working on, there came a desire to enhance the advancements of others in a new and unique way. The idea that "imitation is the highest form of flattery" embodies this movement to adapt and reappropriate centuries-old stories. Reworkings of old stories are viewed by many as a creative endeavor and not simply an act of copying another person's idea, due to the fact that fairytales are now in the public domain. With this outlook in mind, the focus on creating unique retellings that can manage to both mirror the original and leave the reader with new ideas led to many adaptations of classic tales. While some writers and filmmakers may adapt the Grimms' fairytales because they are very critical of the tales or merely because they view them as a vehicle to moneymaking, most do so out of a desire to pull these stories deeper into our society by questioning and changing aspects of them. As

discussed throughout this thesis, these tales are introduced into the culture that adopts them and changed to reflect the values of that culture.

One of the most marked differences between the American adaptations of the Grimms' fairytales and the stories collected in *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* is the removal of a majority of the violence to ensure that the stories are suitable for children. Children were far less coddled in nineteenth-century Germany than they are today, as is evident by the discussion in chapters One and Three of parents abandoning their children in the woods if they were unable to support them.[xxxix] Violence and sexual content is entirely expunged from many adaptations, with the exception of those that are geared toward adults and even these remove elements of the original violent content from the plot. From a cultural context, it was considered completely appropriate in the time the Grimms were publishing to avoid shielding children from the hard, but true, facts of life. The collection was originally seen to have some faults as a children's book but this was primarily due to its lack of illustrations and the inclusion of scholarly notes, not the fact that the collection included many gruesome scenes. Our culture has very different views on protecting children and tends to avoid exposing them to anything that could possibly frighten or traumatize them. American society frequently demonizes the media and entertainment industries for exposing children to violent acts which are thought to lead children to becoming violent themselves and there is an ongoing debate about whether it is a parent's or the entertainment industry's responsibly to prevent children from watching content that might not be appropriate for them.[xl] The stark contrast between the violence in Grimms' tales and their modern adaptations remains as an example of the ways that parenting philosophies have changed over the past two hundred years.

Another integral change that can be seen in all of these adaptations is the shift toward gender equality. While many argue that the Grimms' fairytales are fundamentally sexist against women, this stance is influenced by which tales and adaptations they are exposed to. There are many heroes, heroines, and villains in *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* who exhibit a variety of traits, which makes it difficult for anyone to say that all of the tales represent one particular trait. While there are some ideas that modern audience might disagree with (such as that women must work hard and prove themselves through domestic accomplishment to achieve a happy ending), this is merely a reflection of the culture in which the tales arose and not a black mark on the tales themselves.

Many Americans are likely to view the Grimms' fairytales as sexist because of the way the tales that have taken root within our culture. The most popular fairytales in our culture are the ones that feature a helpless woman who must be saved and whose story culminates in marriage. While this view would typically be rejected within our modern culture, stories such as "Aschenputtel" and "Sneewittchen" surprisingly remain the most popularly adapted and widely known. It is important to note, though, that these tales also feature a woman as the protagonist and invite readers to identify with and support her. Though they contain some antiquated ideas about gender, it is still from the woman's perspective that we view the story and not from the male hero, who tends to be remarkably flat. In light of this, I would argue that the contemporary shift toward sharing heroic action between men and women is less about a feminist effort to "correct" these tales and more about reflecting gender roles in our society fairly.[xli] It is no longer necessary for women to wait helplessly to be saved, as they can do some of the saving

themselves. These adaptations do not render men inefficient or unnecessary, but split the power and strength between the genders more equally.

In this vein, many of the adaptations examined in this thesis work to dismantle the connection between beauty and goodness that is often alluded to in the Grimms' fairytales. Nearly all of the Grimm heroines are prized for their beauty and it works to define them as the single characteristic that is used to label the heroes does for them. While the tales themselves also show that beauty does not equate to goodness,[xlii] several adaptations continue to expand upon this topic. Haddix does this in her novel adaptation of "Aschenputtel" entitled *Just Ella*, but it can also be done simply through film casting. The film *Ever After*, for instance, portrays one step-sister as kind despite the fact that she is less attractive than her despicable sister. Both of these adaptations work to show that beauty can in fact contribute to one's conceit and villainy rather than signal goodness as it is often thought to do.

