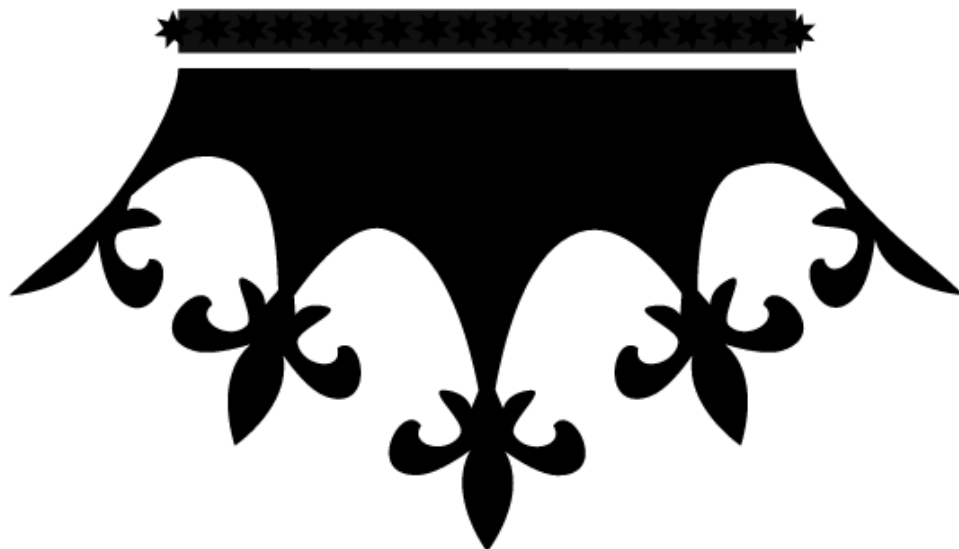




# Always the Princess, Never the Queen

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Female authority figures in movie adaptations  
of fairy tales



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## Abstract

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Sprookjesadaptaties hebben veel bekende conventies; het is een genre waarin prinsessen, prinses, heksen, en magie een rol spelen en waarin de hoofdpersoon altijd nog ‘lang en gelukkig’ leeft. Een van de conventies is het stereotype van de goede maar passieve prinses tegenover de slechte, machtige koningin. In sprookjesadaptaties schijnt autoriteit voor vrouwen inherent verbonden te zijn aan slechtheid. In recente adaptaties lijkt dit echter te veranderen; prinsessen worden actiever en koninginnen worden niet meer neergezet als puur slecht. In deze scriptie onderzoek ik of deze stereotypen daadwerkelijk aan het veranderen zijn. Mijn onderzoeksvraag is: Hoe zijn het prinses- en koninginstereotypen aan het veranderen in hedendaagse filmadaptaties van sprookjes? Mijn hypothese is dat, hoewel het op het eerste gezicht lijkt dat de stereotypen aan het veranderen zijn, bij nadere analyse prinsessen nog steeds passieve personages zijn, terwijl autoriteit vooral voorbehouden is voor slechte, vrouwelijke personages.

Om mijn onderzoeksvraag te beantwoorden heb ik 6 films geanalyseerd, verdeeld in 3 casussen. In mijn eerste casus heb ik gekeken naar traditionele adaptaties; *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) en *Sleeping Beauty* (1959). In mijn tweede casus heb ik gekeken naar twee recente geanimeerde adaptaties: *Tangled* (2010) en *Frozen* (2013). In mijn laatste casus heb ik gekeken naar twee recente ‘live-action’ adaptaties: *Maleficent* (2014) en *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012). Van deze casussen heb ik kort een objectbeschrijving gegeven. Daarna heb ik ze geanalyseerd met behulp van het actantueel model van Algirdas Greimas, om de veranderende rollen van vrouwelijke autoriteitsfiguren in adaptaties te analyseren en de casussen met elkaar te kunnen vergelijken. Daarnaast heb ik Susan Lanser’s concept van ‘discursive authority’ uit het boek *Fictions of Authority* gebruikt om zowel de autoriteit die personages zelf claimen, als de autoriteit die ze verkrijgen of verliezen door interactie te analyseren. Ik heb hierbij drie categorieën gehanteerd die Lanser gebruikt als definitie van ‘discursive authority’: intellectuele geloofwaardigheid, ideologische validiteit, en esthetische waarde.

Uit mijn onderzoek bleek dat, hoewel er zeker aspecten binnen de stereotypen aan het veranderen zijn, mijn hypothese niet helemaal ontkracht kan worden. Vooral nieuwe animatieadaptaties bleken een complexer en genuanceerder beeld te geven van vrouwelijke autoriteitsfiguren, terwijl de ‘live-action’ adaptaties, die juist een duisterdere sfeer neerzetten en gericht zijn op een volwassen publiek, meer terugrijpen op een traditioneel, eendimensionaal beeld. Hoewel deze adaptaties wel spelen met de bekende conventies, waren het vooral de animatieadaptaties die op een dieper niveau deze conventies veranderden.

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## Introduction

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On January 25, 2016, *The Washington Post* published an article based on the preliminary findings of a project to analyze all the dialogue from the Disney princess franchise done by linguists Carmen Fought and Karen Eisenhauer. These preliminary findings were surprising; looking at the percentage of words spoken, the division between men and women turned out to be more balanced in the ‘classic’ princess movies (*Snow White*, *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty*) than in films from the ‘90s. Furthermore, when looking at the number of speaking roles, more recent princess films have larger casts, but also more lopsided ones.<sup>1</sup> However, the objection was immediately made, for example by journalist Darlena Cunha on the website of *Time*, that looking at movies from this perspective does not take into account the roles women play in films.<sup>2</sup>

Looking at the roles women play in fairy tale adaptations, they mostly seem to be royalty, but never good ruling sovereigns. In their stories there is often a king who is the ruling monarch or at the end of the story the princess marries, making her husband the next in line to rule; of the eleven princesses in the current Disney Princess merchandise line-up (2016), ten have a love-interest in their principal movie, three marry at the end of their story, three are officially engaged and two are implied to get married by telling us ‘they lived happily ever after’. Only two ‘princesses’ by birth are not set up to be married at the end of their stories: Pocahontas and Merida.<sup>3</sup>

Whereas the Disney princesses thus do not become rulers, the word ‘queen’ in fairy tale adaptations has inextricably become tied to the word ‘evil’. Women with authority are either portrayed as loving (and often deceased) mothers, or as powerful antagonists.<sup>4</sup> Especially through Disney’s first three princess-movies (*Snow White*, *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty*), the stereotype of an innocent, pretty heroine persecuted by an evil female villain has become reinforced.<sup>5</sup>

However, these stereotypes are not static. Just as the fairy tales of which they are part, they depend on transformation for survival.<sup>6</sup> The stories and thus the stereotypes within them

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<sup>1</sup> Guo, Jeff. (2016) ‘Researchers have found a major problem with ‘The Little Mermaid’ and other Disney movies.’, in: *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/01/25/researchers-have-discovered-a-major-problem-with-the-little-mermaid-and-other-disney-movies/> (20-05-2016).

<sup>2</sup> Cunha, Darlena. (2016) ‘The Point of a Disney Princess Isn’t Her Talking Time.’, in: *Time*. <http://time.com/4196181/disney-princesses-talking-time/> (20-05-2016).

<sup>3</sup> See appendix 1 for more information.

<sup>4</sup> Wohlwend, Karen (2009) ‘Damsels in Discourse: Girls Consuming and Producing Identity Texts through Disney Princess Play’, in: *Reading Research Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 1, pp. 57-83: 59.

<sup>5</sup> Stone, Kay. (1975) ‘Things Walt Disney Never Told Us’, in: *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 88, No. 347, pp. 42-50: 44.

<sup>6</sup> Warner, Marina. (2014) *Once Upon a Time: A Short History of Fairy Tale*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: xxii.

need to be altered in order to fit new audiences and/or a medium, so that the stories can be retold in a way that is relevant for the current society.<sup>7</sup> While this altering of the stories, which causes them to differ from the ‘original’, is sometimes criticized, it also causes contemporary adaptations to illustrate changes in society’s attitudes.<sup>8</sup>

Looking at the stereotype of the princess and the evil queen, it seems a shift is taking place. More and more adaptations show the princess being active and authoritative, and give the nemesis more background and understanding. But are these stereotypes really changing? As Warner notes in her book *Once Upon a Time*, new fairy tale adaptations like *Tangled* answer the demand for positive female role models by showing an upbeat, spirited, and physically vigorous heroine but still cast the blame on an older female authority figure.<sup>9</sup> So are the stereotypes really changing, or do the appearances of contemporary fairy tale adaptations deceive? My research question is: How are the princess and queen stereotypes changing in contemporary movie adaptations of fairy tales? My hypothesis is that, while on the surface princesses are more active and the queens’ persona’s are more elaborated, it still stands that princesses are passive and authority is reserved for the evil female characters.

My research consists of a short introduction and three case studies. In the introduction, I will briefly look into the history of fairy tales, the princess and queen stereotype and the role the Walt Disney Company played in this. I will also briefly go into my theoretical frame. I will use the actantial narrative schema developed by Algirdas Greimas to analyze if and what is changing in the role princesses and queens play in the adaptations. The actantial model will help me get a hold on the different adaptations and will make it manageable to compare them. Furthermore, this theory will allow me to compare the stereotypes not just on a discursive and narrative level, but also in their most basic structure. However, as Vladimir Propp also notes in the introduction of his book *Morphology of the folktale*, structural analysis is a beginning, but not an end in itself.<sup>10</sup> It can be a good starting point, but should not be seen without context as a neutral truth. This structural analysis will give me the input I need, which I will then interpret and contextualize using gender/feminist narratology, which shows the crucial role gender plays in the construction and interpretation of text.<sup>11</sup> In this, I fall in line with Susan Lanser who, in her book *Fictions of Authority*, converges the approaches of formalist and feminist narratology into a sociological poetics, which enables her to “see narrative

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<sup>7</sup> Davis, Amy. (2007) *Good Girls and Wicked Witches: Women in Disney’s Feature Animation*. London: John Libbey Publishing: 13.

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem: 12.

<sup>9</sup> Warner (2014): 142.

<sup>10</sup> Propp, Vladimir. (1968) *Morphology of the folktale*. Austin: University of Texas Press: xiii.

<sup>11</sup> Herman, Luc & Bart Vervaeck. (2005) *Vertelduivels*. Nijmegen: Vantilt: 133.

technique not simply as a product of ideology but as ideology itself.”<sup>12</sup> Thus, this theoretical framework allows me to analyze the rendering of female authority figures as an embodiment of the “social, economic, and literary conditions under which it has been produced.”<sup>13</sup>

In her book, Lanser defines discursive authority as “the intellectual credibility, ideological validity, and aesthetic value claimed by or conferred upon a work, author, narrator, character, or textual practice.”<sup>14</sup> Lanser mostly focuses on female authors and their self-authorization, their “quest for discursive authority” by writing and seeking to publish a work.<sup>15</sup> However, her definition of discursive authority states that this authority can also be claimed by or conferred upon a character, meaning that the quest for discursive authority, “a quest to be heard, respected, and believed, a hope of influence”, can also be undertaken by a character.<sup>16</sup> This enables me to use this framework to analyze fictional authority figures and how their authority is constituted.

Using this theoretical framework, I will make an object-description and analysis of three different types of cases. In selecting my cases, I first decided to focus on Western fairy tale adaptations, since these adaptations have become widely known all over the world. Furthermore, my own prior knowledge of Western fairy tales, being a Western person myself and growing up with these tales, will help me reach a deeper understanding of the subject. Of course, this does also mean I will have to tackle my own assumptions.

In the first case, I will look at some of the ‘traditional princesses and queens’, meaning the adaptations of fairy tales showcasing stereotypes which through growing literacy and widely known adaptations by Disney have become universal phenomenon.<sup>17</sup> As Warner states it, reproductions of personas like the Evil Queen from *Snow White* (1937) have become so imprinted, that this has become the standard.<sup>18</sup> Thus, I will analyze *Snow White* (1937) and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), which are movies from Disney’s ‘Classic period’ (1937-1966, during Walt Disney’s lifetime) and which show the famous classic passive fairy tale princesses for which Disney has gained its reputation.<sup>19</sup> Both movies also feature an older, powerful, evil, female authority figure as nemesis; the Evil Queen and Maleficent, also known as Mistress of All Evil.

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<sup>12</sup> Lanser, Susan. (1992) *Fictions of Authority. Women Writers and Narrative Voice*. Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press: 5.

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem: 5.

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem: 6.

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem: 7.

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem: 7.

<sup>17</sup> Meder, Theo (red). (2013) *Van kikvors tot droomprins. De wording van het sprookje*. Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren: 121.

<sup>18</sup> Warner (2014): 165.

<sup>19</sup> Davis (2006): 9.

In my second case I will look into the two most recent animated fairy tale adaptations which feature female authority figures: *Tangled* (2010) and *Frozen* (2013). While *Brave* (2012) is more recent than *Tangled*, it was not an adaptation of a classic fairy tale. Both adaptations show an active princess and especially *Frozen* is an interesting case study because it is the first Disney animated fairy tale that shows a princess becoming a queen without finding a love-interest first. While *Tangled* does not feature an evil queen, it does feature an older, evil female in a position of authority.

In my third case I will look at contemporary live action adaptations of fairy tales. I will analyze *Maleficent* (2014) and *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012). *Maleficent* is an adaptation of the story of Sleeping Beauty, giving more emphasize to the female nemesis and explaining her motives. *Snow White and the Huntsman* is an example of an adaptation in which the princess becomes more active and stalwart. Furthermore, by analyzing these cases I will analyze live-action adaptations of the traditional adaptations mentioned before.

Most fairy tale research up till now has focused on older adaptations of fairy tales. *Van kikkvors tot droomprins* (2013) under editorship of Theo Meder looks at the ‘becoming’ of the fairy tale, but explicitly does not look into recent productions.<sup>20</sup> *Once Upon a Time* (2014) by Marina Warner doesn’t focus on Western fairy tales but gives a concise and complete history of fairy tales that can function as a useful background in this research. The same goes for *The Irresistible Fairy Tale* (2012) by Jack Zipes, in which he presents a cultural and social history which explains why fairy tales were created and retold.

*Good Girls and Wicked Witches* (2007) by Amy Davis focuses specifically on Disney heroines, but restricts itself to animated movies, excluding the new live-action adaptation and adaptations by other production companies. Other research, like the article *Damsels in Discourse* (2009) by Karen Wohlwend, places princess stereotypes in relation to children and examines the effect on children. In my research, I will restrict myself to examining the cultural products and I will not address the effect the stereotypes have on the audience, since a lot of research has already been done in this direction and it does not add to my research.

Research like mentioned above forms a good basis on which to look into the new adaptations and the changing types and in my thesis I will use this in a literary analysis to provide my findings with context. Looking at the existing literature, it becomes clear that there are some gaps in the current field of fairy tale studies that my thesis can complement. Not only has little research been done on contemporary fairy tale adaptations, most of the

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<sup>20</sup> Meder (2013): 8.

focus of gender-related research has been on the princesses. Other authority figures like the stereotype of the evil queen have been underexposed. However, instead of solely focusing on the evil queens, I decided that it is the relation between the two stereotypes, their shared change, and the comparison between the two that makes this subject interesting and offers an unique perspective.

As Zipes addresses in his introduction of the book *Don't Bet on the Prince* (1986), some feminist criticism of fairy tales is very reductionist and limited, focusing mainly on negative features of the tales.<sup>21</sup> An example he names is *Woman Hating* (1974) by Andrea Dworkin, which describes and theorizes oppression of women, among others in fairy tales. In this research, I strive to be as critical as possible without becoming too reductionist. I will thus use sources like this with caution.

## Fairy tales and the princess and queen stereotypes

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No aspect of Disney's fairy tale adaptations has been so consistently criticized as the changes that made the stories differ from the 'original' versions.<sup>22</sup> Especially the fact that the new versions were perceived as 'sanitized' versions evoked resistance.<sup>23</sup> Examples of this sanitation are *Sleeping Beauty*, in which no mention is made of the fact that in Basile's version the princess is raped and gives birth to twins in her sleep, or of the Ogress mother-in-law who wants to eat the princess and her two children from Perrault version. Another example is *The Little Mermaid*, in which the mermaid magically loses her voice and marries the prince, instead of having her tongue cut out by the sea witch and the prince marrying someone else, as Andersen's version describes. However, this calls into question what the 'original' version of a story is. For those who grew up in the past century, Disney's portrayal of the stories has become so imprinted that those are considered to be the 'classics'. And even if a specific version of a fairy tale is seen as classic, this does not make them static. As Jack Zipes states in his book *The Irresistible Fairy Tale*, fairy tales "are constantly re-created and reformed, and yet remain mimetic because of their relevant articulation of problematic issues in our lives."<sup>24</sup> The fairy tales as we know them today are rooted in oral tradition.<sup>25</sup> Stories

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<sup>21</sup> Zipes, Jack. (1986) *Don't Bet on the Prince. Contemporary Feminist Fairy Tales in North America and England*. Gower: Gower Publishing Company Limited: 5-6.

<sup>22</sup> Davis (2006): 12.

<sup>23</sup> Warner (2014): 132.

<sup>24</sup> Zipes, Jack. (2012) *The Irresistible Fairy Tale. The Cultural and Social History of a Genre*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: 20.

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem: 2.



were told to communicate knowledge and experience.<sup>26</sup> Altering the story was an essential part of the function of the storyteller, who used stories as a ‘teaching tale’ and altered aspects as to make the story relevant for the audience.<sup>27</sup> With the recording of fairy tales in print, the stories thus lost some of their cultural fluidity that was essential for its teaching capacity.<sup>28</sup> However, even in recorded form fairy tales continue to be altered. The collectors and writers like Perrault and the Grimm Brothers, who formed a corpus of fairy tales which marked the start of modern fairy tale as we know it, already adapted the stories they collected to their own ideas.<sup>29</sup> For example, Wilhelm Grimm censored stories in such a way that women were blamed and heroines’ parts became smaller, while actions of men were excused and boys got more to do.<sup>30</sup> It is important to note that all the universally known collections of fairy tales were collected by men. Thus, our notion of female protagonists has been shaped by male collectors of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. The general patriarchal view of that time placed women mostly in domestic positions, serving the interests of men.<sup>31</sup> Stories that featured heroines that were assertive and courageous simply did not fit this view and were thus not selected by the collectors, or they were adapted.

Thus, the versions of the stories by the Grimm Brothers were already censored, polished, reshaped versions. Eventually, these versions traveled the world, became known as classics, and defined fairy tales all over the world.<sup>32</sup> Thus, the question of the ‘original’ becomes unanswerable. Luckily for my research this does not pose a problem, since I will take the cultural products as a starting point. The history of older versions will thus only play a part in the context of the product.

In her book, Amy Davis calls Walt Disney “probably the closest thing the twentieth-century produced to a teller of national (and international) folk stories.”<sup>33</sup> While this research does not exclusively focus on Walt Disney and his company, his influence in contemporary adaptations of fairy tales is gigantic and deserves some separate attention.

The Disney Brothers Studio was founded in 1923 and changed its name to Walt Disney Productions in 1926.<sup>34</sup> After producing the reasonably successful series of live-action/animated shorts *Alice Comedies*, the company’s first big success was the all-animated series featuring Oswald the Lucky Rabbit. However, in 1928 Disney lost most of his

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<sup>26</sup> Zipes (2012): 2

<sup>27</sup> Davis (2006): 11-12.

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem: 12.

<sup>29</sup> Warner (2014): 49/50.

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem: 135.

<sup>31</sup> Zipes (2012): 80

<sup>32</sup> Warner (2014): 60.

<sup>33</sup> Davis (2006): 10.

<sup>34</sup> Ibidem: 73.

animation staff and the Oswald trademark to Universal Pictures, which had distributed the series. Mickey Mouse was created and Walt decided to produce an animated short with synchronized sound: *Steamboat Willie*. While this was not the first sound cartoon, the heavy reliance on synchronized sound effects set it apart.<sup>35</sup> The company was unique in wanting animators to have artistic training and in facilitating art classes.<sup>36</sup> Because of this, the company could produce more realistic, higher-quality animation with a more sophisticated storyline.<sup>37</sup> This eventually led to Walt's decision to produce a feature-length cartoon, which was unheard of because of the time and money involved.<sup>38</sup> The film industry even dubbed the project 'Disney's Folly'. However, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* became hugely successful and urged Disney on to release more animated features.<sup>39</sup>

The make-up of Walt Disney Company during this time was very male-dominated. While a lot of women were employed by the company, they mostly worked in departments that were low in status, like the ink-and-paint department.<sup>40</sup> While Walt himself stated that women could contribute something in the business that men never would or could, it wasn't until the period 1989-2005 that the make-up started shifting in favor of a greater presence of women in upper-level positions.<sup>41</sup>

The way women are portrayed in Disney's movies has not always been a point of critique. While the portrayal of women in movies from the 'Classic period' is now often critiqued for its classic passive fairy tale princesses stereotype, in its own time no objection seems to have been raised, as Davis notes from an analysis of a survey done by *McCall's* magazine in 1967.<sup>42</sup> However, in the post-war period, women rose up against the sanitizing, stereotyping, and beauty queen fantasies of the movies. The roles of evil female authority figures however, like the evil queens or stepmothers, were not changed and thus left unchallenged.<sup>43</sup> After the feminist protests of the Seventies, film companies commissioned women screenwriters to write heroines which answered the demand for more positive role models.<sup>44</sup> However, this did not immediately signal big changes in the portrayal of women by Disney. From her analysis of the 'Middle Era', from 1967-1988, Davis concludes that any feminist themes in Disney animation were carefully contained within conservative forms, for

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<sup>35</sup> Davis (2006): 79.

<sup>36</sup> Ibidem: 80.

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem: 87.

<sup>38</sup> Ibidem: 90.

<sup>39</sup> Ibidem: 90.

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem: 113.

<sup>41</sup> Ibidem: 170.

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem: 135.

<sup>43</sup> Warner (2014): 132-133.

<sup>44</sup> Ibidem: 142.

example by making the female lead a child or an animal.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, in this period no adaptations of classic fairy tales were produced by Disney, leaving the princess and queen stereotype mostly unchanged.