Another topic that adaptations frequently deal with is the Grimms' tales portrayal of good and evil as being in strict opposition to one another with no intermediary zone between. This sort of presentation of the world might make lessons simpler for children to understand, but it is not a true representation of reality. Real people are simultaneously good and evil rather than strict ideals on either side of the spectrum and many modern adaptations attempt to reflect this. There has been a recent rise in the number of stories that twist old tales (both fairytales and other classic works of literature) around in order to place the character that is traditionally viewed as the villain in the position of protagonist.[xliii] This allows audiences to view the tales with which they are so familiar from another perspective and reveals the complexity of human nature. Though many of

the tales examined in this thesis explore this topic, the television series *Once Upon A Time* does it the most extensively. The series spends a large amount of time investigating the line between hero and villain and the minute circumstances that can decide which group a character will fall into. None of the antagonists in the series are fundamentally evil, but are all propelled toward darkness by circumstances out of their control. There is even some hope that these characters may reform and turn away from temptation in order to become heroes themselves.

This trend toward representing a villain's point of view is too prominent and interesting to be ignored. What is causing modern writers and directors to view stories from this angle and why is it so popular amongst American audiences? I argue that this trend has come into existence because of the creation of psychology as a discipline and America's fascination with individual motives. Though many of the great early psychologists were German, the science itself did not fully blossom until after the deaths of Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm. The weight psychology carries in our modern world has shaped the way that we view stories: no longer are audiences willing to accept the mere fact that a character does something. Most readers and viewers want to know *why* an individual does something and what his motives are.[xliv] This desire to understand characters more fully has led to the need for adaptations to examine a character's backstory, which can often be lengthy and elaborate.

There are several revisionist trends adaptations that allow the Grimms' tales to better fit into our society. If changes need to be made, though, why not simply create an entirely new story? Do these stories truly fit into our society at all if left in their original forms? The answer to this question is yes. The reason these tales gained popularity in

America is the same reason they have a home within our culture. Some of our cultural values actually align with those of nineteenth-century Germany. Perhaps the most notable of these is the importance of hard work, self-sustainability, and independence. There is an ideal in American culture of an underdog that is able to pull himself up by his bootstraps and make a name for himself. Our culture romanticizes individuals who rise to success, particularly when they start at the bottom. This concept allows Americans to believe that there is the possibility of complete social mobility. While this was not a likely scenario in the Grimms' era, there is an emphasis on each person working his hardest and doing his best to contribute to society. This ensures that the characters viewed as proactive and independent by Germans would also be viewed positively within our culture as well.

This emphasis on the power and influence an underprivileged individual can have within society ties in with rebellion and the condemnation of authority that exists in both contexts. As discussed in Chapter One, there was much social discord and many objected to the imbalance of power within nineteenth-century Germany. The Grimms themselves came from a lower to middle class background and struggled financially for much of their lives. They were also known for their rebellion against the monarchy through their roles as two of the Göttinger Sieben, or Göttingen Seven. This criticism of the upper classes is shown in the portrayal of many royal or wealthy characters as either cruel or ridiculous. Though outright revolution tends to bear negative connotations in America, the concept of overthrowing leadership that is out of touch and working for the good of the many is something that many Americans would view as justifiable and acceptable. Royal characters, though often idealized, are also figures of the oppressive power and influence, which is condemned in a democratic country such as our own. Neither culture is willing

to fully push back against those in authority and in possession of great wealth, but the desire for more equality is commonly found in both nineteenth-century German society and our own.

The last reason why these tales have managed to flourish in our culture is somewhat more disturbing than the others discussed above. Though these tales and adaptations of them cannot be directly connected to representations of America, the nationalism in which they were transcribed is echoed within modern America. Modern America is in deep economic trouble while still continuing to spread its influence and exert its power abroad, just as Germany was in the years leading up to the Holocaust. This shows a disconcerting trend, because the same nationalism that inspired the Grimms to collect and transcribe folk tales also ensured that Germany was the perfect place to breed the racism and hatred supported by the Nazi regime. Could the Islamophobia that is common in our country develop into something as horrible and disturbing as the Holocaust? Would we realize that it could or would we be blinded by the same nationalism and entitlement that ensured that most Germans were oblivious to the rising danger until it was too late? Though this event seems unlikely, it is an important possibility to discuss when we consider the bridge that the Grimms' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* forges between nineteenth-century Germany culture and our own. Fairytales are not the carriers of this evil, as was commonly believed after World War II, but they are so deeply rooted in culture that they can magnify the elements of society which might not be immediately visible.