From the 1980s onwards, changes in the ways women were portrayed began to appear.<sup>46</sup> As stated above on the *Tangled* case, it remains to be seen in this research whether these adaptations succeeded, and what the roles of older authority figures are in these movies. Warner calls the rise of political sensitivity and the resulting tinkering with stories “the most striking development in the alliance of fairy tale and cinema as vehicles in family entertainment.”<sup>47</sup> This development can not only be seen in products of the Disney Company, but in all cultural products. Feminist fairy tales, which like feminist literary criticism, originated in the late 1960s and 1970s, are an example of this.<sup>48</sup> However, as Zipes notes, these fairy tales have not been as widely distributed and are not as well-known as the versions Disney popularized, and they have thus not affected masses of children in our culture.<sup>49</sup>

Despite these changes in policy and product, there are two misconceptions about Disney’s female characters that Davis points out in her book: the fact that all female characters are princesses and that they are all weak, passive figures.<sup>50</sup> The first misconception can be countered by looking at the products of the Classic Years alone: as Davis finds, in the eight films whose central characters are human, eight female major characters can be found, of which only three are princesses.<sup>51</sup> The second misconceptions stems from Disney’s famous classic princesses and while this might hold true for these princesses, it is precisely the goal of this research to illuminate the changes that have taken place in this stereotype.

The Disney Princess franchise has become hugely successful and influential in the way female fairy tale characters are portrayed. The franchise was started fairly recent, in 2000, when Andy Mooney, the then newly appointed president of Disney Consumer Products, realized the latent demand for princess-themed products. The franchise marked the first time Disney marketed characters separately from their film’s release and put characters from different stories side-by-side, which turned out to be a genius invention.<sup>52</sup> In the first six years

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<sup>45</sup> Davis (2006): 165-166

<sup>46</sup> Ibidem: 169.

<sup>47</sup> Warner (2014): 169.

<sup>48</sup> Zipes (1986): 31.

<sup>49</sup> Ibidem: 186.

<sup>50</sup> Davis (2006): 8

<sup>51</sup> Ibidem: 92.

<sup>52</sup> Orenstein, Peggy. (2006) ‘What’s Wrong With Cinderella?’, in: The New York Times. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/24/magazine/24princess.t.html?pagewanted=all> (17-11-2015).

alone Consumer Products revenue shot up to \$3 billion, from \$300 million in 2001, a rise that is mostly attributed to the ‘invention’ of the Disney princesses.<sup>53</sup>

While not nearly as popular or profitable as the Disney Princess franchise, the female Disney villains also have a franchise of their own. While all being part of the Disney Villains franchise, the female villains also got their own sub-franchise called Disney’s Divas of Darkness. The line-up of products of this franchise, while notably smaller than that of the Disney Princess franchise, stood out in 2012 when the Villains Designer Collection was revealed, centering around stylized, couture, limited edition dolls of six female villains and also including apparel, beauty products, home items, and other products featuring these couture versions.

However, while it is Disney and these franchises that made the princess and queen stereotype as widely known as they are today, the stereotypes originated earlier in fairy tales. In his book *Don’t Bet on the Prince* Jack Zipes analyses the stories in *The Blue Fairy Book* by Andrew Lang, the first of the Fairy Books which feature a collection of fairy tales published between 1889 and 1910, which became hugely popular and is now known as one of the ‘original’ collections. Zipes notices a dichotomy between woman who are “gentle, passive, and fair and those who are active, wicked, and ugly”.<sup>54</sup> Heroines in *The Blue Fairy Book* are beautiful, helpless, passive, and function as prize in a competition of quest.<sup>55</sup> They are chosen for their beauty and exist passively until they are seen by or described to the hero.<sup>56</sup> However, even then they take no action to form their own story.<sup>57</sup> They exercise no influence on what happens to them and thus have no authority in their own story. Women who do have this authority, who take action and thus shape the story, are often the evil nemesis of the hero or heroine. In fairy tales, powerful, active, ambitious women are often portrayed as ugly, repulsive and evil.<sup>58</sup> Being powerful and active, which is praiseworthy in males, is thus rejected in females and becomes linked with being unwomanly.<sup>59</sup> This can also be seen in the few powerful good women that feature in fairy tales, which are nearly all fairies and are outnumbered by powerful evil woman.<sup>60</sup> As Zipes argues, these women have a gender only in a technical sense.<sup>61</sup> They are not human beings and thus do not provide an example with whom children can identify. Furthermore, these characters are always remote; they appear

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<sup>53</sup> Orenstein (2006).

<sup>54</sup> Zipes (1986): 197.

<sup>55</sup> Ibidem: 190-191.

<sup>56</sup> Ibidem: 189.

<sup>57</sup> Ibidem: 203.

<sup>58</sup> Ibidem: 197.

<sup>59</sup> Ibidem: 197.

<sup>60</sup> Ibidem: 196.

<sup>61</sup> Ibidem: 196.

when needed and disappear after they fulfilled their duty. Thus, they are more a tool than a fleshed out character.

## Theoretical framework

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The actantial model was first proposed by Algirdas Greimas in 1966 in his book *Sémantique structural*, which was translated to English in 1983 to *Structural Semantics* by McDowell, Schleifer and Velie. He later elaborated on it in other works like *Du sens* (1970), *Sémiotique et sciences sociales* (1976), and *Du sens II* (1983), of which essays were selected, translated, and combined by Perron and Collins into the book *On Meaning: Selected Writings in Semiotic Theory* (1987).

The actantial model, based on theories of Vladimir Propp and Étienne Souriau, is a model that can be used to analyze an action. Both Propp and Souriau describe actors or dramatic ‘functions’ within a certain genre and reduce them to classifications of actants of that genre; Propp focuses on Russian Folktale, and Souriau on theatre. Greimas compares these inventories and proposes his own six possible ‘actants’ in which an action can be broken down. In this model, an actant is not just a specific appearance of a character in a story. The actant is an integral structural element of the narrative, and can be a character, an object, or even a concept. It describes the role this abstract body fulfills within a network of relations.<sup>62</sup> The six actants are: the subject, the objects, the sender, the receiver, the helper and the opponent.<sup>63</sup> These six actants are divided into three oppositions, which each form an axis.

The first opposition, of subject and object, is situated on the axis of desire.<sup>64</sup> The subject does or does not want to be joined with the object, thus establishing two kinds of relation or junction: conjunction (when the subject has the object) and disjunction (when the subject does not have the object). With these two types of relationship, two types of transformation are possible: a conjunctiontransformation (when the subject goes from lacking to possessing the object) and a disjunctiontransformation (when the subject goes from possessing to lacking the object).<sup>65</sup> The ideology of the text tells us whether this relation and/or transformation is positive or negative.<sup>66</sup> Greimas alternatively mentions ‘the quest’

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<sup>62</sup> Luc & Vervaeck (2005): 57.

<sup>63</sup> Greimas, Algirdas. (1983) *Structural Semantics. An Attempt at a Method*. Daniele McDowell, Ronald Schleifer & Alan Velie (trs.) Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press: 203-205.

<sup>64</sup> Ibidem: 203.

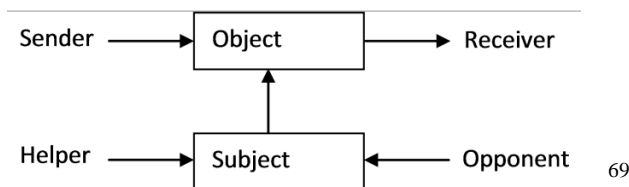
<sup>65</sup> Geest, Dirk de & Jef Bulckens. (1986) *De verborgen rijkdom van bijbelverhalen: theorie en praktijk van de structurele bijbellezing*. Leuven/Amersfoort: Uitgeverij Acco: 34.

<sup>66</sup> Ibidem: 33.

when describing this opposition.<sup>67</sup> This term describes the narrative function of this axis (instead of the semantic investment), since the subject has to undertake a ‘quest’ or transformation to reach its goal and it is this ‘quest’ that is the center of the narrative.

The second opposition, sender and receiver, is positioned on the axis of communication. The sender is the one who incites the action, the receiver is the one who profits from it. Thus, the sender requests a specific junction that the subject pursues, and the receiver benefits from the realization of this junction.

For the last opposition, of helper and opponent, Greimas did not explicitly name the axis. However, he does later suggest that the semantic investment in this relationship is power and thus when describing this model this relationship is usually named the axis of power.<sup>68</sup> The helper is the one who assists the subject, the opponent is the one who hinders the subject. Schematically, Greimas actantial model looks like this:



A disadvantage of the actantial model is that the opponent is not posed as equal to the subject, thus minimizing the importance of the opponent and of the confrontation between the subject and the opponent.<sup>70</sup> On first glance this seems to pose a problem in my research since the evil queen deserves as much attention as the princess. However, as stated before, actants are abstract roles and do not coincide with characters; a character can fulfill multiple actants or one actant can be fulfilled by multiple characters.<sup>71</sup> This is why this model is useful in analyzing these stereotypes: it does not fix the stereotype to the role they play in different narratives, thus enabling an analysis of the changing parts these stereotypes play in different narratives. For all my cases, I will pose an actantial model with the princess as subject, and a model with the queen as subject. When proposing an actantial model for a certain narrative, interpretative choices are always made and this should be kept in mind when reading this thesis. The models proposed for each analysis are my interpretations and cannot be seen as autonomous facts. Needless to say, I will substantiate every choice I make in my analyses.

<sup>67</sup> Greimas (1983): 203.

<sup>68</sup> De Geest & Bulckens (1986): 38.

<sup>69</sup> Greimas (1983): 207.

<sup>70</sup> De Geest & Bulckens (1986): 40.

<sup>71</sup> Greimas (1983): 203.

Since my research focuses on authority figures, it is also important to analyze how characters assert or receive their authority and how they use it. As stated before, Lanser's concept of discursive authority (intellectual credibility, ideological validity, and aesthetic value) is claimed through a quest to be heard.<sup>72</sup> Especially self-authorization, which in Lanser's view is implicit in the very act of authorship, is important and while Lanser mostly applies this to actual female authors, in the analysis of characters taking action in shaping the story can also be seen as an act of authorship. As Zipes states on the example of Snow White:

An angel in the house of myth, Snow White is not only a child but (as female angels always are) childlike, docile, submissive, the heroine of a life that *has no story*. But the Queen, adult and demonic, plainly wants a life of 'significant action,' by definition an 'unfeminine' life of stories and story-telling.<sup>73</sup>

A passive character has no authorship in his/her story, and thus no authority.

Lanser furthermore states that discursive authority is produced interactively, which means it is characterized "with respect to specific receiving communities."<sup>74</sup> In her case studies on female authors, this indicates the audience. However, since I will be analyzing the authority of fictional characters, it is their environment and the other characters that constitute the receiving community. I will use the three aspects of discursive authority mentioned above (intellectual credibility, ideological validity, and aesthetic value) as categories to analyze how authority is constituted in interaction and in self-authorization.

The fact that in Lanser's concept authority is produced interactively corresponds with the actantial model. In both theories, it is in the interaction between actants that meaning is produced; it is in the interactions between actants authority is produced and the actions that constitute the narrative are defined. Furthermore, discursive authority is a process and not a fixed fact. Discursive authority is something characters can gain or lose throughout the narrative and it thus becomes as much a transformation as the junctiontransformations in Greimas' model. The quest for authority and the 'quest' of the subject also seem to coincide when juxtaposing the theories, since it is the subject that undertakes the pivotal actions and transformations of the narrative. However, the actantial model only shows the transformations that take place, not the degree of self-authorship or the degree of authority received through these actions, since the actantial model does not display the reaction of the receiving community. This is an extra dimensions I am adding to the actantial model for this research, since it is not only the subject that can have authority in a narrative. I will thus in my analysis

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<sup>72</sup> Lanser (1992): 7.

<sup>73</sup> Zipes (1986): 203.

<sup>74</sup> Lanser (1992): 6.

of each actantial model also analyze two kinds of ways in which the characters claim authority; through self-authorization and interactively. Of course these aspects of authority are intertwined, but for the purpose of this research I will first analyze them separately before combining them.

By combining these two theories, I propose a theoretical framework which I think will illuminate my cases in such a way, making certain aspects of these cases visible, that answering my research question becomes possible. In this I follow the Searchlight theory by Karl Popper, which poses that observation, from which we acquire knowledge, is always preceded by something theoretical.<sup>75</sup> This theoretical part, our horizon of expectations and/or our hypotheses, lead us to new observational results which can then change our expectations.<sup>76</sup> This, according to Popper, is the aim of the scientist:

to discover better and better theories [or to invent more and more powerful searchlights] capable of being put to more and more severe tests [and thereby leading us to, and illuminating for us, ever new experiences].<sup>77</sup>

Thus, in my conclusion I will not only try to answer my research question, I will also evaluate whether and how my proposed ‘searchlight’ has functioned within this research.

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<sup>75</sup> Popper, Karl. (1977) ‘The Bucket and the Searchlight: Two Theories of Knowledge’, in: *The Philosophy of Ecology. From Science to Synthesis*. (2000) Athens: University of Georgia Press: 142.

<sup>76</sup> Ibidem: 144.

<sup>77</sup> Ibidem: 146.



## Case 1: The Traditional Princesses and Queens

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In this chapter, I will analyze *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* from 1937 and *Sleeping Beauty* from 1959. *Snow White* was the first full-length animated feature film produced and it started off Disney's convention of adapting fairy tales into animated features. *Sleeping Beauty* was the last animated feature produced by Walt Disney himself, based on a fairy tale. Both adaptations are based on fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm (*Snow White* and *Little Briar Rose*), but apart from this *Sleeping Beauty* is also based on the fairy tale *The Sleeping Beauty* by Charles Perrault, and the music from Pyotr Tchaikovsky's ballet *Sleeping Beauty*.

### Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937)

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The Walt Disney Feature Production version starts with a big white-and-gold book titled 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs' opening and showing us the first page of the story:

Once upon a time there lived a lovely little Princess named Snow White. Her vain and wicked Stepmother the Queen feared that some day Snow White's beauty would surpass her own. So she dressed the little Princess in rags and forced her to work as a Scullery Maid.<sup>78</sup>

The page turns, and we read:

Each day the vain Queen consulted her Magic Mirror, "Magic Mirror on the Wall, who is the fairest one of all?"..and as long as the Mirror answered, "You are the fairest one of all," Snow White was safe from the Queen's cruel jealousy.<sup>79</sup>

After this, we see the evil Queen consulting her mirror, which answers her Snow White is more beautiful than she. Snow White meets the Prince and when the Queen sees him serenading her, she becomes even more jealous and orders a huntsman to kill Snow White. However, the huntsman spares her and sends her away.

Helped by animals, Snow White finds a cottage in the woods. She cleans it and falls asleep on the seven little beds. The occupants, the seven dwarfs, return from working in the mine and after some confusion find Snow White. Snow White tells them the Queen will kill her and after she proposes to keep house, the dwarfs let her stay. The Queen again consults her Mirror, which tells her Snow White, living with the dwarfs, is still the fairest of them all. She decides to disguise herself and go the cottage herself. She poisons an apple to give to Snow White.

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<sup>78</sup> *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Cottrel, William et al. (1937) United States: Walt Disney Productions.

<sup>79</sup> Ibidem.

The next day, Snow White sees the dwarfs off. The Queen arrives and tries to persuade Snow White to take a bite off the apple. The dwarfs, alerted by the animal, hurry back to the cottage, but before they arrive Snow White takes a bite. The Queen flees, chased by the dwarfs. They trap her on a cliff and when lightning strikes the cliff, the Queen falls, followed by a boulder.

The dwarfs and the animals mourn Snow White. An intertitle tells us:

...so beautiful, even in death, that the dwarfs could not find it in their hearts to bury her.....they fashioned a coffin of glass and gold, and kept eternal vigil at her side...the Prince, who had searched far and wide, heard of the maiden who slept in the glass coffin.<sup>80</sup>

In the background of the intertitles, we see the seasons change from autumn to winter and spring. The Prince arrives and kisses Snow White. She wakes up and the Prince carries her off on his horse towards a big shining golden castle in the clouds, while we hear a choir singing:

Some day when spring is here  
We'll find our love anew  
And the birds will sing  
And wedding bells will ring  
Some day when my dreams come true.<sup>81</sup>

We cut back to the last page of the book, which tells us "...and they lived happily ever after," and the book closes.

## Analysis

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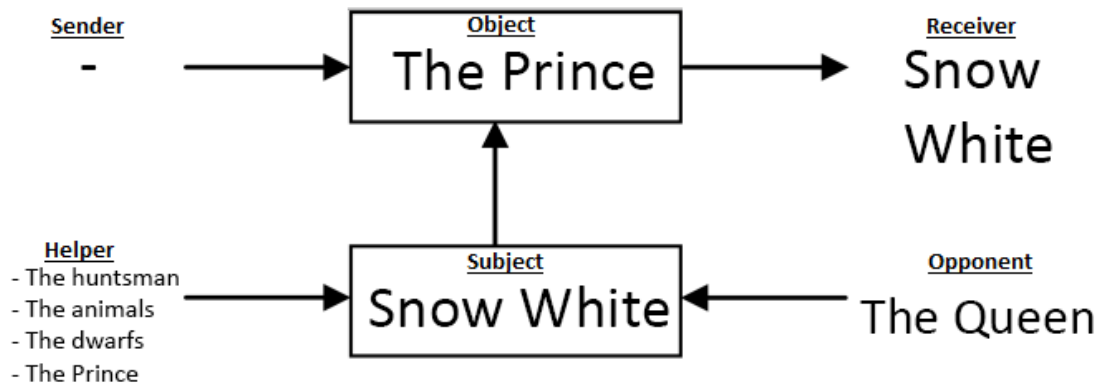
Drafting an actantial model for this narrative turns out to be more intricate than expected. Since Snow White is the main and title character, it seems logical that she is the subject. This would make the Prince the object since "the one I love" is all Snow White desires in this story. However, this wish is constantly expressed passively; the Prince will come and be the one to find her.<sup>82</sup> Snow White takes no action to make this conjunctiontransformation happen and thus does not undertake a quest. The fact that there seems to be no sender in this model emphasizes this. However, when the transformation is completed, Snow White herself is the receiver of the object.

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<sup>80</sup> *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Cottrel (1937).

<sup>81</sup> *Ibidem*.

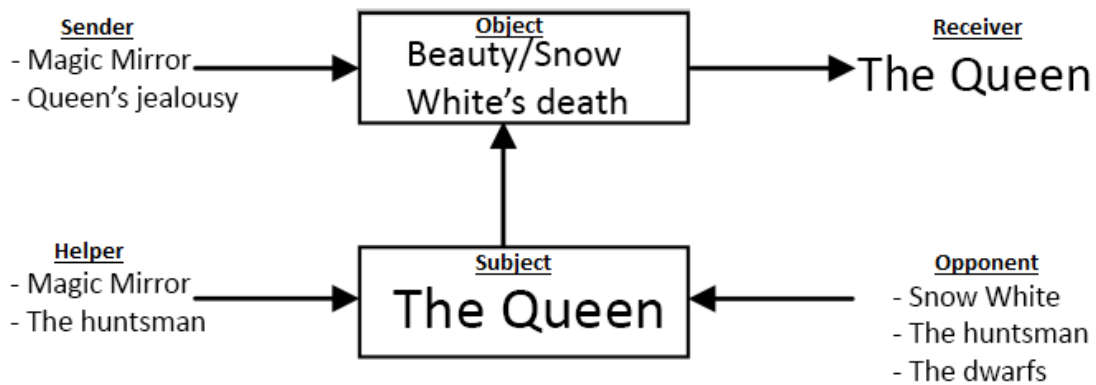
<sup>82</sup> *Ibidem*: Snow White: "I'm wishing for the one I love to find me today."



In this model, the Queen is the opponent. However, it is interesting to note that the Queen does not undertake action with the motivation to thwart Snow White's desire; she has her own motives and desires. The Queen is envious of Snow White's beauty before she sees the Prince serenading the girl and while seeing this is what motivates her to command the huntsman to kill Snow White and bring her the girl's heart, it is not the main motivation. When Snow White is living with the dwarfs, it is the fact that the Magic Mirror tells the Queen that Snow White is still more beautiful that drives her to set out to kill Snow White herself. Stopping the Prince and Snow White from finding each other is only mentioned as an afterthought when the Queen finds out the antidote to the poisoned apple is Love's First Kiss.

In the movie, Snow White has a lot of helpers: the huntsman helps her by sparing her and sending her away, the animals help her by showing her the cottage and helping her clean, and the dwarfs help her by taking her in. However, none of these helpers support Snow White in fulfilling her desire. They keep her alive and safe, but since Snow White does not undertake any action to find the Prince, the helpers are not able to assist her in making the transformation happen. The only character that could be identified as helping Snow White obtain her wish, is the object itself; The Prince. He delivers her her happy ending by finding her himself. The absence of a sender in the movie is very logical in combination with the absence of a quest; no-one sends Snow White on a quest and so no quest is undertaken.

Looking at the narrative from the perspective of the Queen, the model becomes easier to formulate. If the Queen is the subject, the object becomes 'being the fairest one of all', which can be achieved by killing Snow White. The sender in this model is the Magic Mirror, who first tells the Queen that Snow White is more beautiful and later reveals that Snow White survived the Queen's murder attempt by the huntsman. Furthermore, the Queen's jealousy could be seen as a sender, since the Queen would not be motivated into action without this. The Mirror is thus also partially a helper and while the huntsman seems to be a helper at first, he turns out to be an opponent when he deceives the Queen. However, Snow White is the



main opponent, since her existence is what denies the Queen her desire. Furthermore, the dwarfs are her opponent by hiding Snow White and trapping the Queen on the cliff. The Prince could be seen as an opponent since he is ultimately the one who revives Snow White. However, the Queen has already fallen to her death when this happens and when she finds out Love's First Kiss is the antidote of her poison, she explicitly states that she does not perceive this as a problem since the dwarfs will bury Snow White once she is poisoned. The receiver of the narrative, would the Queen have succeeded, would have been the Queen herself. However, the transformation the Queen pursues, which could be seen as a conjunction transformation going from lacking the title of 'fairest of them all' to obtaining it or a disjunction transformation going from 'possessing' Snow White to eliminating her, never happens.

When looking at the discursive authority, it is clear that in the aspect of self-authorization, Snow White does not assert any authority. Zipes noted that the Snow White of the Brothers Grimm is docile, submissive, the heroine of a life that has no story.<sup>83</sup> This holds true when looking at Disney's movie; Snow White is part of a story that even bears her name, but in this story, she takes no action to achieve her goal. It is also striking how many helpers she has. She does not claim any intellectual credibility, ideological validity or aesthetic value for herself.

However, when looking at the authority that is produced interactively, Snow White does seem to receive some authority. In the course of the movie, she interacts with the Prince, the huntsman, the animals, the dwarfs and the Queen.

Especially in her interactions with the dwarfs, Snow White receives some affirmation of her intellectual credibility and aesthetic value. Upon seeing her for the first time, the dwarfs are struck by her beauty and Snow White convinces them to let her stay because she knows how to cook and clean. Furthermore, she does not fall for their lies that they washed 'recently'

<sup>83</sup> Zipes (1986): 203.

and orders them to wash up before dinner, which they reluctantly do. She also gains some intellectual credibility in her interactions with the animals, when they obey her to do the housework the way she wants it done. However, both with the animals and the dwarfs there does not seem to be a transformation in authority. Both are scared and hide when they first meet Snow White, but decide to help her when they learn she is sweet. This ‘sweetness’ could be seen as ideological validity, since Snow White is portrayed as so ‘good and pure’ that the animals, the dwarfs and even the huntsman help her. However, this motivation could also be identified as pity, which would mean Snow White does not receive any authority through these interactions.

A kind of authority that does not fall within the three categories is that of a royal title. Both the huntsman and the dwarfs indicate this authority, the huntsman by apologizing while calling Snow White ‘your highness’, and the dwarfs by stating they are honoured to meet her upon realizing she is the princess. However, with the huntsman no transformation of authority takes place. After begging for her forgiveness, the huntsman urges Snow White to run away calls her ‘child’, immediately reverting back to the previous state of the relationship in which he has authority over the princess.

What is interesting is that the two groups Snow White seems to have the most authority over are counterbalanced by the Prince and the Queen. Like Snow White scares the groups upon first meeting them, both the Prince and the Queen startle Snow White upon meeting. Furthermore, Snow White receives little to no authority from these characters. The Prince serenades her and since they have not exchanged a word at that point, this action can only originate in Snow White’s aesthetic value in the eyes of the Prince. However, since they have no other interaction until the moment the Prince kisses her, wakes her up and carries her off, Snow White does not receive any other authority apart from this aesthetic value. In her interaction with the Queen in disguise, Snow White seems to have some authority; she calls the Queen a ‘poor old lady’ and physically supports her. However, it serves the Queen’s purpose to deceive Snow White into thinking she is weak and so the authority Snow White receives through this interaction is pretended; she only receives it because the Queen pretends to be weak.

Looking at the authority that is produced interactively for Snow White, it is clear that the little authority she receives is mostly based on aesthetic value and knowledge of housework. Furthermore, the balance of authority that is set upon meeting other characters does not transform in any way during the movie.

In the aspect of self-authorisation, the Queen clearly differs from Snow White. She actively pursues her goal and in this takes authorship in her own story. While she does have helpers in the story she undertakes most of her actions alone and is able to do so because of her knowledge of black magic; she poisons the apple and disguises herself as an old peddler with this knowledge, claiming intellectual credibility for herself. In her own eyes, these actions are also ideological valid. However, in the narrative in which the Queen is evil, no other character supports this ideological validity.

In comparison to Snow White, the Queen has fewer interactions with other characters. The first character she interacts with, the Magic Mirror, is a complex one since this character could also be seen as a tool; in the movie he functions as a source of knowledge but he does not seem to have his own agenda. He is completely subservient to the Queen, appearing when she summons him, calling her 'my Queen' and 'Majesty' and obeying every command. The Mirror does not seem to have any choice in obeying the Queen, weakening the authority that is conferred upon her by the fact that the Mirror obeys her. On the other hand, in obeying her the Mirror confirms the Queen's royal status multiple times, conveying some authority that comes with this status upon her. Because the Magic Mirror is more a tool than a character, the fact that he receives some intellectual credibility by knowing more than the Queen (the fact that she was deceived by the huntsman and Snow White's current location) does not pose a threat to the Queen's authority.

In the movie, the huntsman does what the Mirror cannot: he disobeys the Queen, partially undermining the authority he conveys upon her when he obeys her because of her status and the threat of a penalty. However, the Queen uses the disobedience of the huntsman to assert her own intellectual credibility. When she finds out she has been tricked, she states the huntsman is a blundering fool and decides to finish the job herself, implying that she is more capable than the huntsman. Whether the huntsman is in the end punished for his disobedience is not told.

After these interactions, the Queen disguises herself as an old peddler and fakes weakness to deceive Snow White. She loses some intellectual credibility when the animals see through her disguise and attack her, but reasserts herself as intellectually strong by manipulating Snow White into taking a bite of the apple by telling her it is a wishing apple, thus succeeding in her quest. However, in her disguise she seems to have lost her access to black magic and her status as royalty which asserted her authority before. Because of this, she cannot counter the animals attack and is also forced to flee when the dwarfs arrive. In her last action, she shows that while she does not have her power, she does still have enough intellectual credibility to

quickly come up with a plan to counter the dwarfs' chase by trying to crush them with a boulder. In the end it is none of the characters or actants that cause her downfall. It is the sheer force of nature and her own plan that backfires that in the end kill her when lightning strikes the cliff and she falls, followed by the boulder she was pushing. Thus, though she loses, there is no character or actant that has more authority in this story as the Queen, since no character except she herself was able to defeat her.

## Sleeping Beauty (1959)

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Like *Snow White*, this movie starts with a book opening. On the first page, we read: "In a far away land long ago lived a King and his fair Queen. Many years had they longer for a child and finally their wish was granted," which is also being narrated.<sup>84</sup> The page turns, and we read and hear:

A daughter was born. They called her Aurora. Yes they named her after the dawn, for she filled their lives with sunshine. Then a great holiday was proclaimed throughout the kingdom so that all of high or low estate might pay homage to the infant princess. And our story begins on that Most Joyful day.<sup>85</sup>

While a choir sings "hail to the princess Aurora", we see troops of people arrive at the castle. King Hubert and Prince Philip arrive and the narrator tells us Hubert and Stefan would today announce that Philip would be betrothed to Aurora. The Three Good Fairies, Flora, Fauna, and Merryweather, arrive and bless the child with gifts of beauty and song, but then the evil fairy Maleficent arrives. She was not invited and as revenge curses the baby to prick her finger on a spindle on her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and die. Maleficent disappears and the third fairy changes the curse so that the princess will not die, but fall asleep, only to be awakened by True Love's Kiss.

To protect Aurora, the fairies disguise themselves and raise Aurora in a cottage in the woods. Sixteen years later, Maleficent's minions have failed to find Aurora and she sends her pet raven to find her. The narrator tells us that for her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Fairies had planned a party and a surprise, so they sent Aurora into the forest. In the forest, Aurora meets Philip and falls in love. They agree to meet that evening at the cottage.

At the cottage, the Fairies use magic to prepare the surprise. Maleficent's raven sees some of this magic that escapes through the chimney. Aurora returns and tells the Fairies about the man she met. The Fairies tell her that she is Princess Aurora and they take her back

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<sup>84</sup> *Sleeping Beauty*. Geronimi, Clyde. (1959) United States: Walt Disney Productions.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibidem*.

to her father. At the castle, Maleficent lures Aurora to the tallest tower, where she pricks her finger. The Fairies place Aurora on a bed and decide to put everyone in the castle to sleep until Aurora awakens. While doing this, Flora overhears Hubert saying Philip has fallen in love with a peasant girl he met. The Fairies hurry back to the cottage, but when Philip arrives Maleficent and her goons are waiting for him and take him captive. The Fairies arrive, realize what has happened and decide to go to Maleficent's castle.

The Fairies sneak into Maleficent's castle and free Philip. Maleficent's pet raven catches them and warns the goons. Chased by the goons but aided by the Fairies, Philip escapes. Maleficent realizes what is happening and tries to stop Philip by summoning a forest of thorns around Stefan's castle. Aided by the Fairies, Philip cuts a way through. Maleficent transforms into a dragon and chases Philip to a cliff, but aided by the Fairies Philip throws his sword into her heart. The thorns disappear and Philip finds Aurora, kisses her and thus wakes her and everyone up.

Philip and Aurora come down and Aurora is reunited with her parents. We cut back to the book, which shows Philip and Aurora dancing and reads "And they lived happily ever after" before closing.<sup>86</sup>

## Analysis

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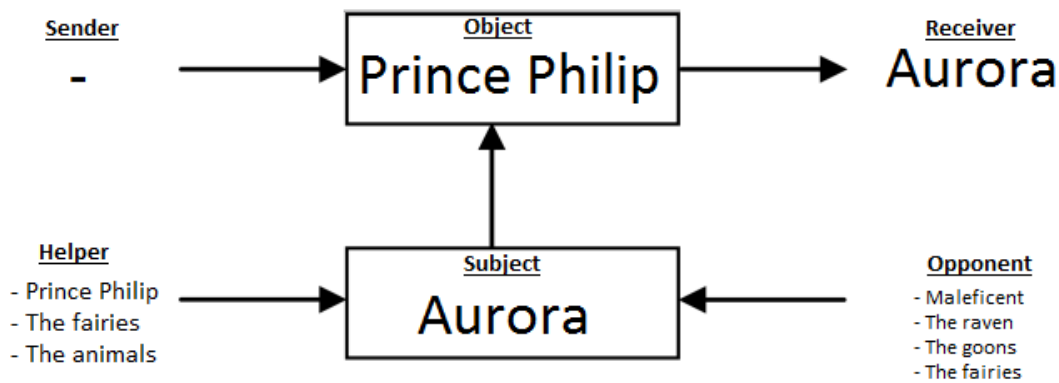
When drafting an actantial model for *Sleeping Beauty*, the same problem as with *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* comes up: the title character, Aurora, is a very passive character who does not undertake a quest. She does not take any action to achieve her goal and make a transformation happen. Her passiveness is illustrated by the fact that Aurora has the least screen time of all the Disney Princesses, only being on screen for 18 minutes and in those minutes only uttering about 25 sentences. In the last 35 minutes of the movie, of which she is asleep 20 minutes, Aurora does not speak at all.

If Aurora is the subject, her dream prince, which turns out to be Prince Philip, is the object since the only desire Aurora expresses and which she has dreamed about is being found by her prince and falling in love with him. Even her complaint that the Fairies treat her like a child is connected to this, since they prevent her from meeting anyone. Thus, a conjunctiontransformation takes place in the narrative. However, as with Snow White, since

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<sup>86</sup> *Sleeping Beauty*. Geronimi. (1959).





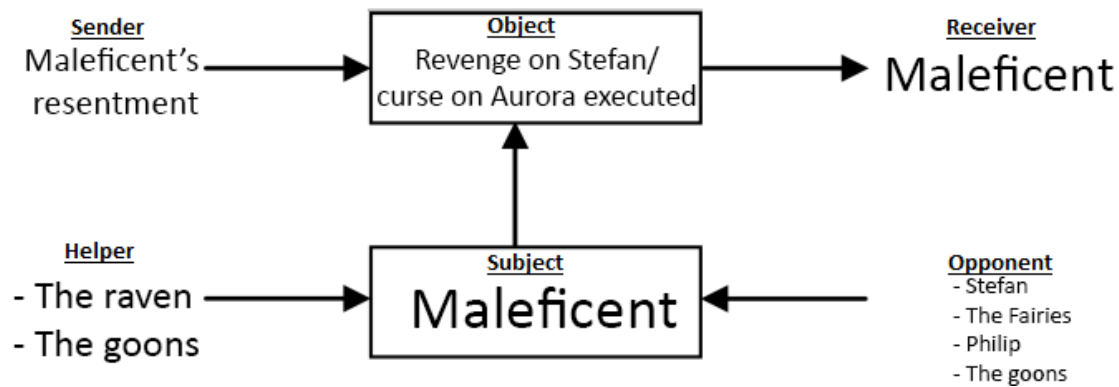
Aurora does not undertake a quest, there is no sender in this model. The receiver of the transformation is Aurora herself.

Thus, most of the characters in the movie function as opponents or helpers. The major opponent is Maleficent, who has her pet raven and goons to help her, making them Aurora's opponents too. As with the Evil Queen, it is important to note that Maleficent is not motivated to stop Aurora from obtaining her object. Her actions do initially keep Philip and Aurora apart, but this is something that happens by extension of the actions Maleficent undertakes because of her own reasons. Maleficent is offended when she is not invited to Aurora's christening and wants to take revenge on King Stefan and the Queen by cursing their daughter. All her actions in the movie are aimed at making sure her curse takes place. Maleficent even plans on releasing Philip and letting him ride off to Aurora when he is old as a cruel joke, thus showing that her ultimate goal is not keeping the two lovers apart, but extracting her revenge on Stefan.

The Fairies for the largest part of the movie function as helpers, not only by keeping Aurora safe, but also by aiding Philip in his escape from and battle with Maleficent. They free him and give him a Shield of Virtue and a Sword of Truth. However, they also for a short period function as opponents by taking Aurora back to her father before she can meet Philip again and forbidding her to meet him, since she is betrothed and the fairies do not know the man Aurora met and Philip are one and the same. Another important helper is Philip himself since he actively chases Aurora multiple times throughout the movie. The animals from the forest also help Aurora by leading Philip to her in the forest.

What is interesting to note is that King Stefan and King Hubert do not play a part in this model. They could be seen as helpers since they are the ones who decided Aurora and Philip would get married, but they do not take any action to make this happen.

When looking at the narrative from the perspective of Maleficent, getting revenge on King Stefan and the Queen by cursing Aurora becomes the object. This could be described as a conjunction transformation since Maleficent tries to go from lacking revenge to having taken



revenge. In this model, Maleficent herself would be the receiver since she is the one who profits from this revenge. Stefan, the Fairies and Philip all become her opponents since they actively try to stop Maleficent's revenge from happening. Stefan decrees every spinning wheel to be burned and entrusts his daughter to the Fairies, who disguise themselves as human peasants and raise Aurora in a cottage in the woods. One of the fairies furthermore changes the curse so that Aurora will not die but fall asleep and can be woken by True Love's Kiss. Philip thus is her opponent because he can break the curse. The goons and the pet raven are her helpers, though the goons also partially thwart her plans through their own stupidity by searching for a baby for sixteen years. In this model, Maleficent's own resentment is her sender. Maleficent sets out to get revenge for the fact that she did not receive an invitation. Nobody motivates her or points out that taking revenge is an option.

Apart from Aurora and Maleficent, the movie also features the Fairies as important female figures. They undertake most of the actions that drive the plot. While they have three distinct personalities, when placing them in an actantial model they function as one actant. However, since these characters are not part of my hypothesis and, as stated before, only have a gender in a technical sense, I will not look into their authority further.

In the aspect of self-authorization, Aurora does not assert any authority. One action she partially takes by herself (and partially because the Fairies told her not to speak to strangers) is running away from Philip when he asks her for her name, an action that actively goes against achieving her goal. Apart from this, Aurora does not undertake any action that she is not ordered or persuaded to. Aurora does not claim any intellectual credibility, ideological validity or aesthetic value for herself.

However, through interaction she does receive some authority, even before we actually see her. In the movie it is described that everyone comes to pay homage to the princess and we hear the choir sing "We pledge our loyalty anew [...] All of her subjects adore her", thus

asserting the authority Aurora receives through her royal status.<sup>87</sup> Hubert, Philip and the Fairies also come to pay homage and while Philip pulls a face when looking at the baby, Flora asserts Aurora's aesthetic value by giving her the gift of beauty.

In the rest of the movie, Aurora interacts with the Fairies, the animals, Philip, Maleficent, Stefan, the Queen and Hubert, though the last four are all very short interactions. Especially the interactions with the Fairies and the animals assert some authority for Aurora. Aurora clearly is not fooled by the Fairies' pretext that they need her to go pick berries to get her out of the house, thus showing that she does have some intellectual credibility. However, while she does complain about the fact that the Fairies treat her like a child, she follows their every order, even when it causes her distress. An example of this when the Fairies tell her she can never see the young man again; Aurora cries about it, but does not refuse. The Fairies also assert Aurora's royal status by giving her a crown, thus making this aspect of her authority explicit.

The animals in the forest sing with Aurora, follow her, help her pick berries and try to entertain her by posing as a prince. Why they do this is not made clear but, as with Snow White, it could be seen as an assertion of ideological validity since Aurora is so sweet and pure of heart that the animals feel inclined to help her. With both the Fairies and the animals, no real transformation in authority takes place.

What is interesting is that while with her interactions with the Fairies and the animals Aurora receives authority because of intellectual credibility and ideological validity, with Philip and Maleficent only her aesthetic value is asserted. Philip remarks that Aurora's singing is beautiful and Maleficent asserts that Aurora "is indeed most wondrous fair."<sup>88</sup> However, Maleficent asserts this not to Aurora, but to Philip when she is taunting him with a vision of Aurora in ageless sleep. On the other hand, both characters clearly have more intellectual credibility than Aurora. Philip quickly persuades Aurora to trust him and dance with him, while Aurora is at first scared when she meets him. Maleficent furthermore persuades Aurora with her magic to follow her to the tower and orders her to touch the spindle, which she does. With these two characters the balance of authority that is set upon meeting also does not transform in any way.

With Stefan and the Queen, Aurora's only interaction is bowing to them, asserting the fact that their royal status is higher, and hugging them. With Hubert Aurora asserts her aesthetic value by silencing him by giving him a peck on the cheek.

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<sup>87</sup> *Sleeping Beauty*. Geronimi. (1959).

<sup>88</sup> *Ibidem*.

Maleficent differs greatly from Aurora in her self-authorization. All the actions Maleficent takes she decides to do for herself. She does not follow any orders and while she does have helpers in the story, the main part of the actions to achieve her goal she undertakes herself or she orders others to do. Most of her authority comes from her power and magic. However, contrary to the Evil Queen these powers cannot be categorized as intellectual credibility. Maleficent's powers seem to be a part of her being. While we see the Evil Queen consulting books, Maleficent's magic is not something she acquires through knowledge. She possesses it as part of her being. Because of this, it constitutes a separate category from which characters can draw authority.

In interacting with other characters, Maleficent clearly sees herself above everyone and for the most part the characters react in line with this view. She proclaims herself the 'mistress of all evil' and scorns anyone who think they can defeat her. Most of the authority Maleficent receives comes from her enormous magical power. However, she also has intellectual credibility because she comes up with plans and ways to execute them.

In the movie, Maleficent interacts with the Fairies, the King and Queen, the goons, the raven, Aurora and Philip. Only the Fairies and Philip compromise her authority, from the rest of the characters she only gains authority. The Queen calls Maleficent 'Your Excellency' and both she and the King are not able to protect Aurora from Maleficent. The goons are stupid creatures who obey Maleficent, even after she brutally attacks them and curses them. She is less abusive to her pet raven, but he also follows her every command and is clearly not equal to her, since she constantly calls him her 'pet'. Maleficent furthermore easily hypnotizes Aurora and makes her touch the spindle. All these interactions show that Maleficent is hugely powerful and thus has a lot of authority over a lot of characters. In all these interactions no transformation of authority takes place.

Since Philip and the Fairies are able to defeat Maleficent, a little transformation of authority does take place in the interactions between these characters. The Fairies are clearly scared of Maleficent when she shows up at the christening and while Merryweather is the one to tell her she is not wanted at the christening, they cannot do anything to stop Maleficent from insulting them and cursing Aurora. The fact that Merryweather can only modify the curse a little shows that Maleficent's power is much greater than that of the Fairies, thus granting her authority. However, the Fairies are able to keep Aurora hidden from Maleficent for sixteen years, showing that while she is more powerful, the Fairies intellectual credibility can match Maleficent's. However, the fact that Maleficent in the end succeeds in her curse

gives her intellectual credibility over the Fairies. The transformation that thus takes place goes from Maleficent having all the authority to her losing some when the Fairies succeed in hiding Aurora, to regaining it again by fulfilling the curse, to losing it again when the Fairies, with the help of Philip, defeat her.

In her interactions with Philip, Maleficent asserts a lot of authority by misleading him, capturing him and then taunting him. She clearly has the upper hand until Philip gets help from the Fairies. From that point Maleficent loses intellectual credibility since Philip is able to counter every one of her attacks, eventually even defeating her. It is important to note that while Maleficent is in the end defeated, it takes three Fairies and a Prince to do so, once again underlining Maleficent's power.

## Conclusion

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When looking at these analyses, the similarities immediately become clear: both feature a female protagonist who does not assert any authority herself. She gains some intellectual credibility and ideological validity through interactions with animals and non-humans (the dwarfs and the fairies) and her aesthetic value is asserted by other human characters (the Princes and the antagonists). Both women do have a royal status as princess that is sometimes emphasized and grants them authority, but no real change in the authority of these characters or in the balance of authority between characters is made. Apart from this, the female protagonist does not take any actions to fulfil her goal. She does not undertake any quests and the actantial model thus does not have a sender. The goal of both protagonists is finding love in the form of a prince but this goal is only reached because this prince takes action. Both princesses have helpers, but these helpers mostly help the princess by keeping her safe. Little to no action is undertaken by these helpers to help the princess reach her goal. The princesses are also very similar in terms of personalities: they are kind, musical, innocent, young (Snow White is fourteen, Aurora turns sixteen), and good-natured.

The female protagonist is counterbalanced by an evil, older woman. This older woman's goal is to destroy the female protagonist and she is very active in achieving this goal. However, the queen's goal is not to stop the princess from reaching her goal; she has her own goal and her own motivations. Her senders are her own negative emotions, such as vanity and jealousy. The older women are thus also similar in personality, being independent, powerful, cruel, haughty, and calculating. The woman asserts her own authority through her power over other characters and the other characters, both non-human and human, mostly

obey the woman because of this intellectual credibility or magical power. Thus, the woman's authority is greater than that of the protagonist, and mostly based on intellectual credibility or magical power, while the protagonist mostly gets her authority from ideological validity and aesthetic value. Furthermore, while the older woman has to deal with subjects that slow down her progress, the protagonist only makes progress through the help of other characters. Again, we see little to no change in the balance of authority between these character and other characters.