The Grimms' fairytales are not the frivolous, soft stories that many Americans assume them to be. They depict terrible situations, depraved acts, and gruesome

punishments that psychologists, such as Bruno Bettelheim, argue allow children to gain power vicariously through the heroes they read about. Some might view fairytale adaptations as a recycling of ideas in order to reduce the work needed to produce a movie or novel, but they are far more than that. Like the tales on which they are based on they can reflect the culture in which they reside, for better or for worse. Character depiction offers particularly important insight, as it reveals the characteristics that a society condemns, condones, and deifies. Though the first edition of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* was published over two hundred years ago, these tales and characters have just as strong a hold on audiences as they always have.

Appendix: Summaries of Fairytale Adaptations

***Ever After: A Cinderella Story* - Dir. Andy Tennant**
An adaptation of "Aschenputtel," this film follows a young woman whose father died and left her in the care of her cruel step-mother. In order to save a slave's life, Danielle disguises herself as a noblewoman and purchases the man's freedom. She is quickly noticed by the prince and the two begin to fall in love, but their different social circumstances nearly pull them apart.

***Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters* - Dir. Tommy Wirkola**
This film is a sequel to the tale of "Hänsel und Gretel" in which the protagonists are grown up and hunting witches similar to the one that tried to kill them when they were children. Over the course of the movie they face the strongest witch that they ever have and it leads them to question the truth about magic.

***Just Ella* - Margaret Peterson Haddix**
This novel acts as a sequel to the tale "Aschenputtel," in which Princess Ella is engaged to Prince Charming. The Prince is depicted as being rather dull, and Ella spends most of her time amongst servants. Ella later discovers that she has been chosen to marry the Prince because of her looks and not because he truly loves her, then works to escape from the palace.

***Maleficent* - Dir. Robert Stromberg**
Stromberg's film offers a new perspective on the story of "Dornröschen." The film focuses on the "evil witch" in the classic tale, Maleficent, and explains her behavior within the course of the story. She is betrayed by the man she once loved (Aurora's [Dornröschen's] father) as he attempts to gain power and take the throne. Maleficent, upon learning of the girl's birth, puts her plans for revenge in motion.

***Once Upon A Time* - dir. Edward Kitsis, Adam Horowitz, and Steve Pearlman**
This television show follows Emma (an adult orphan) and Henry (the son she gave up for adoption immediately after he was born). Henry has a theory that everyone in the town is a fairytale character doomed to live in a world where there "are no happy endings." The narrative alternates between the characters' lives in the Enchanted Forest of fairytale and their mundane lives in Storybrooke, Maine.

***Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* - James Finn Garner**
Garner's book is a collection of short adaptations of the Grimms' fairytales that focuses on updating several facets of the tales to ensure that they are fully "politically correct." All of these adapted stories work to remove the sexism and cruelty to animals from the tales. This thesis exclusively looks at Garner's revised versions of "Der Froschkönig" and "Rotkäppchen."

***Red Riding Hood* - Dir. Leonardo DiCaprio**
The film is based on the story of "Little Red Riding Hood" and follows a young girl, Valerie, whose village is tormented by a werewolf. The villagers quickly turn on one

another, trying to discover who among them is the werewolf. The werewolf appears to have a strange connection with Valerie and it becomes apparent that the wolf is someone close to her. The film makes it ambiguous who the wolf could be until the protagonist finds out near the end.

***Snow White and the Huntsman* - Dir. Rupert Sanders**
This movie is an adaptation of "Little Red Riding Hood" and focuses on Snow White and a Huntsman who the Evil Queen has sent to kill her step-daughter. The Huntsman must choose whether he will protect his own life by killing Snow White, or whether he should help the princess take back the kingdom. The two grow close as they work together to overthrow the queen.

***Tangled* - Dir. Nathan Greno and Byron Howard**
This is an animated movie which is geared toward children. It follows a young princess who was kidnapped and raised by a witch. Every year on her birthday, the king and queen send thousands of paper lanterns into the sky in hopes that their daughter would return. The princess runs away from her "mother" with the help of a womanizing thief in order to see the lights.