## Case 2: New Animation

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In this chapter, I will analyze *Tangled* from 2010 and *Frozen* from 2013. Both are 3D computer animated adaptations. *Tangled* is based on the fairy tale *Rapunzel*, which was first published in *Children's and Household Tales* by the Brothers Grimm. *Frozen* is based on the fairy tale *The Snow Queen* by Hans Christian Andersen.

### Tangled (2010)

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The movie starts with a narrator who tells us about a Queen who was sick when she was about to give birth. She was healed by a magic golden flower and gave birth to Rapunzel, a baby with beautiful golden hair. An old woman, Mother Gothel, had always used the flower to keep herself young. She kidnapped the baby and raised her in a hidden tower in the forest, in order to be able to use the healing magic that was now contained in the Rapunzel's hair. Gothel never let Rapunzel go outside but despite this, Rapunzel saw thousands of lanterns in the sky on her birthday each year, which the King and Queen launched every year, hoping their daughter would return.

Years later, Rapunzel asks if Gothel will take her to see the floating lights for her eighteenth birthday. Gothel refuses and forbids Rapunzel to ask about leaving the tower. Flynn Rider, a thief, stumbles upon the tower and climbs it to hide from the palace guards. He and Rapunzel make a deal: Flynn will take Rapunzel to see the lanterns and in return Rapunzel will give him back his satchel with the crown he stole (which she took from him).

Gothel returns to the tower, realizes Rapunzel left, and goes after her. At a pub, Rapunzel convinces some thugs to help them escape the palace guards that are chasing Flynn. The guards chase after Flynn and Rapunzel, followed by the Stabbington Brothers, two criminals who want revenge on Flynn for double-crossing them. After a fight near a dam, Flynn and Rapunzel get trapped in a small cave which slowly fills up with water. Thinking they are about to die, Flynn confesses his real name is Eugene Fitzherbert and Rapunzel confesses that she has magic hair that glows when she sings, which they then use to light up the cave and find an exit.

The Stabbington Brothers run into Gothel, who convinces them to help her. Later that day, Gothel finds Rapunzel and tries to take her home. However, Rapunzel refuses and Gothel dares her to test Eugene's feelings by giving him the crown back. The next day, Rapunzel and Eugene arrive at castle town and Eugene buys Rapunzel a small purple flag with the royal

crest as a memento. That evening, Eugene and Rapunzel watch the lanterns and Rapunzel decides to give Eugene the satchel. Eugene spots the Stabbington Brothers, tells Rapunzel he needs to take care of something, and leaves with the satchel. The Stabbington Brothers go after Rapunzel and lie to her, telling her Eugene traded her for the crown. Gothel turns up and knocks the Brothers out. Heartbroken by Eugene's betrayal, Rapunzel goes back home with Gothel.

At the tower, Rapunzel realizes she is the lost princess by looking at the flag Eugene bought her and confronts Gothel. Meanwhile, Eugene has been arrested for stealing the crown and faces the gallows. He manages to escape with help from the thugs from the pub and sets off to the tower. When he reaches the top, he is stabbed in the back by Gothel. Rapunzel tells Gothel that, if she lets her heal Eugene, she will go with Gothel without resisting. Gothel agrees, but Eugene cuts off Rapunzel's hair. Rapunzel's hair loses its magic and Gothel begins to age rapidly, stumbles around the room and tumbles out the window. Rapunzel tries to heal Eugene, but fails. Eugene dies while Rapunzel sings the healing song. Her tear lands on Eugene's face, Eugene wakes up healed, they hug, and Rapunzel kisses him. At the castle, Rapunzel is reunited with her parents. Eugene narrates the ending, just as in the beginning, telling how everyone, even the tugs, got their happy ending.

## Analysis

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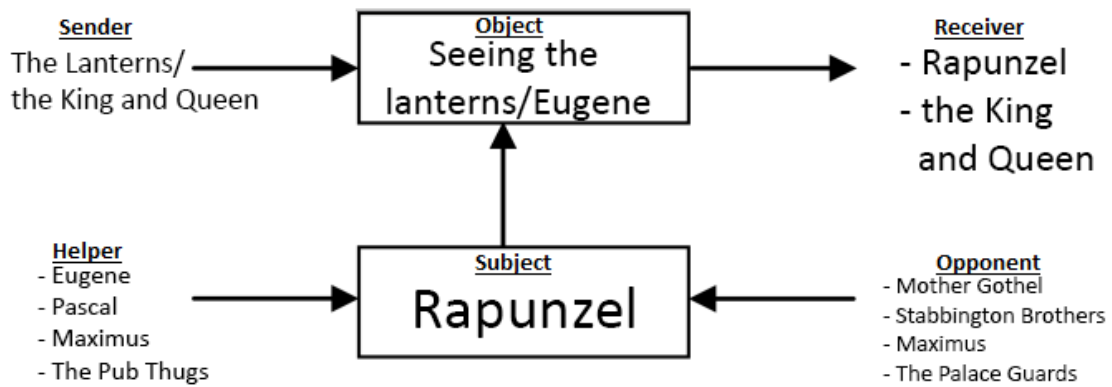
The first thing that stands out when beginning to draft an actantial model for this movie, is that it seems to be more straightforward than the models for the traditional princesses.

Rapunzel is more clearly the subject, since her quest to see the lanterns that appear on her birthday is what drives the story, and she actively pursues making this conjunctiontransformation happen. She does not let Gothel stop her when she forbids Rapunzel to ever leave the tower and strikes a deal with Eugene so that he will escort her to see the lanterns in return for his satchel with the crown. This way, Rapunzel herself tries to achieve her goal. Once she has achieved this goal, it is literally stated that Eugene becomes her new object.<sup>89</sup> However, unlike the first two princesses, Rapunzel's initial goal is not to find love. Furthermore, the lanterns and thus indirectly the King and Queen who release these lanterns are the sender. The principal receiver of the transformation is Rapunzel herself but

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<sup>89</sup> *Tangled*. Grena & Howard. (2010) United States: Walt Disney Animation Studios; Walt Disney Pictures: Eugene: "You were my new dream." Rapunzel: "And you were mine."

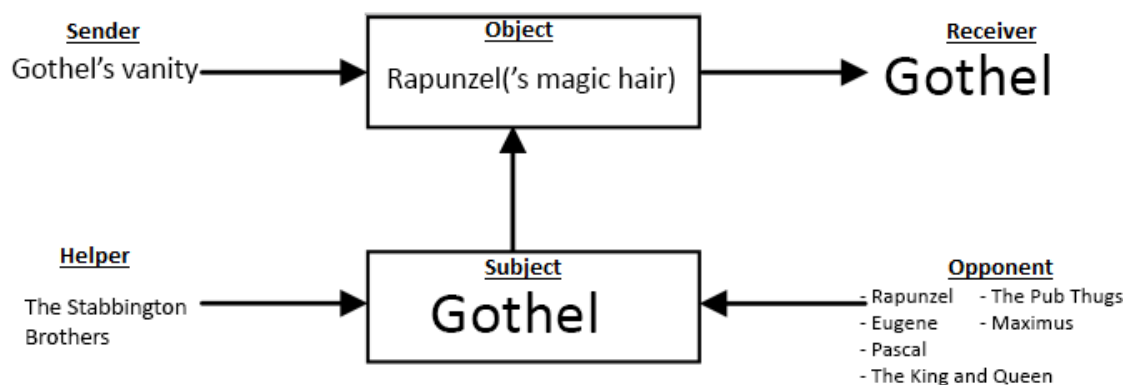




the King and Queen also profit from the transformation in the end, since it helps Rapunzel realize who she is and return to them.

However, the actantial model becomes more intricate in comparison to the traditional movies, since it comprises a lot more characters. The principal opponent is Gothel, whose desire is to remain young and beautiful. To do this, she needs Rapunzel to stay hidden and stop her from realizing she is the princess. Gothel enlists the Stabbington Brothers, who thus also become Rapunzel's opponents. Maximus and the palace guards are Rapunzel's opponents since they try to capture Eugene, who is her principal helper. However, Maximus makes a transition to helper when Rapunzel calms him down and convinces him to stop chasing Eugene for 24 hours. Other helpers are Pascal and the Pub Thugs. All these helpers actively support Rapunzel in reaching her goal. For example: Maximus and the Pub Thugs break Eugene out of prison so he can save Rapunzel and Pascal makes Gothel stumble out of the window, which kills her.

From Gothel's perspective, her object is to remain young and beautiful. By extension, Gothel needs to keep Rapunzel's hair hidden. However, Rapunzel is simply a bystander in this; Gothel's focus is on the healing power of Rapunzel's hair. Her own vanity is what sends her on her quest, which could be described as a conjunctiontransformation, since Gothel loses Rapunzel's hair and spends the major part of the movie trying to reclaim it. If she were to succeed, Gothel herself would have been the receiver of the transformation. However, the



transformation does only take place for a short moment, before Gothel is defeated. Gothel has a vast amount of opponents: Rapunzel and Eugene are her main opponents, but since they are aided by Pascal, the Pub Thugs, and Maximus, they are also her opponents. Pascal is even the one who effectively kills Gothel by making her trip. The King and Queen are Gothel's opponents in the beginning of the story by taking away her magic flower, but throughout the rest of the movie they are also her opponent by sending the lanterns which spark Rapunzel's interest in the outside world. The only helpers Gothel has are the Stabington Brothers, but it turns out she only uses them for her own advantage and double-crosses them in the end. However, the Brothers do not have the possibility to take revenge for this, so they do not change into opponents.

The aspect of self-authorization is interesting in this movie, since the main protagonist is manipulated by the antagonist to not assert any authority for herself. On multiple occasions, Gothel makes comments about Rapunzel being too weak and naive to handle herself (for example in her song 'Mother Knows Best'<sup>90</sup>), playing on Rapunzel's insecurities. However, the quest takes place because Rapunzel is not stopped by this manipulation and does take matters into her own hands. She thinks of a plan to distract Gothel by asking her for a present that will take Gothel a three day travel to get. Then, she strikes a deal with Eugene and throughout the movie saves herself and Eugene multiple times by quick thinking, for example by using her hair to escape from Maximus and the guards. She thus shapes her own story, acting out of her own intrinsic motivation and actively pursuing her goal. A lot of self-authorization comes from intellectual credibility; Rapunzel comes up with ideas and executes them. Throughout the movie, we see Rapunzel become more confident in this self-authorization. As her quest progresses and she gains more knowledge and confidence, she also becomes stronger in claiming authority.

Rapunzel interacts mostly with Gothel and Eugene. In her interactions with Gothel, Rapunzel mostly loses authority. These interactions are complex because for the major part of the movie Rapunzel believes Gothel to be her mother. Thus, Gothel's authority over Rapunzel stems from her parental role, which can be seen as a combination of intellectual credibility and ideological validity. Rapunzel thinks Gothel is right because as her mother, she knows more (through experience) and her judgment can thus be trusted. Rapunzel is clearly subordinate to Gothel at the start. She follows Gothel's order, tries to ask for permission to

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<sup>90</sup> *Tangled*. Grena & Howard. (2010): Gothel: "Look at you, as fragile as a flower. Still a little sapling, just a sprout. [...] Take it from your mumsy, On your own, you won't survive. Sloppy, underdressed, immature, clumsy, please, they'll eat you up alive. Gullible, naive, positively grubby, ditzy and a bit, well, hmm vague. Plus, I believe, gettin' kinda chubby."

see the lanterns, takes the abusive jokes Gothel makes without complaining, and is constantly interrupted by Gothel when she talks. However, when Gothel denies her her wish, Rapunzel claims intellectual credibility by misleading Gothel and disobeying her. While we do see Rapunzel defying Gothel as a young girl, the measure of this disobedience is small (looking out of the window at night). As the story progresses and Rapunzel gains more intellectual credibility of her own by being in the outside world and experiencing life, her disobedience grows. Rapunzel stands up to Gothel and doesn't obey when Gothel orders her to come home. For a moment she loses this authority when her heart is broken and she declares Gothel was right about everything, but when she finds out Gothel is not her mother, Rapunzel declares that she will never stop trying to get away from her. In this interaction she claims ideological validity and intellectual credibility, stating that Gothel was wrong about the world and about herself. After this, Gothel still tries to manipulate Rapunzel, for example by blaming her for the fact she stabs Eugene.<sup>91</sup> However, this does not have the same effect on Rapunzel as before. Thus, we see a transformation in the balance of authority between these two characters; Rapunzel does not receive a lot of authority in her interactions with Gothel, but through her self-authorization and the authority she receives from other interactions she is able to shift the balance.

In her interactions with Eugene, Rapunzel has the huge disadvantage that she has never been outside her tower, granting Eugene intellectual credibility. At the start Eugene tries to use this to his advantage by guilt-tripping Rapunzel about betraying Gothel and scaring her by taking her to a pub filled with criminals so she will want to go home. However, these tactics do not succeed. From their first meeting, Rapunzel immediately claims her own authority in their interactions; she knocks Eugene out using a frying pan, locks him in a closet, and eventually ties him up to negotiate with him. Eugene attempts to win her over with his aesthetic value, but Rapunzel gains authority over him by resisting, forcing Eugene to comply with her terms. When Rapunzel shows that she is able to hold her own at the Snuggly Duckling by engaging the thugs in a song about their dreams, Eugene compliments her on this, assigning her intellectual credibility and diminishing the advantage he has.<sup>92</sup> After this, the interactions become more balanced, with both characters helping each other and telling each other about their secrets and past. Rapunzel's secret of her magic hair grants her authority since it enables her to heal Eugene's hand. However, in the end Eugene cuts off her hair to save her from Gothel, an action that both removes the authority Rapunzel receives

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<sup>91</sup> *Tangled*. Grena & Howard. (2010): Gothel: "Now look what you've done, Rapunzel."

<sup>92</sup> *Ibidem*: Eugene: "Well, I've got to say, didn't know you had that in you back there. That was pretty impressive."

from her magic power, but also completely destroys Gothel's authority over and interest in Rapunzel. Eugene is the only one who asserts Rapunzel's aesthetic value by being awe-struck when he first sees her. After being saved by her he again asserts this value by stating he has "a thing for brunettes."<sup>93</sup> The rest of the characters don't address this aspect in any way. The transformation of authority that thus takes place in the interactions between these characters is the finding of a balance; Rapunzel starts out with authority by forcing Eugene to help her, but Eugene regains his authority through his knowledge of the outside world. In the end, they start helping and trusting each other, giving each other authority. This balance is illustrated by the last lines narrated by Eugene, in which he states Rapunzel asked him to marry her, which Rapunzel reprimands him for, after which he corrects himself.<sup>94</sup>

Other characters Rapunzel interacts with are Pascal, the Thugs, Maximus, the Stabbington Brothers and the King and Queen. However, these interactions are mostly limited to one or two actions, apart from Pascal, who has more interactions but which are limited to physical interactions.

The Thugs scare Rapunzel at first but when she claims authority by asserting her ideological validity (by telling them to "find your humanity!"), they help her escape the guards through a secret tunnel. She holds authority over Maximus, so much even that he obeys her commands like a dog. This almost 'magic' effect on animals is something that also came forward with the traditional princesses and for which ideological validity seems the best explanation; the character is so good and pure that animals are inclined to listen to her. This could also explain Rapunzel's relation with Pascal.

Rapunzel's only interaction with the King and Queen is the reunion at the end, and her only interaction with the Brothers is that she runs from them. While the reunion at the end grants Rapunzel some authority since it confirms her status as royalty, her flee from the Brothers (from whom she is saved by Gothel) diminishes her authority.

Rapunzel's interactions with Pascal are difficult to define since they are exclusively physical. Thus, it is difficult to analyze them in terms of authority. However, as stated before, most of the authority Rapunzel receives from these interactions seems to be based on ideological validity. Rapunzel is so good that Pascal even sacrifices his freedom to live with her in her tower.

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<sup>93</sup> *Tangled*. Grena & Howard. (2010).

<sup>94</sup> Ibidem: Eugene (voice-over): "Did Rapunzel and I ever get married? Well I am pleased to tell you that after years and years of asking, and asking, and asking, I finally said yes."

Rapunzel (voice-over): "Eugene."

Eugene: "All right, I asked her."

In the movie, Gothel is very strong in her self-authorization. From the moment we see her in the prologue, she takes action to shape her own story; she hides the magic flower and steals Rapunzel as a baby to regain access to the healing powers. Furthermore, Gothel undertakes most of her actions alone. The only helpers she has are the Stabbington Brothers and eventually it turns out she simply manipulated them for her own gain, double-crossing them to regain Rapunzel's trust. The most striking aspect of Gothel's self-authorization is that it does not come from any special power. Gothel has no magic power or other superhuman trait through which she claims her authority. She relies purely on her intellect and her skill as a manipulator, thus claiming authority through intellectual credibility. While Gothel is very occupied with her physical appearance, she herself does not derive any authority from this. She is furthermore very sure of herself, calling herself a "strong, confident, beautiful young lady."<sup>95</sup> Throughout the movie, no change in her self-authorization takes place. Gothel starts off as a strong character in terms of self-authorization, and remains so until the very end.

Gothel mostly interacts with Rapunzel and as stated before most of her authority in these interactions is derived from the fact that Rapunzel believes Gothel to be her mother. Through this parental role, Gothel receives intellectual credibility and ideological validity. She even sings a song called 'Mother knows best', underlining the fact that her intellectual credibility correlates with her parental role. However, while she already has a lot of authority in this relationship, almost every interaction with Rapunzel is still manipulative to keep Rapunzel subordinate. Gothel switches between playing the concerned sweet mother, for example by making Rapunzel her favorite food and telling her she loves her multiple times, and keeping her down by attacking Rapunzel's confidence or adopting a victim role. She also pushes all the guilt for her actions on Rapunzel, for example when she and Rapunzel get in a fight and she claims to have done nothing wrong.<sup>96</sup> At the start of the movie, these tactics work and Rapunzel obeys Gothel, but as the story progresses and Rapunzel claims more intellectual credibility for herself, she also starts to stand up to Gothel, causing Gothel to lose authority. Rapunzel does not obey her anymore when she tells her to come home. However, Gothel's manipulations still have some hold on Rapunzel; when she challenges Rapunzel to test Eugene's feelings by giving him the crown, the fact that Rapunzel does not give Eugene the crown right away shows that Gothel's manipulation still has some effect. Gothel receives

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<sup>95</sup> *Tangled*. Grena & Howard. (2010)

<sup>96</sup> *Ibidem*: Gothel: "Oh Rapunzel, you know I hate leaving you after a fight especially when I've done absolutely nothing wrong."

a lot of authority by coming up with a plan to get Rapunzel to come home and when she succeeds we see her reverting back to her pattern of before, alternating between loving mother, blaming Rapunzel, and attacking her confidence. However, when Rapunzel realizes Gothel is not her mother, she loses all her intellectual credibility and we see that the manipulations do not work anymore. Gothel has to use physical restraints by shackling Rapunzel, which shows that she does not have enough authority anymore to command or overrule her. Thus, we see the balance shift from Gothel having all the authority to her losing this.

After Rapunzel, the characters Gothel interacts the most with are the Stabbington Brothers. However, these interactions are very limited. We mostly see Gothel manipulating the Brothers. In her first interaction with them, she calls them wild dogs chasing their tails and convinces them to help her. While the Brothers clearly have more physical strength, Gothel uses her intellectual credibility to claim authority, causing the Brothers to follow her orders, thus confirming her authority. In the end, Gothel even overpowers the Brothers physically by knocking them out. In their interactions, Gothel never loses any authority and there thus is no change in the balance of authority in this relationship.

The other characters Gothel interacts with are Maximus, one of the Pub Thugs, Eugene and Pascal. From the Pub Thug she receives aesthetic value, which she uses for her benefit.<sup>97</sup> What is interesting is that both the animals Gothel interacts with decrease her authority: she is startled by Maximus when she meets him and Pascal is the one who makes her trip and fall out of the window.

However, Pascal is not the only one responsible for her downfall. Eugene is the one who cuts off Rapunzel's hair, despite having been stabbed and shackled by Gothel. Gothel herself pulls her hood over her eyes, causing her to stumble around blindly. She is thus herself partially responsible for her demise.

## Frozen (2013)

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At a palace, a little girl named Elsa accidentally hits her sister Anna with her magic (which creates ice and snow) while playing with her. Their parents, the King and Queen, take the sisters to see the troll leader Pabbie, who tells them that it is lucky Elsa didn't hit Anna's heart and cures Anna by removing all traces of magic, even in Anna's memories. He furthermore

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<sup>97</sup> He flirts with her, saying: "Ooooooh, somebody get me a glass, coz I just found me a tall drink of water." *Tangled*. Grena & Howard. (2010)

warns Elsa that she must learn to control her powers. Her parents decide to lock the gates and keep Elsa's powers hidden from everyone, even Anna. Growing up, Elsa tries to learn how to control her powers but fails and thus stays shut away in her room, even when her parents die.

Years later, when Elsa has come of age, the gates of the palace are opened for coronation day. Excited, Anna runs outside and meets Prince Hans of the Southern Isles. Elsa is crowned Queen of Arendelle and that night at the ball, Anna runs into Hans again and falls in love. Hans proposes and Anna accepts, but Elsa refuses to give them her blessing. The sisters fight and Anna pushes Elsa to the point where she accidentally reveals her powers. Elsa flees into the mountains, accidentally freezing the whole fjord and starting a winter. Anna decides to go after Elsa to stop the winter.

At the top of the mountain, Elsa comes to terms with leaving her kingdom and starts testing her powers. She builds a snowman and an ice palace. While looking for Elsa, Anna enlists Kristoff, an ice-harvester, to escort her up the North Mountain. They meet Olaf, the snowman Elsa created, who has come to life and decides to join them since he wants to experience summer. Back in Arendelle, Hans decides to go find Anna with a group of volunteers. The Duke of Weselton, a trading partner of Arendelle, volunteers his two bodyguards and orders them to end the winter if they encounter Elsa.