***The Magic Circle* - Donna Jo Napoli**
Napoli's novel reworks the tale "Hänsel und Gretel" so that the witch holds the position of protagonist. The Ugly One, who was once a midwife and sorceress but was cursed by the devil and forced to become a witch, shows how complicated “evil” can be. The novel shows the Grimms' tale from the witch’s perspective and shows that she never wished to hurt the children but was forced to.

***The Princess and the Frog* - Dir. Ron Clements and John Musker**
This animated Disney film revolves around a woman named Tiana in the early twentieth century and is based on "The Frog Prince." Tiana's friend Charlotte is set to marry a prince, who comes to meet her but is turned into a frog when he arrives. When Tiana tries to kiss the prince and transform him back into a man, she is turned into a frog as well.

***Zel* - Donna Jo Napoli**
This novel depicts Zel (Rapunzel) and her isolated life with her mother in a rural part of the mountains. Her mother restricts her freedom, but Zel one day meets a prince who shows her what she’s missing in her sheltered life. Fearing that she will lose her beloved daughter, the witch locks Zel away in a tower for several years.

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Notes

[i] Gerstl, Quirin. “Die Brüder Grimm als Erzieher: Pädagogische Analyse des Märchens.” München. Ehrenwirth. 1964.

[ii] Snyder, Louis. *Roots of German Nationalism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978. pg 50.

[iii] Dégh, Linda. “Grimm's ‘Household Tales’ and Its Place in the Household: The Social Relevance of a Controversial Classic.” Western Folklore 32.2: 1979.

[iv] Tatar, Maria. *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales. Princeton*, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987. pg. XXII

[v] Dègh, 97

[vi] Blackbourn, David. *The Long Nineteenth Century: A History of Germany, 1780-1918*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. pg. 48.

[vii] Zipes, Jack. "The Forgotten Tales of the Brothers Grimm." *The Public Domain Review*. 2012. Web. http://publicdomainreview.org/2012/12/20/the-forgotten-tales-of-the-brothers-grimm/

[viii] McGlathery, James. Grimm's *Fairy Tales: A History of Criticism on a Popular Classic*. Columbia: Camden House, 1993. pg. 6

[ix] Scholars contemporary to the Grimms, such as Johann Karl August Musäus, Achim von Arnim, and Clemens Bretano, collected common folktales and edited their plots, changed their depictions of the characters (for example, by turning peasants to princes), removed some magical elements, and translated the stories into scholarly High German.

[x] Snyder, 42

[xi] In Ellis' book *One Fairy Story Too Many: The Brothers Grimm and their Tales*, he argues that the Grimms stole all of their material from earlier writers and lied about the sources of their stories in order to ensure a profit.

[xii] Tatar, XXVI

[xiii] Tatar, XXXIII

[xiv] The Grimms published seven major editions of *Kinder-und Hausmärchen*. The publication history is as follows. First edition: 1812-1815(two volumes), second edition: 1819-1822 (three volumes), third edition: 1837, fourth edition: 1840, fifth edition: 1843, sixth edition: 1850, seventh edition: 1857. This thesis will utilize the seventh edition, because it underwent the most editorial work by the Grimms, in an effort to please their audience and thus is the most demonstrative of German values in this period.

[xv] This term refers to the versions of these fairytales as they were recorded by the Grimm brothers as opposed to versions written by either the Grimms’ contemporaries or modern authors.

[xvi] Russian folktale scholar Vladimir Propp has done extensive work in this field and his definitions for the trajectories of folktales are the most widely accepted. Antti Aarne, Stith Thompson, and J. Miller have also contributed substantially to the classification of folktales and the research of narrative motifs.

[xvii] In the past this classification has been the most accepted way of grouping protagonists and has been used by nearly all scholars who study the Grimms' fairytales.

[xviii] These labels refer to some of the most common types of hero found in *Kinder-und Hausmärchen*. I have created these titles in order to discuss different portrayals of heroes more easily. The same applies to the subgenres of heroine that I examine in Chapter Two.

Chapter One

[xix] Throughout this thesis, I will refer to the male leads of each tale as the "hero." While they are not necessary a protagonist, or even a well-rounded character, the happy endings of most tales depend on their "heroic" actions.