Kristoff, Anna, and Olaf arrive at the ice palace and Anna goes in alone. Elsa is happy to see her sister but tries to convince her to leave. When Anna tells Elsa she created an eternal winter, Elsa panics and accidentally hits Anna in her heart with her powers. Elsa then creates a huge snowman to throw Anna, Kristoff, and Olaf out. Kristoff notices Anna's hair is turning white and decides to take her to the trolls. Pabbie tells her there is ice in her heart and that she will turn into solid ice if it is not removed, which can only be done by an act of true love. Believing true love's kiss will work, Kristoff decides to take Anna back to Hans. However, Hans just arrived at the ice palace. Weselton's bodyguards sneak into the castle and attack Elsa, who fights back using her magic. During the fight, Elsa becomes unconscious and wakes up shackled in a dungeon back in Arendelle. Hans asks her to stop the winter, but she admits she does not know how.

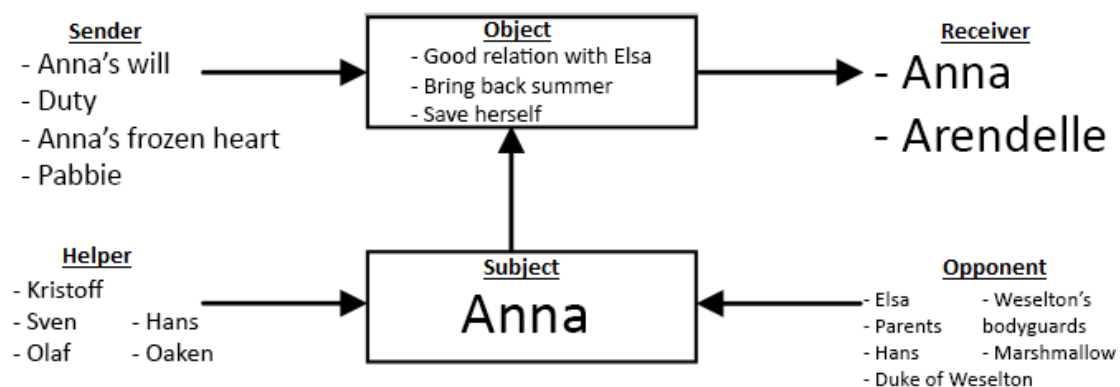
Meanwhile Anna and Kristoff hurry back to the castle. When they arrive, Anna gets taken to Hans and Kristoff leaves. Anna explains to Hans he needs to kiss her, but Hans reveals he only wanted to marry Anna to rule Arendelle. He locks Anna in a room, tells the dignitaries that Anna died, and sentences Elsa to death for treason. However, Elsa escapes.

Kristoff sees a storm cloud forming over Arendelle and turns back. Olaf breaks into the room where Anna is held and helps her realize Kristoff loves her. They run out onto the

fjord into the storm to find him. Elsa is also on the fjord trying to escape but when Hans tells her Anna died because Elsa froze her heart, she collapses. Anna sees Hans about to kill Elsa and jumps between them, turning into ice just as Hans swings his sword. His sword shatters and Anna comes back to life since saving her sister was an act of true love. This helps Elsa realize that love will thaw, enabling her to thaw the ice and return summer to Arendelle. Hans is returned home to be punished by his family, Anna and Kristoff kiss, and Elsa turns the courtyard into an ice-skating rink for everyone.

## Analysis

Both Elsa and Anna can be seen as the subject. When making an actantial model with Anna as subject, three objects come up: 1. Having a good relation with Elsa, 2. Bringing back summer, 3. Saving herself with an act of true love. While these objects overlap throughout the movie, this is the order in which they have the most priority. For the first object there is no specific sender apart from Anna's own will. Anna herself would be the receiver of this conjunctiontransformation (from lacking a relation with Elsa to having one) and both Elsa and her parents are opponents in this since they decide to separate the sisters to keep Elsa's powers hidden. Anna has no helpers for reaching this object and she partially abandons it when she goes after Elsa to bring back summer, which could be seen as a conjunctiontransformation (from lacking summer to regaining it) for which her duty as a princess is the sender. The whole kingdom of Arendelle would be receiver of this transformation and Elsa and Marshmallow are the opponents. The Duke of Weselton, his bodyguards, and Hans try to make this transformation happen by killing Elsa. However, since Anna does not want her sister killed, this makes them her opponents. Her helpers are Olaf, Kristoff, Sven, Hans (before he reveals himself to be the opponent), and Oaken, who all help her to find and reach Elsa. For the third object, Anna's frozen heart and Pabbie are the senders and Anna herself is the receiver. Hans turns out to be the opponent and Olaf, Kristoff, and

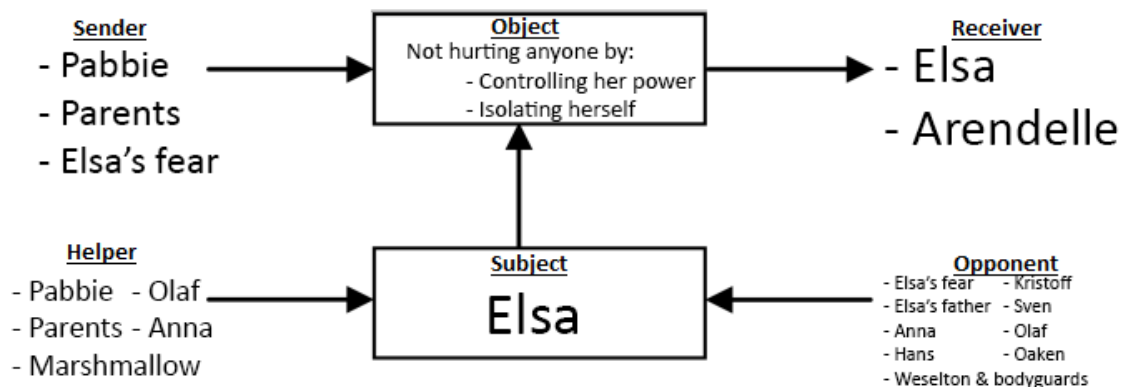




Sven are the helpers. In the end even Hans could be seen as helper as his actions force Anna to sacrifice herself and thus thaw her heart. It is striking that in this model a lot of characters take multiple, sometimes opposing positions. In the other movies, only one or two characters functioned as multiple opposing actants. In this movie, the distinction between good and bad seems to have become more diffuse.

This blurring is very clear in the character of Elsa, who sometimes functions as the opponent and causes the main problem of the movie by accidentally freezing the kingdom. She even seems to share some features with the villains we have seen before: she has magical powers, isolates herself in a castle, commands minions, starts dressing more provocative, and bears the title of Queen. As Davis states, being sexually mature is something that in early Disney films is tied to an evil nature, opposed to heroines that are young, naïve, and innocent.<sup>98</sup> As stated before, in fairy tale adaptations the title of Queen is furthermore reserved for loving (and often deceased) mothers, or powerful antagonists. Within the Disney universe Elsa is only the second princess who is crowned Queen on-screen. Kida from *Atlantis: The Lost Empire* (2001) is the first Disney princess who ascends the throne within the movie, since she is crowned at the end of the movie after finding a love-interest.<sup>99</sup> Elsa is crowned within the first 20 minutes without having a love-interest. What is important to note is that Elsa freezes her kingdom, isolates herself and starts using her powers freely not long after being crowned.

When making an actantial model with Elsa as subject, there is one main object; not hurting anyone with her powers. She first tries to do this by controlling her powers and when this fails, she isolates herself. Pabbie and her parents are the senders when she tries to control her powers and while her whole environment would profit from this, Elsa herself would be the main receiver of this conjunctiontransformation. While for Elsa her powers seem to be the



<sup>98</sup> Davis (2006): 207-208.

<sup>99</sup> Ibidem: 177.

opponent, as Pabbie states it is actually fear that causes her to lose control over her powers.<sup>100</sup> Her father, who teaches her to conceal her powers, making her fear them, could thus be seen as an opponent. Other opponents are Anna, who drives Elsa to the point of losing control of her powers multiple times, and the Duke of Weselton, who calls her a monster for having her powers. Helpers in learning to control her powers are Pabbie, her parents, Anna and Olaf (whose statement “An act of true love will thaw a frozen heart” makes Elsa realize how to control her powers). However, when Elsa tries to isolate herself, for which her fear is the sender and again the whole kingdom would be the receiver, Anna and everyone who helps her find Elsa become Elsa’s opponent; Hans, Kristoff, Sven, Olaf, and Oaken. Furthermore the bodyguards of the Duke become her opponents when they try to kill her. Her only helper in this is Marshmallow.

In the aspect of self-authorization, Anna asserts authority by taking a lot of actions by herself that shape her story. What is interesting is that, as a character who has been shut away from the world almost her entire life, she does not possess a lot of knowledge on the outside world but still manages pretty well with quick thinking. She has help from characters like Kristoff to compensate her lack of knowledge but manages to save herself and other characters with quick thinking, for example when she impedes Marshmallow by catapulting a tree into him. Thus, she asserts authority through intellectual credibility not in terms of knowledge, but by being bright. Furthermore, Anna asserts her authority through aspects of her personality that could be categorized as ideological validity. She is optimistic, persevering, loyal, a little naïve and consistently tries to ‘do good’. In the end, Anna even saves herself through ideological validity; it is her own selfless action of choosing her sister before herself that not only saves Elsa, but also herself.

Anna interacts mostly with Elsa, Hans, Kristoff, and Olaf. As children, Anna and Elsa seem to be almost equal to each other in terms of authority. Elsa is older and has magical powers, but in their interactions we see Elsa mostly trying to entertain Anna by making it snow inside and building a snowman. However, after Anna’s memory is altered to make her forget Elsa’s powers and Elsa distances herself from Anna, there is a shift in authority that has mostly to do with the fact that Anna does not know Elsa has powers.<sup>101</sup> This missing knowledge makes Anna lose authority. A clear illustration of how this shift has affected the relationship is seen when Anna is forced to stand close to Elsa after the coronation, which

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<sup>100</sup> *Frozen*. Buck, Chris & Jennifer Lee. (2013) United States: Walt Disney Animation Studios; Walt Disney Pictures: Pabbie: “Fear will be your enemy.”

<sup>101</sup> *Frozen*. Buck & Lee. (2013): Anna: “We used to be best buddies, and now we're not. I wish you would tell me why.”

Anna finds uneasy. She reacts awkward when Elsa tries to assert Anna's aesthetic value, immediately stating Elsa has more aesthetic value.<sup>102</sup> However, once Anna has fallen in love with Hans she starts claiming more authority in her interactions with Elsa. When Elsa questions Anna's knowledge of love Anna states she knows "More than you!" She also goes against her sister's orders, taking one of Elsa's gloves and eventually pushing her to reveal her powers. This again shifts the balance since Anna's gap in knowledge is now filled. Anna states this in the reprise of 'For the First Time in Forever': "Cause for the first time in forever I finally understand." When Anna finds Elsa, Anna even has some intellectual credibility since Elsa does not know she froze the kingdom. This changes the balance, but because of her powers Elsa remains dominant. She states "What power do you have to stop this winter? To stop me?" and uses her power to force Anna to leave by creating a huge snowman called Marshmallow. However, in the end Anna saves herself from Elsa's powers by sacrificing herself, thus claiming authority through ideological validity and balancing their relationship again.

In her interactions with Hans, Anna first receives a lot of authority. Upon meeting, Hans asserts Anna's authority as royal by bowing when he hears she is the princess (while he himself is also a prince), and in the rest of the interactions he keeps asserting her in different ways. He backs her aesthetic value by stating he likes the white streak in her hair, supports her ideological validity by standing up to Weselton when he accuses Anna of being a monster too, and follows her orders when she asks him to stay to take care of Arendelle while she goes after Elsa.<sup>103</sup> Even when Anna makes statements that reduce her own authority, like "it's just me", he challenges these statements ("Just you?"). It would thus seem that Anna has the most authority in this relationship. However, when we learn Hans was manipulating Anna to fall for him, his actions become ambiguous, asserting Anna's authority but also serving Hans' ulterior motive. In body language, it seems Hans constantly has more authority. While Anna is clumsy, Hans is the one who catches her when she stumbles. Their interactions even start out with Hans knocking Anna over with his horse. Furthermore, Hans does not assert Anna's intellectual credibility, but when he reveals himself to be the bad guy, he attacks this aspect immediately. He states that she is naïve for agreeing to marry him so fast and that Anna was dumb enough to go after Elsa. Furthermore, he shoots down every counter Anna makes.<sup>104</sup> In

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<sup>102</sup> *Frozen*. Buck & Lee. (2013): Elsa: "You look beautiful."

Anna: "Thank you. You look beautifuler. I mean, not fuller. You don't look fuller, but more...more beautiful."

<sup>103</sup> *Ibidem*: Duke: "You! Is there sorcery in you, too? Are you a monster, too?"

Anna: "No. No. I'm completely ordinary."

Hans: "That's right, she is. In the best way."

<sup>104</sup> *Ibidem*: Anna: "You're no match for Elsa."

the end Anna reclaims her intellectual credibility by thwarting Hans' plan to kill Elsa and her ideological validity by stating “The only frozen heart around here is yours,” for which Hans has no answer. She then punches him in his face, causing him to fall overboard. This final act illustrates the change that has taken place in the relationship between Anna and Hans. Where upon meeting Hans almost knocks Anna into the water with his horse, in the end Anna has the upper hand and throws him into the water.

In her interactions with Kristoff, there is a constant balancing of authority. Anna hires Kristoff to take her up the mountain and the fact that Kristoff has more knowledge off the outside world grants him authority and diminishes Anna's on multiple occasions. A good example of this is when Anna tries to climb the mountain and Kristoff states “I wouldn't put my foot there”, after which Anna slips. However, Anna often saves Kristoff. When they are being chased by wolves Kristoff tells Anna not to help because he does not trust her judgment, thus doubting her intellectual credibility. Immediately after this Anna proves her credibility by saving Kristoff from the wolves multiple times. Furthermore, when Anna orders Kristoff to do something he usually obeys, for example when she asks him to wait outside the ice palace while she talks to Elsa. While this does show that Anna has authority in this relationship, it does not become clear on which aspect this authority is based. In the end, these characters reach a balance of authority that is illustrated by Kristoff lifting Anna off the ground but then awkwardly asking her if he can kiss her, which he only does after she kisses him on his cheek and consents.

The most important interactions between Olaf and Anna take place when Olaf helps Anna realize Kristoff loves her. He diminishes her intellectual validity by stating “Wow, you really don't know anything about love, do you?”, but immediately asserts Anna's ideological validity very strongly by stating “Some people are worth melting for.”

Anna also interacts with her parents, the Trolls, servants, the Duke of Weselton, Oaken, and Marshmallow. However, in these interactions no real changes or interesting aspects of Anna's authority come up.

While Anna is very stable in her self-authorization, Elsa clearly changes in this aspect. From the start, she has her powers that give her authority. As with Maleficent, these powers do not fall in the category intellectual credibility but are something she was born with. They thus constitute a separate category for receiving or losing authority. For the first part of the movie, these powers are merely seen as a threat. During this, Elsa does not take any action to shape

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Hans: “No, you're no match for Elsa.”

her story, but subjects herself to the will of others, mostly her parents. When she is crowned Queen, Elsa gains authority based on her royal status and while she uses this, only after Elsa's powers have been revealed does she start making decisions that alter her own story. At this point she thus starts claiming more authority through self-authorization through her powers, which she displays through changing her appearance and creating a new castle. She also renounces her position as Queen by throwing her crown away. However, she still remains fairly passive, mostly taking action (like creating Marshmallow or attacking the bodyguards) when she is cornered. Only at the end of the movie does Elsa embrace the authority she receives both from her powers and as Queen, which can be seen in the fact that at the end of the movie she uses her powers to entertain her subjects by creating an ice-skating rink in the courtyard.

Elsa mainly interacts with Anna. As stated before, there is a balance in the interactions when the characters are kids, but after Elsa strikes Anna with her powers by accident and is forced to hide her powers this balance shifts and becomes very complex. Anna has no knowledge of Elsa's power, granting Elsa intellectual credibility and authority through her powers. On the other hand, Elsa fears hurting her sister again and since she cannot control her powers, she thus fears Anna's presence and loses authority because of her powers. This also influences the ideological validity, since Elsa believes she can only be who she is when she is isolated, since she otherwise hurts people.<sup>105</sup> Anna on the other hand constantly defends Elsa's ideological validity, stating Elsa is not a monster.<sup>106</sup> Another aspect that influences the balance of authority between these characters is that Elsa is Anna's older sister and Queen. When Anna asks for her blessing, Elsa displays her authority as older sister and Queen by ending the party and telling Anna she cannot marry a man she just met. Throughout the movie, all these aspects keep influencing the balance of authority, mostly in Elsa's favor, until Anna sacrifices herself for Elsa because she loves her. Elsa responds to this action with disbelief.<sup>107</sup> This action also restores Elsa's own belief in her ideological validity while balancing it with Anna's, thus restoring their relationship to the balance it had before Elsa struck Anna with her powers. This is illustrated by the fact that the movie ends with Anna and Elsa playing together using Elsa's powers, just as they did as kids.

Besides Anna, Elsa mostly interacts with her father and Hans. In her interactions with her father, Elsa's powers are mostly treated as a threat, thus diminishing her authority. The first thing we see the king say to Elsa is "Elsa, what have you done? This is getting out of

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<sup>105</sup> *Frozen*. Buck & Lee. (2013): Elsa: "No, Anna. I belong here. Alone. Where I can be who I am without hurting anybody."

<sup>106</sup> *Ibidem*: Anna: "My-my sister's not a monster."

<sup>107</sup> *Ibidem*: Elsa: "You sacrificed yourself for me?"

hand!”, referring to Elsa’s powers.<sup>108</sup> The king is also the one who gives Elsa her gloves and teaches her to “Conceal it. Don't feel it. Don't let it show.”<sup>109</sup> However, the king does grant Elsa authority by believing in her, stating “She can learn to control it. I'm sure.” and assuring Elsa she will be fine when her parents go away.<sup>110</sup>

In her interactions with Hans, the authority Elsa gains from her powers is used to attack her ideological validity. He does this first when Elsa is attacking the bodyguards to defend herself by stating “Don’t be the monster they fear you are”, prompting Elsa to drop her guard.<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, Hans manages to diminish Elsa’s authority as Queen by attacking her ideological validity when he makes the dignitaries believe Elsa killed her sister with her powers and he charges her with treason. Elsa then claims authority through her powers by using them to escape from Hans, but Hans manages to turn this authority against her again when he makes her believe that her powers are responsible for her sister’s death.

Other characters Elsa interacts with are Pabbie, her servants, the Duke of Weselton, his bodyguards, and Olaf. Of these characters, her interactions with the Duke and Olaf are the most interesting in terms of authority. Her interactions with the Duke are mostly based on Elsa’s authority as Queen, since the Duke is mostly interested in Arendelle as a trading partner. However, once Elsa’s powers are revealed the Duke immediately attacks her authority by calling her a monster. In the end Elsa regains her authority again and uses it to not only stop doing business with the Duke, but also to insult his authority in the process by calling his residence ‘Weaseltown’. Interactions with Olaf are mostly influenced by Elsa’s authority that comes from her power, since Olaf is a living reminder of this power. Not only does Elsa create him, in the end she also saves him from melting by creating an own personal flurry for him. Olaf on the other hand is the one who helps Elsa realize how to control her powers by stating: “An act of true love will thaw a frozen heart.”<sup>112</sup>

## Conclusion

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When looking at these adaptations, the first important thing to note is that they both do not carry the name of the protagonist as title. During production both movies did carry their traditional titles (*Rapunzel* and *The Snow Queen*), but as the producers from both movies in multiple interviews explain, both titles were changed to make them less gender-specific and to

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<sup>108</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>109</sup> *Frozen*. Buck & Lee. (2013).

<sup>110</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>111</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>112</sup> Ibidem.

make them represent the content of the movie better.<sup>113</sup> <sup>114</sup> This ties in with the fact that both adaptations are more loosely based on the fairy tales than the movies described before. More characters are added and the narratives are changed more drastically, for example with magic elements being added in *Tangled* and a sibling relationship between the protagonist and the Snow Queen included in *Frozen*.

When comparing the movies, it is interesting to note that both protagonists, Rapunzel and Anna, are raised in a closed-off environment and that because of this they need a guide with knowledge of the outside world to be able to undertake their quest. These guides end up being their love-interests, but are not determined as such from the start. Between the protagonists and the love-interests, we see a change in the balance of authority that in both cases starts off in favor of the love-interest because of his lead in knowledge, but becomes more equal as the movie progresses. The first interaction between the protagonist and the guide is also very similar; both guides are reluctant to assist the protagonist, until they are bribed with objects of value. The protagonists receive authority in the interactions with their guides through intellectual credibility in terms of quick thinking, and in the end a balance of authority between the guide and the protagonist is found.

It also stands out that both protagonists have multiple objects with multiple receivers, indicating that they do not undertake their quests solely for their own gain. Furthermore, finding love in some way is the last object of both protagonists. The movies are also very complex. There are more characters involved, which sometimes fulfill multiple actantial functions. What stands out is that there are a lot of opponents. Especially Elsa has to deal with a lot of opposition, but Gothel and Anna also have to deal with six opponents. Furthermore, opponents have become more diffuse, as shown in the character of Elsa. Lastly, the helpers of both protagonists actively help the protagonist to reach their goal.

Anna and Rapunzel are very analogous in terms of personality; they are both spirited and bright and receive most of their authority from their quick thinking and ideological validity. This ideological validity mostly comes from their personality. Furthermore, they are both manipulated by the antagonist into believing that the antagonist loves them; Rapunzel by Gothel and Anna by Hans. Another aspect that plays a big part in the balance of authority in both movies are family relations. Both the relationships and the balance of authority between Rapunzel and Gothel and Elsa and Anna are influenced by their (believed) family relation.

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<sup>113</sup> Chmielewski, Dawn & Claudia Eller. (2010) 'Disney restyles 'Rapunzel' to appeal to boys', in: Los Angeles Times. <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/mar/09/business/la-fi-ct-disney9-2010mar09> (18-04-2016).

<sup>114</sup> Connelly, Brendon. (2013) 'Inside The Research, Design And Animation Of Walt Disney's Frozen With Producer Peter Del Vecho', in: Bleeding Cool. <http://www.bleedingcool.com/2013/09/25/inside-the-research-design-and-animation-of-walt-disneys-frozen-with-producer-peter-del-vecho/> (18-04-2016).