[xx] Tatar, Maria. *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales. Princeton*, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987. Print. pg. 93

[xxi] The makers of the film *Maleficent* based their film on the tale "La Belle au Bois Dormant" (The Beauty Sleeping in the Wood) by Charles Perrault, a French contemporary of the Grimm brothers. However, there are very few differences between the Grimmian tale and the film that were actually a feature of Perrault's version. The film is equally different from both versions. The only exception to this is that Perrault's tale discusses in depth an evil which lurks in the prince's family. In *Maleficent*, this is translated into Aurora's father King Stefan's growing insanity caused by his paranoia and desire for Maleficent's death.

[xxii] Blackbourn, David. *The Long Nineteenth Century: A History of Germany, 1780-1918*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. pg. 96.

[xxiii] Syder, Louis. *Roots of German Nationalism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978. pg. 38.

[xxiv] Blackbourn, 51-52

[xxv] Blackbourn, 52

Chapter Two

[xxvi]Tatar, Maria. *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales. Princeton*, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987. Print.

[xxvii] As with the types of heroes discussed in Chapter One, the separation of these styles of heroine are my attempt at grouping characters together to make discussion simpler. As with the heroes, heroines are traditionally divided by into categories defined by whether they are active or passive. I argue, however, that their age and social station are tell more about each character's characteristics than the level of their agency does.

[xxviii] The character of Regina and the changes she undergoes will be discussed more in depth in Chapter Three of this thesis along with several of the other antagonists mentioned in the first two chapters.

Chapter Three

[xxix] Brauner, Sigrid. *Fearless Wives and Frightened Shrews: The Construction of the Witch in Early Modern Germany.* Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001. pgs. 17-18.

[xxx] See the chapter of Snyder's book entitled "Cultural Nationalism: The Grimm Brothers' Fairy Tales," which focuses on the history of the Grimm's tales and their nationalist connotations.

[xxxi] These character types, in contrast with those examined in the prior chapters, are groupings that are commonly examined together by readers and scholars alike.

[xxxii] Brauner, 9&18.

[xxxiii] Brauner, 13.

[xxxiv] Haase, Donald. *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairy Tales: Q-Z.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press. 2007. pg. 1032.

[xxxv] Kramer, Heinrich and Sprenger, Jacob. "Malleus Maleficarum." trans. Summers, Montague. 1928. Web. http://www.malleusmaleficarum.org/downloads/MalleusAcrobat.pdf

[xxxvi] The plant rapunzel, which is also known as rampion, is a leafy plant with purple flowers. The roots and leaves of this plant is sometimes eaten in salads. It is also thought to cure some illnesses. In the tales and their adaptations rapunzel is often affiliated illness and healing.

Conclusion

[xxxvii] The Internet Movie Database (imdb) lists over one hundred live-action film adaptations of fairytales alone. This does not count the numerous television, animated film, theater, opera, and literature adaptations.

[xxxviii] Memes (themes that are continually modified and passed through the internet) and fanfiction (fan written continuations or adaptations of movies and books) allow audiences to influence the source material in the same way it has influenced them.

[xxxix] Child abandonment in its many forms (both legal and illegal) is still common in America today. However, it tends to be accompanied by a stigma and is taboo to varying degrees.

[xl] For more information on this topic, refer to this article from PBS. http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/next/body/what-science-knows-about-video-games-and-violence/

[xli] Alice Neikirk does some analysis of this topic from an anthropological angle in her article "'... Happily Ever After' (or What Fairytales Teach Girls About Being Women)."

[xlii] For more information on this, see Chapter Three's analysis of "Sneewittchen" and "Aschenputtel."

[xliii] Two notable examples of this genre are John Gardner's 1971 novel *Grendel* which interacts with the epic poem *Beowulf* and John Updike's 2000 novel *Gertrude and Claudius* which interacts with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. There are many other examples of this genre of adaptation which are too numerous to list in this thesis.

[xliv] The popularity of police procedurals, such as Criminal Minds, that show the evolution of criminals and the reasons why they commit crimes is evidence of this. Whenever a person does something that we cannot imagine doing ourselves, we tend to ask *why*. It is this curiosity that also makes us wonder about a character's backstory.