Looking at the 'older' women, it becomes clear that Elsa is a different kind of character. While Gothel is the antagonist and falls, in terms of personality, in line with the traditional queens, Elsa does not. She is not an outspoken evil character and is also not strong in self-authorization from the start, as Gothel is. Elsa undergoes a transformation in her self-authorization, like Rapunzel, and also resembles to protagonists in the fact that she has multiple objects with multiple receivers. For Elsa's character, ideological validity is also very important in her authority.



## Case 3: Live Action Adaptations

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In this chapter, I will analyze two live action adaptations of the same fairy tales that I analyzed in case 1. *Maleficent* from 2014 is an adaptation of *Sleeping Beauty*, directed by Robert Stromberg and starring Angelina Jolie as Maleficent. The movie shows the fairy tale from the perspective of the villain. *Snow White and the Huntsman* from 2012 is a live-action adaptation of *Snow White*, directed by Rupert Sanders and featuring, among others, Kristen Stewart as Snow White, Charlize Theron as the Evil Queen, and Chris Hemsworth as the Huntsman.

### Maleficent (2014)

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The movie starts with a narrator who tells us “Let us tell an old story anew, and we will see how well you know it.”<sup>115</sup> The narrator tells us about two kingdoms, one inhabited by humans ruled by King Henry, and one known as the Moors, inhabited by magical creatures of which the strongest fairy was Maleficent. Maleficent is friends with a peasant boy named Stefan and on her sixteenth birthday he gives her true love’s kiss. Stefan eventually stops visiting and Maleficent grows up to become the protector of the Moors. She wounds King Henry when he attacks the Moors and on his deathbed, King Henry promises that the person who will kill Maleficent shall marry his daughter and become the new king. Stefan goes to the Moors to trick Maleficent and burns off her wings. Stefan becomes king and when Maleficent’s servant Diaval tells her this, she seizes dominion over the Moors.

Later, Stefan and the Queen have a child called Aurora. Maleficent curses the child to prick her finger on the spindle of a spinning wheel on her sixteenth birthday and fall into a sleep like death, from which she can only be awoken by true love’s kiss. Stefan entrusts his child to three fairies, who take her into hiding but who turn out to be very incapable of taking care of the child, prompting Maleficent and Diaval to take care of her from a distance.

Aurora grows up and one day Maleficent takes her into the Moors. Aurora thinks Maleficent is her fairy godmother and they start to develop a relationship. Maleficent tries to revoke the curse, but fails. Aurora meets Prince Philip and finds out about the curse. She flees to the castle. Maleficent finds Philip and hurries him to the castle, but before they arrive Aurora pricks her finger. Maleficent and Diaval sneak into the castle with Philip. The fairies

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<sup>115</sup> *Maleficent*. Stromberg, Robert. (2014) United States: Roth Films; Walt Disney Pictures.

convince Philip to kiss Aurora, but the curse is not broken. Maleficent says goodbye to Aurora and kisses her forehead, after which Aurora wakes up.

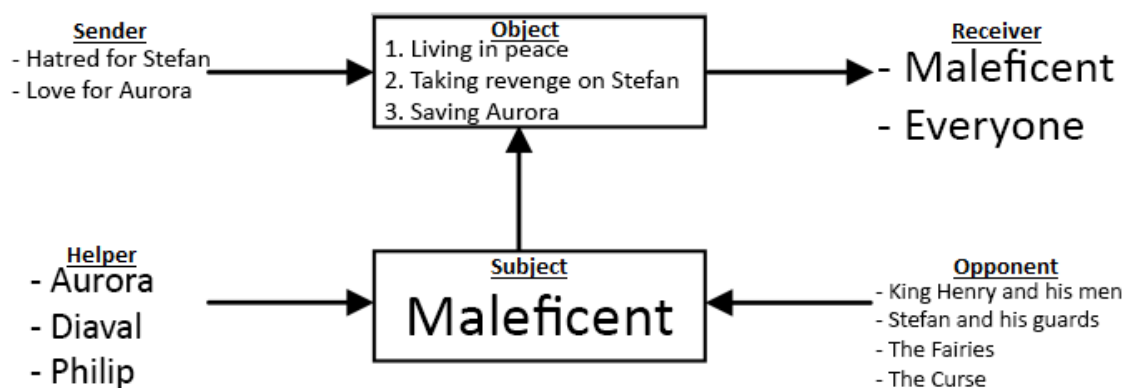
As Maleficent, Diaval, and Aurora try to leave the castle, Stefan and his men trap them. Aurora flees and accidentally finds and releases Maleficent’s wings. They reattach themselves to Maleficent and she starts flying, frees Diaval, and flies with Stefan to the top of one of the towers. She almost kills Stefan but stops and tells him “It’s over.” When she turns to leave Stefan attacks her and they fall off the tower. Maleficent saves herself by flying but Stefan falls to his death.

Maleficent crowns Aurora Queen of the Moors, unifying the kingdoms. The narrator tells us:

So you see, the story is not quite as you were told, and I should know, for I was the one they called Sleeping Beauty. In the end, my kingdom was united not by a hero or a villain, as legend had predicted, but by one who was both hero and villain. And her name was Maleficent.<sup>116</sup>

## Analysis

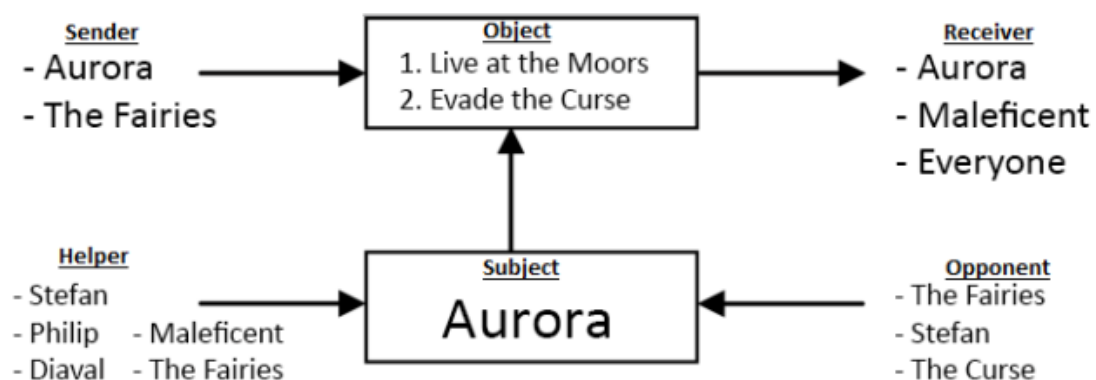
Taking Maleficent as the subject, three objects come up for the actantial model: 1. Living in peace, 2. Taking revenge on Stefan, 3. Saving Aurora. What is interesting is that objects 2 and 3 are directly contrary to each other, since Maleficent’s plan to take revenge is to make the curse on Aurora come to pass. The two senders are also opposites. Maleficent is spurred into taking revenge by her hatred for Stefan, but eventually wants to save Aurora out of love for her. In the model for the second object Maleficent functions as receiver, since she is the one who would mainly benefit from the conjunctiontransformation, going from lacking revenge to having taken revenge. Reaching the third object would be stopping the disjunctiontransformation of having Aurora to losing her to the curse. Almost every character



<sup>116</sup> *Maleficent*. Stromberg. (2014).

in the movie would benefit from this and is thus a receiver, since at the end everyone wants Aurora to escape the curse. Maleficent’s opponents are King Henry and his men, Stefan and his guards, and the fairies (since their failure to take care of Aurora would mean Maleficent’s curse would fail). It seems logical that Aurora would be an opponent of Maleficent, since Maleficent curses her and at first hates her. However, Maleficent only curses Aurora to get revenge on Stefan. She does not have any motivation against Aurora except for her connection to Stefan. Furthermore, Aurora does not undertake any actions to stop Maleficent from reaching her goals. Aurora is a helper in this model, as are Diaval and Philip. It is interesting to note that unlike the other to helpers, Philip is a passive helper. Maleficent mostly uses him as a means to an end. She puts him to sleep, brings him to the castle, sneaks him inside and delivers him at Aurora’s room all while Philip is unconscious. The other helpers take action independently to help Maleficent.

When taking Aurora as the subject, the objects she pursues are not very clear. For the first part of the movie, Aurora does not seem to have an object. She grows up but does not express any wishes or pursues any goals. Once she is allowed into the Moors, her object becomes to live at the Moors. This object would be achieved through a conjunctiontransformation (from not living at the Moors to living at the Moors) and since no one motivates Aurora except herself, Aurora is also the sender in this model. Both Aurora and Maleficent would benefit from achieving this object, making them the receivers. The fairies are opponents since they do not want Aurora to live at the Moors and Maleficent could be seen as helper since she takes Aurora into the Moors and allows her to live there. However, before this transformation is achieved Aurora finds out about the curse and her new object becomes evading the curse. Since the fairies are the ones who tell Aurora about the curse, they now function as the sender. The transformation, as with Maleficent’s third object, now becomes stopping the disjunctiontransformation of living to succumbing to the curse. If she would succeed not only Aurora but everyone would be the receiver since everyone wants the curse to fail at this point in the movie. While at this point Aurora sees Maleficent as her



opponent since she cast the curse, Maleficent only undertakes actions that help Aurora, thus making her a helper. Stefan on the other hand tries to stop Maleficent, thus unconsciously becoming Aurora's opponent. However, he also tries to protect Aurora from the curse by letting the fairies take her into hiding in a cottage in the woods when she is a baby and locking her in her room when she returns on her sixteenth birthday. Apart from Stefan and Maleficent, other helpers are the fairies, Diaval, and Philip.

What stands out is that while at first glance Aurora seems Maleficent's opponents and Maleficent seems Aurora's opponent, both do not take any actions to keep the other from their object. Both characters even help each other reach their objects. Furthermore, at a certain point in the narrative, both characters have the same object (evading the curse) and no character is working against this object. The conflict in the narrative at that point purely comes from the distorted relationships between certain characters and the inevitable aspect of the curse. The curse could thus be described as an opponent for both characters, since it is not under control of Maleficent at this point and thus functions autonomously.

Maleficent is a very strong character in terms of self-authorization. Her actions drive the narrative and almost all her actions are taken independently, mainly motivated by her own emotions (which can be seen looking at the senders in the actantial model in which she is the subject). While she does have helpers, most of these helpers only follow her orders. Even Diaval, who sometimes voices his discontent with Maleficent's actions, obeys every command. While part of Maleficent's power, her wings, is taken away at the start of the movie, she still possesses enough magical powers to claim a lot of authority, taking dominion over the Moors without any opposition when she returns from the ruins. We see examples of this power when Maleficent hears why Stefan took her wings and shoots a ray of energy into the sky, or when her presence alone makes walls crumble and makes the Moors turn dark. However, these magical powers are also problematic since they can be more powerful than Maleficent herself; once the curse is cast, even Maleficent has no authority over it anymore, on the one hand showing how powerful she is but on the other also indicating she has no complete authority over her powers. Once her wings are returned to her, Maleficent releases her dominion of the Moors, having recovered the main source of her authority and not needing her dominion over the Moors as a source anymore. As the narrator states, Maleficent "took off her crown", indicating that no character in the story has as much authority as Maleficent does, since she is the only one who can dethrone herself. Furthermore, this action

illustrates Maleficent's ideological validity, since taking over the Moors was an act connected to her becoming evil.

Maleficent mostly interacts with Stefan, Diaval and Aurora. From the start, Maleficent clearly commands authority in her interactions with Stefan. As children, she demands Stefan to show himself and give back the jewel he stole, which he does. At first it is not clear why Stefan obeys Maleficent, but before he leaves he states he likes her wings, emphasizing the authority Maleficent receives both from aesthetic value and from her magical properties. Stefan greatly diminishes Maleficent's authority by deceiving her, slipping her a sleeping draught, and burning her wings off. Still, even with his new authority as king and with Maleficent's wings clipped, Maleficent's magical powers give her enough authority to be dominant. Stefan is clearly distressed when Maleficent shows up at his daughters christening and he cannot do anything to stop her from cursing his child, except begging her. Maleficent then asserts her authority further by making him beg again before including true love's kiss in the curse as cure. At first this concession seems to diminish Maleficent's authority over Stefan, but we later learn that her concession is only a sham since Maleficent thinks true love's kiss does not exist. After Maleficent has cursed Aurora, Maleficent and Stefan do not interact again until the final battle. However, we do see Stefan becoming paranoid out of fear for Maleficent, indicating that she still has a lot of authority. During the final battle, Stefan manages to gain the upper hand using his knowledge that iron burns fairies. This moment and when he burns off Maleficent's wings are the only moments he is truly dominant in their interactions. However, this dominance is not upheld long. Once Maleficent regains her wings, she has enough authority to defeat Stefan. The last bit of authority she receives in this relationship is based on ideological validity, since she chooses to spare Stefan instead of killing him. The contrast between Maleficent's status as a hero (at this point) and Stefan's as a villain is emphasized by the fact that Stefan then attacks her in the back. This grants Maleficent a lot of ideological validity over Stefan and clears her from any blame of his death, since he falls to his death by his own doing.

In her interactions with Diaval, Maleficent also clearly has more authority. They meet because Maleficent saves Diaval from a farmer using her powers to turn him from a raven into a man. While Diaval at first does not grant her a lot of authority based on this action ("What have you done to my beautiful self?"), once Maleficent points out she has saved his life he pledges to be her servant.<sup>117</sup> Maleficent then states that she needs him to be her wings, which is interesting since her wings were a source of authority before and she needs a

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<sup>117</sup> *Maleficent*. Stromberg. (2014): Diaval: "And in return for saving my life, I am your servant. Whatever you need."

replacement. This grants Diaval some authority, which we see in their interactions later on. Diaval is one of the few characters who is not scared of Maleficent, and he is the only one who mocks her and argues with her. However, Maleficent still gains more authority in their interactions than she loses. She turns him into whatever animal she wants and he obeys all her orders. There is no real change in this relationship throughout the movie.

In her interactions with Aurora, Maleficent gains a lot of authority through her powers but also loses some through ideological validity. As a baby and as a child, Aurora is clearly not intimidated by Maleficent and Maleficent often saves her using her magic. When Aurora and Maleficent meet, Aurora calls her her fairy godmother, indicating that Aurora believes Maleficent to be ideological valid. However, Aurora attacks Maleficent's ideological validity when she finds out about the curse, stating "You're the evil that's in the world." Maleficent later validates this when Aurora has succumbed to the curse as she states "I will not ask your forgiveness because what I have done to you is unforgivable." However, this ideological validity is restored when Maleficent saves Aurora from the curse, illustrated by the fact that Aurora calls her 'godmother' again when she wakes up. Throughout their interactions, Aurora often obeys Maleficent, which indicates that while it is not clear from which aspect this authority comes, Maleficent does have authority in her relationship with Aurora. In the end, Maleficent transfers the authority she has as Queen of the Moors to Aurora.

Other characters Maleficent interacts with are the Moor creatures, the three fairies, King Henry and his men, Stefan's men and Philip. From all these characters, Maleficent mostly receives authority. Until Maleficent seizes dominion over the Moors, she gets along with the creatures. After she turns dark, the creatures fear her. The Moor creatures could thus be seen as indicators of ideological validity, just as the woodland animals were with the traditional princesses.

The fairies do not diminish Maleficent's authority in any way. Maleficent is clearly more powerful and intelligent. She swipes away the fairies with her power at the christening and teases them without them noticing when they are living in the cottage. Furthermore, Maleficent keeps an eye on Aurora since the fairies are incapable of raising her. At the end of the movie, we see Maleficent still holds authority in this relationship when she silences the fairies with one look.

Both Henry's and Stefan's men also do not diminish Maleficent's authority. In every conflict with them, Maleficent easily defeats them using her powers. Philip also only grants Maleficent authority, since she easily puts him to sleep and brings him to the castle.

Aurora asserts less authority through self-authorization. She only takes a few actions by herself that shape her story; she runs away to the castle when she finds out about the curse, she escapes from her room in the palace, and sets Maleficent's wings free during the final battle. Of these actions, the first two go against the object that Aurora is pursuing (evading the curse). For Aurora's authority ideological validity is very important. However, she mostly claims this authority through interaction.

Aurora mostly interacts with Maleficent and the Moor creatures. As stated, as a child Aurora loses authority since Maleficent constantly needs to look after her and save her. Maleficent is the only character to diminish Aurora's authority based on aesthetic value, stating "It's so ugly you could almost feel sorry for it."<sup>118</sup> The authority Aurora receives from Maleficent is mostly based on ideological validity. Aurora is so sweet, innocent, and 'pure' in her interactions with Maleficent that Maleficent slowly starts to realize she made a mistake by cursing Aurora. This is emphasized when Maleficent tries to revoke the curse, showing that Aurora has won over Maleficent and granting her authority based on ideological validity. However, Maleficent fails in revoking the curse but eventually saves Aurora with true love's kiss. This can also be seen as a sign of Aurora's ideological validity; not only did she win Maleficent over, she also helped her feel true love (something Maleficent herself did not believe in).

Aurora's interactions with the Moor creatures can be seen as confirmation of her ideological validity, since these creatures only seem to interact with 'good' beings. From the start, the creatures have no timidity to interact and play with Aurora. We see them giving her flowers, allowing her to pet them, and in the end, when she is crowned, celebrating. This contrasts with Maleficent, who forced the creatures to bow for her when she seized dominion as an evil Queen.

Other characters Aurora interacts with are the fairies, Diaval, Philip, Stefan, servants and Stefan's men. However, these last two interactions and her interactions with Diaval do not change anything in her authority. In her interactions with the fairies, Aurora mostly gains authority since the fairies are clumsy and incapable of looking after her. However, the moment that Aurora tells the fairies that she is going to live at the Moors is the only moment we see the fairies use their authority as parental guardians.<sup>119</sup> Aurora's aesthetic value is only asserted twice in the movie: first when the fairies give her the gift of beauty at her christening, and second when the fairies try to convince Philip to kiss her. While Philip does assert

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<sup>118</sup> *Maleficent*. Stromberg. (2014).

<sup>119</sup> Ibidem: Knotgrass: "See here, young lady. I did not spend 16 years in this miserable hovel with these two imbeciles... So that you could ruin it on the last day. We are taking you back to your father with..."

Aurora's aesthetic value, the interactions with the fairies give Aurora the most authority based on aesthetic value.

In her interactions with Philip, her aesthetic value is thus asserted.<sup>120</sup> When they first meet, Aurora is wary of Philip and she stumbles when he comes close, but Philip apologizes for this multiple times and admits he got lost, something Aurora can help him with. Thus, there is a small balance of authority between these characters. In her only interaction with Stefan, their family tie plays a big part. Aurora hugs Stefan and he orders her to be locked up in her room.

Looking at Aurora's authority we thus see this authority is mostly based on her ideological validity and her aesthetic value. Aurora does not receive any authority based on her royal status or intellectual credibility, and also does not claim any authority based on these aspects.

## Snow White and the Huntsman (2012)

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A narrator tells us that once upon a time a Queen pricked her finger on a rose blooming in winter and wished for "child as white as snow, lips as red as blood, hair as black as a raven's wings and all with the strength of that rose."<sup>121</sup> The child, Snow White, was adored throughout the kingdom "as much for her defiant spirit as for her beauty."<sup>122</sup>

When Snow White is still young, her mother dies and her father and his army battle a mysterious army of glass soldiers. The King frees a prisoner named Ravenna, becomes enchanted by her beauty and marries her the next day. On their wedding night, Ravenna kills the king. She lets her brother Finn and her army into the castle and takes control. Snow White's childhood friend William and his father Duke Hammond escape but Snow White is captured.

Under Ravenna's rule, the kingdom falls in ruins. Snow White grows up locked in a tower. Ravenna meanwhile drains the youth of young women in order to stay young, but despite this her Magic Mirror tells her that now that Snow White has come of age, she is more beautiful than Ravenna and the reason Ravenna's powers are waning. However, Ravenna can become immortal by consuming Snow White's heart. Snow White escapes and eventually collapses in the Dark Forest. Ravenna convinces Eric the Huntsman to help her find Snow White by promising him she will bring his departed wife back to life if he succeeds. Eric finds

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<sup>120</sup> *Maleficent*. Stromberg. (2014): Philip: "The most beautiful girl I've ever seen."

<sup>121</sup> *Snow White and the Huntsman*. Sanders, Rupert. (2012) United States: Roth Films; Universal Pictures.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibidem*.



Snow White, but when Finn lets it slip that Ravenna cannot bring back his wife, he lets her go. Snow White convinces Eric to escort her to Duke Hammond's castle. Meanwhile, William joins Finn's men to find Snow White

Eric and Snow White make it out of the forest but are attacked by a troll, which Snow White saves them from by charming it. They find a fishing village populated by women and Eric finds out Snow White's identity. He decides to leave her with the women, but Finn arrives and burns down the village. Eric returns when he sees the village being burned and saves Snow White.

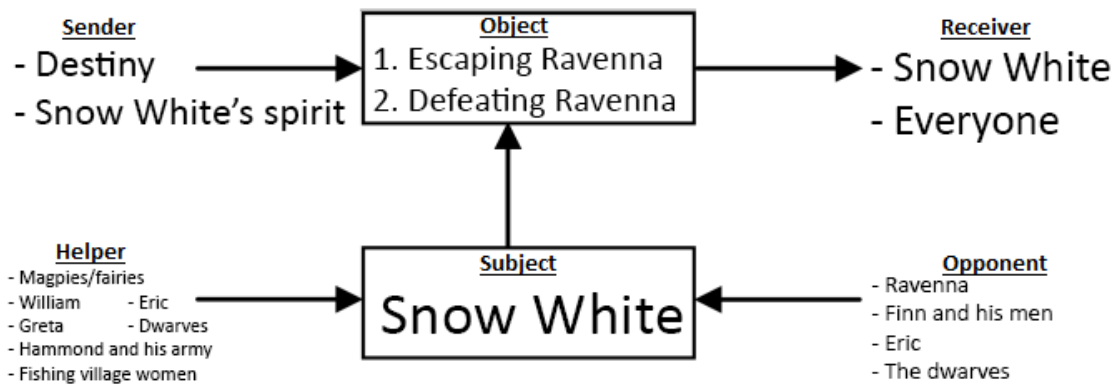
Eric and Snow White continue towards Hammond's castle, but are attacked by eight dwarves. Snow White convinces them to help her. The dwarves lead them to Sanctuary, the home of the fairies. The next morning, Snow White meets a great White Hart, who blesses her by bowing for her. However, the Hart is hit by an arrow from Finn's men. William reveals himself and helps them defeat Finn's men while Eric kills Finn. One of the dwarves saves Snow White by taking an arrow that was meant for her and dies.

Through telepathy Ravenna learns that Finn is dead. The next day, William and Snow White talk, they kiss, and William gives her an apple. However, when Snow White takes a bite it turns out to be poisoned and William is revealed to be Ravenna in disguise. Before Ravenna can cut out Snow White's heart, Eric and the real William arrive and Ravenna flees. William kisses Snow White, but nothing happens. At Duke Hammond's castle, Snow White is placed on a bier. Eric says goodbye to her and kisses her, and Snow White wakes up. She convinces Duke Hammond to attack Ravenna's castle. Hammond's army fights its way inside and Snow White confronts and defeats Ravenna. The movie ends with Snow White being crowned Queen.

## Analysis

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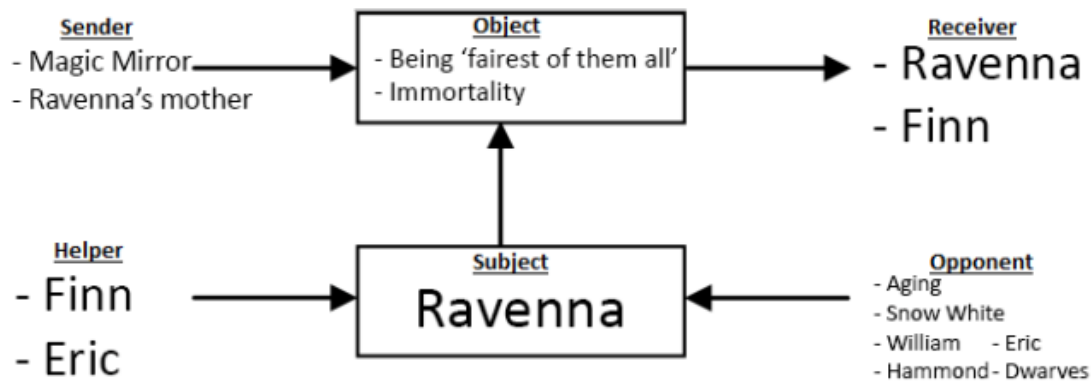
With Snow White as subject, there are two objects in the actantial model: 1. Escaping Ravenna and her henchmen, 2. Defeating Ravenna. Fulfilling the first object would be a conjunction transformation, since Snow White would go from lacking freedom to possessing it. She herself would benefit from this transformation, making her the receiver. While multiple pieces of information prompt Snow White to escape, it is mostly her own spirit that prompts her to do so, making this the sender in this model. Ravenna, Finn, his men, Eric, and the dwarfs all at some point try to stop this transformation from happening. Ravenna sends Finn after Snow White once she has escaped and eventually poisons her when Finn fails. Finn



and his men chase Snow White to bring her back to Ravenna. Eric helps Finn track Snow White down and the dwarfs catch her and tie her up. However, these last two characters make a shift and become helpers. Snow White convinces Eric to escort her to Duke Hammond's castle in exchange for gold but eventually he starts caring for her and helps her because of that. The dwarves decide to help Snow White when they learn her identity. Apart from these two, Snow White has a lot of other helpers; Greta, two magpies who turn out to be possessed by fairies, the women of the fishing village, and William. Greta is another prisoner of Ravenna who tells Snow White Duke Hammond is still alive. The magpies are often seen leading Snow White in the right direction, for example showing her a way out of Ravenna's castle through the sewers and guiding her to a white horse to escape on. The women of the village take care of Snow White and help her escape. William saves Snow White from one of Finn's men. For the second object, it is complex to name a sender. Throughout the movie, it is constantly emphasized that Snow White is destined to defeat Ravenna.<sup>123</sup> Thus, destiny could be seen as the sender. Fulfilling this object could be described both as a conjunctiontransformation (going from lacking the title of Queen to possessing it) and a disjunctiontransformation (going from having an enemy to lacking an enemy). Since defeating Ravenna is mostly emphasized, this last description connects best to the movie. Since the whole kingdom benefits from Ravenna's demise, everyone can be seen as a receiver. Snow White does not have any additional opponents apart from the ones mentioned before. However, Duke Hammond and his army are additional helpers, since they ride with Snow White to attack Ravenna's castle. Looking at this actantial model, it stands out that Snow White has a lot of helpers who actively help her pursue her goal.

At the start of the movie, Ravenna's object is to be 'fairest of them all', which can be seen in the fact that even when she has taken control over the kingdom, she still asks her Magic Mirror to confirm her beauty. Later on we learn that Ravenna's mother put a spell on

<sup>123</sup> *Snow White and the Huntsman*. Sanders. (2012): Muir: "She is destined, Beith. I see an end to the darkness."



her to make her beauty her power and protection by keeping her young and beautiful forever, which can only be undone by one of “fairest blood”. Her mother thus is the sender of Ravenna’s quest to be the fairest. Since at the start of the movie the Mirror confirms she is the fairest, Ravenna’s quest is not a transformation but the stopping of the disjunctiontransformation of being the fairest to losing this title. Not only Ravenna, but also her brother Finn benefits from Ravenna having this power since she is able to support him and protect him with her powers. At first it seems aging is the only opponent for Ravenna, but when we learn Snow White’s presence is what is diminishing her powers, Snow White also becomes an opponent. Finn helps Ravenna by bringing her young girls from who she can absorb the youth. When Ravenna learns from the Mirror that Snow White can be her undoing or make her immortal, killing Snow White becomes her new object. The Mirror thus sends her on this quest and only Ravenna herself would benefit from reaching this object. The transformation that would take place would be a conjunctiontransformation, from lacking to having immortality. Snow White thus becomes her direct opponent, but since Eric, William, Duke Hammond and the dwarves aid Snow White they also become her opponents. Apart from Finn, who Ravenna sends to recapture Snow White, Eric is also temporarily a helper for Ravenna, when she convinces him to track Snow White down in exchange for bringing his departed wife back to life if he succeeds.

In terms of self-authorization, Snow White is a strong character. While she does need help to reach her goal, she takes a lot of actions to reach her goals herself and without being ordered to. She escapes Ravenna’s castle, saves Eric from a troll by charming it, convinces Hammond and his army to fight alongside her, and in the end manages to defeat Ravenna. Most of this authority comes from her status as the ‘chosen one’, which seems to be based in her ideological validity. Directly at the start Snow White’s mother states that she has rare beauty in her heart that will serve her well as queen. In the rest of the movie, it is constantly

emphasized that Snow White is very pure of heart and that this is the reason she will be able to destroy Ravenna.<sup>124</sup> It is this ideological validity that enables Snow White to escape the castle (with the magpies showing her the way), charm the troll, convince the army, and defeat Ravenna. While she is considered the ‘Fairest of them All’, Snow White does not claim any authority through her beauty. Furthermore, while she does have a royal title and exhibits her cleverness, she does not claim authority in her self-authorization through these aspects. Snow White does not really change in her self-authorization. From the start she has her authority through her ideological validity and while this is affirmed throughout the movie, no real change in her authority takes place.

Snow White mostly interacts with Eric, the dwarves, and Ravenna. In her interactions with Eric, a clear shift in authority takes place. When they meet, Eric easily tracks and finds Snow White. The first thing Snow White furthermore asks him is to help her, illustrating that Eric clearly has more authority and intellectual credibility in the situation. She eventually convinces him to be her guide by promising him gold, but Eric emphasizes that he does not trust her, diminishing her ideological validity. However, using her ideological validity she saves Eric from the troll, giving her some authority through this aspect again. Once Eric learns Snow White’s identity, the balance starts to shift in favor of Snow White. Eric gives his word that he will escort her based on her identity, not the promised gold. He furthermore starts to assert her authority in terms of ideological validity, although he only asserts this to other characters: Beith (one of the dwarves) and William. Once Snow White is dead, the balance shifts further and Eric asserts this. In his speech to Snow White before he kisses her, Eric asserts her ideological validity by stating that her heart and spirit remind him of his late wife. Furthermore, for the first time he asserts her royal status by calling her ‘princess’ and stating that she will be a queen in heaven now. It is interesting to note that the only time Eric directly asserts Snow White’s authority is based on aesthetic quality.<sup>125</sup> All the assertions of her authority based on her title or her ideological validity are either done when she is unconscious, or to another character.

The dwarves assert Snow White’s authority often and do little to diminish it. Before they know her identity, they threaten to kill her and tell her to shut up, but after she reveals her identity, only once does one dwarf diminish her authority by stating he does not trust and believe her. The only affirmation of Snow White’s aesthetic value is done before her identity

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<sup>124</sup> *Snow White and the Huntsman*. Sanders. (2012): Magic Mirror: “Her innocence and purity is all that can destroy you.”

<sup>125</sup> *Ibidem*: Eric: “You look very fetching in mail.”

is revealed.<sup>126</sup> The dwarves constantly affirm her authority through her royal status by calling her ‘princess’ or ‘my lady’. The dwarves are in the end also the ones who start the chant “Hail to the Queen.” One of the dwarves, Muir, constantly affirms Snow White’s ideological validity using his powers of premonition. He affirms Snow White is the princess, states she is destined to end the darkness, and later even affirms that it is Snow White’s presence that makes the dwarves’ ailments diminish. He also states Snow White is “life itself” and calls her “the one.” In the end, one of the dwarves dies protecting Snow White, illustrating the shift that has been made from the dwarves being suspicious of Snow White to stating that they will follow her in life and in death.

While Snow White and Ravenna do not interact with each other a lot, their interactions are pivotal for Snow White’s authority. At the start of their interactions, when Snow White is still a child, they seem to have a balance of authority when they both affirm each other’s aesthetic value.<sup>127</sup> However, once Ravenna’s true nature is revealed, the balance completely shifts when she locks Snow White up for ten years. The fact that she is able to do this shows that Ravenna clearly has more authority based on her magical power and title as Queen. This also becomes clear when Ravenna disguises herself as William and tricks Snow White into eating the poisoned apple. She affirms Snow White’s royal status in this conversation, stating that she is the rightful heir. However, since this is only part of Ravenna’s plan to trick Snow White and she succeeds, this interaction mostly diminishes Snow White’s intellectual credibility. In Snow White’s dying moment, when Ravenna thinks she has won and Snow White is not a threat anymore, Ravenna affirms Snow White’s ideological validity, stating that Snow White was the only one pure enough to save her or destroy her. In their final battle, Ravenna attacks this aspect again. She forces Snow White to watch her friends fight Ravenna’s magic and states that it is Snow White that led them to their deaths, concluding that she and Ravenna are not so different after all. However, Snow White answers she is everything Ravenna is not and proves this when she kills Ravenna, establishing once and for all that she is of “fairest blood”. While there is a shift in the balance of authority when Snow defeats Ravenna, this shift is very unexpected. Throughout their interactions, the balance does not shift in Snow White’s favor. Ravenna has more authority through her magic power and shows this in the final battle by easily deflecting Snow White’s attacks. The only reason Snow White is eventually able to defeat Ravenna seems to be because she is destined to.

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<sup>126</sup> *Snow White and the Huntsman*. Sanders. (2012): Gus: “She’s pretty.”

<sup>127</sup> *Ibidem*: Snow White: “You’re so beautiful.”

Ravenna: “That’s kind, child. Especially when it is said that yours is the face of true beauty in this kingdom.”

Snow White interacts with a lot of other characters, but the most important of these characters in her construction of authority are the magpies, the White Hart, and Duke Hammond and his men. The magpies and the White Hart both assert Snow White's ideological validity by helping her and blessing her, since they are both 'good' creatures. The fact that they help Snow White thus emphasizes her 'goodness', just as the interaction with the animals did with the traditional princesses.

Snow White's most important interaction with Duke Hammond and his men is when she convinces them to ride with her to attack Ravenna's castle. This interaction is mostly based on her ideological validity and the fact that she is the rightful heir. The fact that she succeeds in convincing both Hammond and his men thus underlines Snow White's authority based on her royal status and her ideological validity. William, the 'prince' in this movie, does have some interactions with Snow White. However, these do not change a lot in her authority. The most interesting interaction Snow White has with him is when they talk about her uncertainty of becoming Queen, and this interaction turns out to be Ravenna in disguise.

Snow White's authority is thus mostly based on her royal status and her ideological validity. This is illustrated during her coronation, when the priest states: "In the name of all that is good and just in this land! I crown you Queen."<sup>128</sup> The biggest change in terms of authority Snow White makes in this movie is the fact that she goes from imprisoned princess to ruling Queen. The other aspects of her authority, primarily her ideological validity, are present from the start and do not change.

Ravenna's self-authorization is mostly based on her magical power and her royal title. She is able to control her kingdom through these aspects of her authority and as the Mirror states, Snow White's kingdom is not the first she managed to control.<sup>129</sup> Furthermore, she undertakes her quests mostly by herself. No one commands her and she thus actively shapes her own story. Her aesthetic value plays an important role in her authority as well. It is through her beauty that Ravenna manages to enchant the king and take over the kingdom. She only starts showing her magical powers right before she kills the king. Her magical powers are also tied to her beauty. Ravenna's mother casts a spell that makes Ravenna's beauty her power and protection. While it is never explicitly stated, Finn's statement that "Magic comes at a lofty price" when Ravenna looks at her aging face in the Mirror implies that using her magic makes

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<sup>128</sup> *Snow White and the Huntsman*. Sanders. (2012).

<sup>129</sup> *Ibidem*: Magic Mirror: "Yet another kingdom falls to your glory."

Ravenna age.<sup>130</sup> Consuming Snow White's heart would thus not only mean immortality, but also being able to use her powers without consequence. Ravenna's aesthetic value thus plays an important role in her authority, but apart from charming the king she rarely uses it as a power resource. Ravenna does not claim any authority through ideological validity, but remarkably also seems aware of the fact that she is not ideologically valid in her world. This can be seen in the fact that right before Snow White kills her, Ravenna states: "I will give this wretched world the Queen it deserves."<sup>131</sup>

In comparison to Snow White, Ravenna has very little interaction with other characters. She mostly interacts with Finn and Snow White, but most of the times we see her she is alone and/or acts alone. In her interactions with Finn, it is clear from the start that Ravenna is the dominant party and this balance does not shift in the course of the narrative. When she welcomes Finn into the castle, Ravenna addresses Finn as 'my brother', underlining their familial bond. The balance of authority is quickly made clear when Finn answers with 'My Queen', showing that while they are family, Ravenna clearly has more authority. Throughout the rest of their interactions, Finn obeys Ravenna's every command. Why he does this is never made explicit, but since Ravenna's authority mostly comes from her power and this power is what enables her to sustain Finn, his obedience can be seen as an affirmation of her magical powers. In the end, when Finn is mortally wounded and begs his sister to heal him, she refuses, possibly since it would ask too much of her power. While she does ask her brother for forgiveness for this decision, the fact that she places herself above her brother illustrates that no change of authority takes place between these characters.

Between Ravenna and Snow White, there also seems to be little change in their balance of authority. As stated before, there seems to be a balance when they first meet but this quickly turns out to be a sham. Once Ravenna reveals her true self, the balance completely shifts in her favor and she locks Snow White up. Until the end, this balance is maintained. Ravenna does not receive any authority from Snow White apart from the fact that she is able to deceive her into eating the apple, asserting her intellectual credibility. However, Ravenna also does not lose a lot of authority in her interactions with Snow White. The only time she loses authority is when she tells Snow White she would have been the only one pure enough to kill her. Telling this reveals Ravenna's weakness to her opponent and she only does this because she thinks Snow White is defeated. In the end, Snow White is able to defeat

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<sup>130</sup> *Snow White and the Huntsman*. Sanders. (2012).

<sup>131</sup> *Snow White and the Huntsman*. Sanders. (2012).

Ravenna without having claimed authority over her, based purely on the fact that she is the ‘chosen one’.

Other characters Ravenna interacts with are Eric, the Mirror, her mother, and the king. Her interactions with Eric are interesting in terms of authority since he does not seem intimidated by her royal title or magic powers. Thus, Ravenna is forced to manipulate him in another way; she makes him believe she can use her powers to bring his wife back from the dead. Since this works, Ravenna gains intellectual credibility through this interaction.

The Mirror is interesting since it is a sentient tool; it obeys Ravenna but does not really seem to have any choice in this. Thus, the fact that it does as commanded does not grant Ravenna authority. Furthermore, the Mirror is a source of knowledge, thus having more intellectual credibility than Ravenna. However, since the Mirror is subservient to Ravenna, obeying her commands and affirming her royal status by calling her ‘my Queen’, this does not pose a threat to her authority. The Mirror does affirm Ravenna’s authority in a very literal way, confirming she is the fairest of them all and stating: “Is there no end to your power and beauty?”<sup>132</sup>

Ravenna’s mother also confirms her aesthetic value, stating that Ravenna’s beauty is all that can save her. She thus links Ravenna’s authority completely to her beauty. The King also affirms Ravenna’s aesthetic value and grants her more authority based on this, marrying her and making her Queen only because she is beautiful.

Ravenna’s authority thus does not really change in the course of the movie. Only being killed by Snow White diminishes her authority. There are very little interactions through which Ravenna loses authority.

## Conclusion

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Looking at the actantial models, it is noticeable that the princesses again have significantly more helpers than the queens. However, the queens do not have a lot more opponents than the princesses. All the characters also have multiple objects, illustrating that these movies have more intricate narratives than the traditional adaptations.

What is also notable is that both princesses are not looking for love in any part of their story. Both the movies end with the princesses looking at their potential love-interest and smiling, but finding these love-interests is never the object and the movies also do not make clear if the princess and the prince eventually end up together.

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<sup>132</sup> *Snow White and the Huntsman*. Sanders. (2012).



The queens have more explicit and explained senders in these movies. The movies show us the reason behind both Maleficent's anger and Ravenna's vanity, making their characters more relatable and less 'pure evil'. The movies show us that these characters are evil, but their evil was created by circumstance. A big difference is that while Snow White is Ravenna's direct opponent and both aim to destroy each other, Aurora is only a circumstantial opponent. Maleficent wants to get revenge and uses Aurora as a means to do this.

In terms of self-authorization, both the princesses and the queens are very similar. While Snow White has a little more self-authorization, both her and Aurora's authority is mostly based on their ideological validity. In both cases, the queen is stronger in her self-authorization and this authority is mostly based on her magic powers, which in both cases she uses to claim more authority by becoming queen. A big difference can be found in the ideological validity of the queens. While Maleficent changes in this aspect and in the end becomes ideological valid, Ravenna is aware of the fact that she is evil and accepts this fully. This is illustrated by the fact that Maleficent releases her dominion voluntarily, while Ravenna has to be killed to be dethroned.

In their interactions, the characters are also very similar. Both the princesses are asserted in their ideological validity by magical beings. While Snow White's validity is also asserted by humans and the dwarves, it is the fact that the White Hart blesses her that convinces these characters. It also stands out that the princesses have very little interactions with the prince. The queens both mostly interact with their male servant, who both in some way owe them a debt because the queen saved the servant using her magic; Maleficent literally saves Diaval's life and Ravenna sustains Finn's life with her power. Both the servants blindly follow the queens orders. A big difference in the interactions between the princess and the queen is that Aurora manages to gain some authority by showing Maleficent her ideological validity, while Snow White does not gain any authority and it is the contrast in ideological validity that is pivotal in her interactions with Ravenna.

In the end, both the evil queens make way for the princess to become queen. While Maleficent dethrones herself and Ravenna is killed, both still are rulers with magic power who make way for a younger character who is ideological valid.

## Analysis and Conclusion

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In this chapter, I will compare my analyses of my cases. I will look at striking similarities and differences on the actantial level, in terms of self-authorization, authorization through interaction, on a discursive level, and in terms of genre. I will connect these analyses with gender narratology and summarize my findings to answer my research question. I will also briefly evaluate my research and my theoretical framework.

### Actantial level

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The actantial analyses revealed that a major change has taken place between the traditional adaptations and the new animation adaptations. Whereas the traditional princesses did only have one object, finding love, the new animation protagonists have multiple objects of which finding love is only a part. Both Rapunzel and Anna do at some point in the movie have love as their object, but this is only after they have already met their love-interest and have spent time with him. The traditional princesses both expressed their wish to find love before meeting their prince. In the live-action adaptations, finding love has completely disappeared as object. The princesses do meet a love-interest, but whether or not they end up together is left unanswered.

While the traditional princesses do not undertake any actions to reach their goal and do not undertake a quest, the new animation protagonists and the live-action princesses actively go out into the world chasing their object. Since the traditional princesses did not undertake a quest, the proposed actantial models of their narratives also did not have a sender. The new animation and the live-action protagonists do have senders; two of these princesses, Anna and Snow White, are aware of their royal status and have a feeling of duty as their sender. The other two, Rapunzel and Aurora, are not aware of their royalty, and are spurred into action by their own desire.

The object of the traditional princesses was only achieved by the actions of the princes. In the new animations, both Rapunzel and Anna managed to achieve all of their goals themselves, although they are both guided by their love-interests. In the live-action adaptations, Aurora did not manage to reach her goal herself, but Snow White did. In these adaptations, the fact that the princes do not save their princesses is made a pivotal point that stands out; both Philip and William kiss their princess without effect.

In comparison to the queens, the princesses all have a lot of helpers. However, the helpers of the traditional princesses mostly aid them by keeping them safe, while the helpers of the new animation and live-action princesses actively help them reach their goal. However, this does not mean that the traditional princesses act more independent. It can better be seen as an illustration of the fact that the traditional princesses do not pursue their goal at all.

In the actantial model for the traditional princesses, the only receivers were the princesses themselves. Both princesses thus showed little concern for other characters or their kingdoms. In the new animation and live-action adaptations, there are multiple receivers, indicating that the actions taken by these protagonists are not only taken for their own gain. In all four cases it could even be argued that the whole kingdom benefits from the pursued transformation and could thus be seen as a receiver.

When looking at the actantial models for the ‘older’ women, it stands out that the traditional queens had the same goal; destroying the protagonist. Of the new animation queens, the objects are more diffuse. However, all the women have negative emotions as their sender; envy, haughtiness, vanity, and fear. In the live-action adaptations, destroying the protagonist, either direct or through circumstance, is the object for the queens again. However, while negative emotions such as hate and vanity are still the sender, the movies also give us an explanation where these emotions come from. This is also the case for Elsa. By explaining the senders, the characters of the queens become more relatable. Thus, we can distinguish two kinds of ‘queens’: the selfish kind with unexplained motives (The Queen, the traditional Maleficent, and Gothel) and the kind with explained motives we can relate to more (Elsa, the live-action Maleficent and Ravenna). Both the traditional and the live-action Evil Queen and Maleficent have the same object (being fairest of them all and taking revenge on Stefan), but in the case of the live-action adaptation we get a better explanation why; The Evil Queen is not just vain but needs her beauty to sustain her power, and Maleficent is not just offended because she was not invited, but because Stefan stole her wings. Their actions thus do not come from a pure evil personality, but it is something that is brought on by circumstance.

Looking at the receivers in the actantial models for the queens, we also see the divide mentioned above. While all the queens themselves are the principal receivers, only the queens we can relate to also have other receivers, thus being less selfish as the traditional queens. All the queens furthermore have a small number of helpers, apart from Elsa. No other queen has more than three helpers.

Another aspect that stands out is the fact that the new animation adaptations are more diffuse and complex; they contain more characters and these characters fulfill multiple actants. While it does regularly occur in the traditional adaptations that a character fulfills two actants, in the new animation adaptations some characters (or parts of a character) fulfill three or four actants. While in the live-action adaptations, characters do not fulfill so much actants, these adaptations do contain more characters and are more diffuse in terms of good and evil, since they try to give an explanation for the evil deeds of the queens.

## Authority

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Since the traditional princesses do not take any actions to achieve their goal, they are not very strong in the aspect of self-authorization. They do not shape their story in any way. The 'queens' in their story on the other hand are very active and claim a lot of authority for themselves. They pursue their goal, mostly relying on magic and intellectual credibility, and thus 'write' their own story. In the new animation adaptations, the princesses are stronger in self-authorization than their traditional counterparts. Rapunzel makes a clear change towards more self-authorization and Anna is already very strong in her self-authorization and keeps this stable. Both princesses rely on their quick wit and good personality in their authority. The 'queens' of the new animation adaptations are more problematic. Gothel is very strong in her self-authorization, in line with her traditional counterparts. Elsa on the other hand is less strong in her self-authorization and only starts to embody her authority more when she starts to exhibit 'evil' characteristics. However, once she reverts back to being a 'good queen', she retains her self-authorization. In the live-action adaptations, both queens are very strong in their self-authorization and stay that way throughout the film. Most of their authority comes from their magic and their role as queen. The princesses are both less strong in their self-authorization and do not really experience a change, but are clearly stronger in terms of self-authorization in comparison to their traditional counterparts. They mostly rely on their ideological validity in their authority.

In the authority that is produced through interaction a shift has also taken place. While all the princesses have their ideological validity asserted through interactions, for the traditional princesses this is mostly through interactions with animals, for the new animation princesses through interactions with humans, and for the live-action princesses through their interactions with magical beings. Furthermore, the traditional princesses' intellectual credibility was only asserted by non-humans, while the new animation princesses claim

authority based on intellectual credibility with their quick thinking and are asserted in this by other humans, mostly their eventual love-interests. This contrasts with the traditional princesses since their love-interests mostly assert their aesthetic value. The live-action princesses strikingly claim little to no intellectual credibility and while their aesthetic value plays a role in their narrative (Aurora is blessed with beauty and Snow White is 'fairest of them all'), they both receive little authority through this beauty. The royal status of the characters is mostly important for the production of authority of the traditional princesses. In the production of authority of the new animation princesses this aspect is less important. However, for the live-action princesses this aspect is important. Not only is it asserted in their interactions, but both the live-action movies also end with the princesses being crowned queen.

What also stands out is that in most of the adaptations, there is a lack of interaction between the princess and the prince. Both in the traditional and the live-action adaptations there is very little interaction between these characters. However, Eric can also be seen as a love-interest for the live-action Snow White, which would make this movie fall in line with the new animation adaptations, in which the princesses do have a lot of interactions with their love-interests. What is interesting to note is that this divide matches the royal status of the love-interest. When the love-interest is a prince, not a lot of interaction takes place; The Prince, both the animation and the live-action Philip, and William have little interaction with their princesses. The 'regular' guys, Eugene, Kristoff, and Eric, interact a lot with their princesses. It would seem that the title of prince is enough to fall in love with a character, while without it the development of a relationship is needed. Hans is also an illustration of this, since he is a prince and Anna immediately falls in love with him but after this needs a whole movie to realize she is in love with Kristoff.

While the traditional queens receive authority based both on their magical power and intellectual credibility, in the new animation adaptations there is an increased emphasize on one of these aspects; Gothel mostly receives authority based on her intellect, and Elsa based mostly on her powers. In the live-action adaptations, the queens mostly receive authority based on their magic powers and their royal title. In these adaptations, intellectual credibility plays little to no part in the construction of the queens' authority. Thus, the fact that these characters are queens has become a more pronounced part of their character, instead of just a title. The 'queens' always have more authority than the princesses. This even applies to Elsa and Maleficent, who stand out in this category because they do not end up evil.

What stands out is that in the balance of authority between characters, in the traditional adaptations little to no change takes place. The balance that is established at the beginning is often the same at the end of the movie. In the new animation adaptations, not only is there often a change in the balance, this change is also a very important aspect of the narrative. Both Rapunzel's shift in authority relative to Gothel and Eugene and Anna's relationship with Elsa and Kristoff are what drive the narrative forward. However, in the live-action adaptations, little change in the balance of authority between characters takes place.

## Discursive level

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On the discursive level, there are some interesting similarities. All the princesses have a similar personality; they are all good-natured, innocent, and a bit naïve towards the outside world. However, the princesses from the new animations are a bit older than the traditional princesses. Rapunzel and Anna are both 18 and thus technically adults, while Snow White and Aurora are 14 and 16. The live-action princesses are divided, with Snow White being 18 and Aurora 16.

The queens also have similar personalities, except for Elsa and the live-action Maleficent. The queens are mostly cruel, independent, powerful, and haughty. While the live-action Maleficent for the time that she is 'evil' does exhibit some cruel and haughty personality traits, such as her obvious pleasure in Stefan's distress, she loses these traits once she becomes 'good' again. Elsa stands out because she is powerful and independent, but not cruel or haughty. Her whole story even revolves around the fact that she does not want to hurt people and does not have a lot of faith in herself. She also stands out because of her age, having just turned 21 whereas the other queens are clearly older. She however does fit in with the traditional queens by having magical powers, something of all the queens only Gothel lacks.

Another aspect that stands out is that while all the princesses are raised fairly closed-off from the world, in the new animations this aspect is emphasized more. Both princesses sing a song about being able to go outside and both need a guide to manage the unknown outside world. While the live-action Snow White does not sing, she also needs a guide to help her. In all three cases we see the same layout: the princess wants someone to guide her but the guy refuses, until she promises him a material reward (a crown, supplies, gold). The characters start to travel together and the guy starts caring for the princess, eventually deciding to help her based on his feelings instead of his reward.

The new animation adaptations also feature more interaction between the princess and the love-interest and the princess and the antagonist. The relationship between the love-interest and the princess is thus more balanced, illustrated by the fact that both traditional princesses were first kissed while unconscious, while the new princesses themselves take the lead in this interaction. In the live-action adaptations, both princesses are kissed while unconscious by their princes, but both kisses have no effect.

Looking at who eventually beats the queen, we see another shift. Both the traditional queens were defeated by the prince, and Gothel is also mostly defeated by the male lead. However, the other queens are all saved or killed by the princess: Elsa learns to control her powers by Anna's actions and Maleficent learns to love by Aurora. Ravenna is the only queen who is killed by the princess herself. Thus, men are becoming less heroic and princesses take it upon themselves to save the day. However, while princes are not used to save the day anymore, they are still necessary to guide the princesses through the dangers of the outside world.

The three princess that are crowned on-screen are also the ones without elaborate love stories; Elsa is crowned without having a love-interest, and live-action Aurora and Snow White both do have a love-interests but are not married when they are crowned. Thus, these princesses become ruling monarchs while the other three princesses are all implied to get married before they become queen.

## Genre

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Looking at fairytale adaptations as a genre, we see some interesting changes taking place. For example, some conventions and stereotypes of traditional fairytale adaptations are mocked in the new adaptations. An example of this is the idea of 'true love', which is pivotal in traditional adaptations since it is true love's kiss that wakes up the princesses. In *Frozen* we see Anna falling in love with a prince and, following traditional convention, immediately agreeing to marry him because it is 'true love'. However, both Elsa and Kristoff point out that Anna cannot marry a man she just met, and in the end we learn that their love was not true love to begin with. In *Maleficent*, the same convention is mocked by having the 'traditional' meeting of the prince and princess who fall in love, and the prince attempting to save the princess with true love's kiss. However, in this adaptation the kiss fails. An example of a stereotype being mocked can also be found in both movies; the set-up of Elsa's character as a Queen who isolates herself and freezes a kingdom points to the stereotype of the evil queen,

and on posters for the movie *Maleficent* the tagline ‘Don’t believe the fairy tale’ points to the fact that there is more behind the stereotype than the fairy tale suggests. Thus, the new adaptations not only base their story more loosely on the source material, it also mocks conventions of the genre.

This mocking of conventions is interesting, since it relies on the audience’s knowledge of these conventions to be able to subvert them; without knowing how traditional adaptations dealt with ‘true love’, Elsa’s refusal to bless Anna’s marriage or Philip’s failed kiss become a lot less meaningful. Furthermore, without knowing the stereotypes the subversion of these characters becomes a lot less interesting. Thus, the fact that these conventions are subverted shows that fairytale adaptation has become a genre in its own right, since there needs to be a genre with stereotypes and conventions before these can be subverted.

This parody of the genre goes hand in hand with another development in the genre; the fact that especially the live-action adaptations are clearly aimed at an older audience. This can be seen when looking at the classifications of these movies by Kijkwijzer, the Dutch motion picture rating system. All the animated adaptations are rated for 6 years and older (*Sleeping Beauty* is even rated for all ages), while both live-action adaptations are rated for 12 years and older, based on their scary and violent content. Warner points out in her book that, as a consequence of the 21<sup>st</sup> century social and political sensitivity, a clear split between material for children and adults is made.<sup>133</sup> Davis also signals the fact that dark themes are becoming more prominent in fairytale adaptations, and that this is perceived to be mainly intended for adolescents and adults.<sup>134</sup> However, what is interesting about this ‘dark turn’ of fairytale adaptations is that it can be seen as a return to the origins. As shown in the introduction, both the collectors of fairytales and the first adaptations by Disney sanitized the tales to some extent. The ‘reverse-sanitization’ that we see happening now is not a literal return to the source material, but in terms of themes and ‘feeling’ seems to come close to what the ‘original’ stories comprised.

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<sup>133</sup> Warner (2014): 173.

<sup>134</sup> Davis (2006): 218-219.



## Gender

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Analyzing these changes and similarities through gender narratology does not only show us the characters as carriers of a specific gender ideology, but also makes the different narrative techniques used to form these characters clear.<sup>135</sup>

In gender narratology, a recurrent trend is to categorize narrative form on the basis of gender. The opposition between male and female plots can be found in many sources. Peter Brooks for example places the male plot driven by ambition opposite to the female plot of endurance: “a waiting (and suffering) until the woman’s desire can be a permitted response to the expression of male desire.”<sup>136</sup> In *Vertelduivels* by Herman and Vervaeck a similar opposition of traditional plot definitions is found between the male plot based on dominance and male desire, and the female plot centered around the narration itself.<sup>137</sup> In her review of feminist narratology, Ruth Page also talks about the juxtaposition of the male action-centered, teleologically focused plot and the female non-linear plot structured around multiple endpoints.<sup>138</sup> It is important to note that this opposition between categories of plot can be helpful to analyze and illustrate the changes that have taken place within a specific genre, but it also needs to be critically questioned. Especially the value judgment that is often connected to these categories, that female plots exhibit weak narrativity, is problematic since the degree of narrativity has no connection to gender.<sup>139</sup>

Looking at the actantial models of the fairy tale adaptations, the traditional animations fall into the category of a female plot of endurance. The protagonists are passive and endure their hardship until the prince comes to save them. The plots of the new animations also have some female characteristics. Both protagonists endure hardship before the movie and both movies work towards multiple endpoints. However, during the movie both protagonists are active and both plots are action-centered. The live-action adaptations can be categorized as male plots: the protagonists do have to endure hardship, but the plot is very teleologically focused and ends in one strong end-point in which the princess has become dominant.

Joseph Campbell in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* poses a model of the journey of the archetypal hero. In his book, he states:

Typically, the hero of the fairy tale achieves a domestic, microcosmic triumph, and the hero of myth a world-historical, macrocosmic triumph. Whereas the former—the youngest or despised

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<sup>135</sup> Herman & Vervaeck (2005): 140.

<sup>136</sup> Brooks, Peter. (1984) *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*. Oxford: Clarendon Press: 39, 330.

<sup>137</sup> Herman & Vervaeck (2005): 144.

<sup>138</sup> Page, Ruth. (2003) ‘Feminist narratology? Literary and linguistic perspective on gender and narrativity’, in: *Language and Literature*, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 43-56: 45.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibidem*: 51.

child who becomes the master of extraordinary powers—prevails over his personal oppressors, the latter brings back from his adventure the means for the regeneration of his society as a whole.<sup>140</sup>

Looking at the adaptations analyzed, it is interesting to note that the traditional adaptations and *Tangled* thus fall into the category of fairy tales, but the live-action adaptations and *Frozen* can be seen as myths, since in these adaptations the kingdoms are saved when a good queen comes to power. These adaptations thus not only feature more male plots, but these plots also have a bigger scope.

Campbell's use of the word 'hero' seems to imply that only male characters can play this part. However, Campbell defines a hero as "the man or woman who has been able to battle past his personal and local historical limitations to the generally valid, normally human forms."<sup>141</sup> Thus, all the princesses could be seen as heroes in their own stories. However, when looking at the definition of the quest Campbell's hero undertakes, which makes him the hero, this becomes problematic again, since the traditional princesses did not undertake any quest to begin with. Campbell describes the quest as the hero answering a call to adventure to enter a strange world, facing trials, and obtaining a gift. The hero then decides whether to return to the ordinary world with this gift and if he does, uses this gift to improve the world.<sup>142</sup> The hero thus becomes a character who acts and defines. While the new animation and live-action heroines to varying degrees do act, the traditional princesses do not and thus do not undertake a quest that would make them a hero. Both the traditional Snow White and Aurora do receive a call to adventure to some degree: Snow White is urged to flee by the huntsman and enters the unknown forest where she meets the dwarves and the animals, and Aurora is forced to leave the castle as a baby because of Maleficent's curse. Both princesses also return to their ordinary, royal environment in the end, but apart from meeting their prince they do not act, face trials, or receive a gift with which they can improve the world. It seems that the princes on the other hand to face trials; we learn that the Prince searched far and wide for Snow White and we see Philip fighting of a dragon to get to Aurora. Their reward, with which they return, is the princess.

In the newer adaptations, the princesses do undertake 'heroic' quests. Rapunzel, Anna, and the live-action Snow White all answer a call to adventure and enter a world which for them is unknown. They face trials, overcome them, and return the world to the way it should be using the knowledge and confidence gained along the way. *Maleficent* is more complex, since in this adaptation the princess is not the main protagonist. Maleficent, the main

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<sup>140</sup> Campbell, Joseph. (1949) *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: 37.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibidem*: 19.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibidem*: 30.

protagonist, does undertake a quest in some ways but deviates from Campbell's model. Instead of entering a strange world she creates one herself and the trials she faces are mostly internal.

Using the idea of male and female plots as a focus, the change fairy tale adaptations made becomes clear; not only have the plots become more masculine, they also deal with 'larger' issues. However, the case of *Tangled* proves that there is no inherent connection between these two. *Tangled* gives us a more masculine plot, while keeping the setting of the conflicts domestic. Looking at Campbell's definition of a hero's quest, it becomes clear that while the traditional princesses could not be seen as the hero in their own stories, the new adaptations do show us 'heroic' princesses. However, their 'strange world' is mostly the regular world which is dangerous to them, because of their sheltered upbringing. Thus, their quest is partially a quest to learn how to deal with the outside world. What is also interesting to note is that in three of the new adaptations, this quest gives the princess the confidence and knowledge to restore their kingdom to its 'natural' state. Only *Maleficent* deviates from this, showing us a villain who needs to learn certain things before she can restore the kingdom by stepping down as queen.

In the traditional animation adaptations, we see a fairly traditional gender ideology when it comes to authority. The princesses have no self-authorization and in interactions they mostly receive authority based on their beauty, innocent nature and knowledge of house-keeping. The queens do have self-authorization and receive authority through power and intellect but are categorized as evil. The dichotomy between gentle passive women and active wicked women that Jack Zipes noticed in the *The Blue Fairy Book* is thus still very much present in the traditional adaptations.<sup>143</sup> Furthermore, no possibility for change is presented in these adaptations. The balance of authority does not change and is thus presented as an established fact. Furthermore, the princesses are implied to marry before becoming queen, thus never becoming ruling monarchs.

In the new animation and live-action adaptations, we see this ideology shifting. Princesses are stronger in their self-authorization and it is shown that it is possible for queens to be less authoritative and good. It is interesting to note that becoming a queen still seems to be tied to evil and that redemption is thus necessary for a queen to be powerful, authoritative and good. We see this in *Frozen* with Elsa partially becoming an antagonist some time after she is crowned, and in *Maleficent*, in which the seizing of dominion is tied in with becoming

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<sup>143</sup> Zipes (1986): 197.

evil. Maleficent even dethrones herself when she becomes good again. We also see princesses being crowned queen without being married, but this only takes place once the ideological validity of the princess has been established throughout the whole narrative. Thus, becoming a female ruling monarch is only possible when the character has proven her goodness without fail.

In the interactions, a shift has also taken place. Princesses in the new animations mostly receive authority based on their brightness and the balance of authority is not in stasis. It is shown that it is possible to change the balance. However, the live-action adaptations, princesses mostly receive authority based on their ideological validity and no real change in the balance takes place. Thus, in terms of gender ideology the live-action adaptations are closer to the traditional adaptations.

The role and authority of the male leads in the movie has also clearly shifted. Whereas in the traditional adaptations, action was reserved for the males or the evil females, in the new animations and the live-actions adaptations there is a balance of action between the male and the female lead. However, it is worth noting that evil female characters still are more active and require less help than female protagonists. As shown, the princesses often need a guide to assist them on their journey. However, it would be too simplistic to say that the fact that men are needed as a guide in the outside-world is only connected to gender, since in the adaptations in which this is the case, the closed-off upbringing of the princess is part of the narrative.

## Conclusion

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In this thesis, I have attempted to answer the question: How are the princess and queen stereotypes changing in contemporary movie adaptations of fairy tales? My hypotheses was that, while on the surface princesses are more active and queens' persona's more elaborated, it still stands that princesses are passive and authority is reserved for the evil female characters.

While it turns out both stereotypes have experienced some changes, my hypotheses partially stands. Princesses have become more active, less focused on their own gain, pursue more goals than just finding love, and do not need a man to save them anymore but achieve their goals themselves. In the live-action adaptations, it is even made a specific point that the prince fails to save them. Princesses do however still need a lot of help, mostly from their love-interest, and receive most of their authority through the fact that they are good-natured and pure-hearted. In the live-action adaptations, the personalities of the princesses even seem

to have become more one-dimensional, with the princesses being portrayed as completely good and pure characters without flaws.

Queens on the other hand have become more complex characters. Their motivations are expanded upon and they are not portrayed as purely evil characters anymore. They are also portrayed as less selfish, having more receivers in the actantial models proposed for their narratives. However, they are still mostly motivated by their negative emotions and are also still clearly stronger both in self-authorization and authority received through interaction, although the princesses have become stronger in these aspects.

In terms of gender narratology, the new adaptations feature both more male plots and a more heroic protagonist. However, while the new animation adaptations demonstrated some clear changes in the gender ideology it presents, the live-action adaptations seem to partially return to a more traditional gender ideology. These adaptations clearly are conscious of the gender-aspect by not letting the prince save the princess and have the princess be crowned at the end, but in terms of authority they give a very traditional and one-dimensional image of the princess. Furthermore, in the live-action adaptations change in the balance of authority is not possible. Thus, it becomes clear that while the live-action adaptations clearly play with the conventions and stereotypes of the genre and show us a more 'dark' and adult take on the fairy tales, they have become fairly 'flat' in their rendition of authority. The live-action adaptations clearly aim to be more rugged and adult adaptations, but in pursuing this goal lose some depth and complexity the new animation adaptations, which are more aimed at children, managed to portray.

As stated in the introduction, fairy tales and its stereotypes need to transform in order to fit new audiences or a new medium and thus need transformation for survival. However, it is interesting to note that part of this transformation has partially become the mocking of the genre and its stereotypes. Apparently, to be relevant for the current society, the genre needs to make fun of its own conventions in order to appeal. It will be interesting to see how the genre will develop itself in coming years, since there seems to be a paradox: mocking of the genre is needed to appeal to the current audience, but the repetition of certain conventions is also needed to ensure the audience's understanding of this subversion.

In this research, I have used Lanser's concept of discursive authority in combination with Greimas' actantial model. This has enabled me to analyze and compare my cases systematically, helping me grasp and compare my cases. While the use of this framework has led me to some new insights, at some points it also constrained me. Lanser's concept of

discursive authority gave me a good starting point, but the three aspects she defines turned out to be too restrictive in combination with my cases. Because of this, I added two aspects, but in some cases some interactions between characters were still difficult to define. While in her definition Lanser does state that within her definition of discursive authority, authority can also be claimed by a character, Lanser's definition seems to be more fitting for her own case of female authors. For further analysis of authority for fictional characters, another concept of authority that accounts for possible fictional sources of authority, such as magic powers, could strengthen the analysis.

Greimas' actantial model enabled me to systematically and clearly analyze the plots of my cases, some of which were very intricate. What is also important to note is that, while this model enables systematic analysis, it is also based in interpretation. All the models posed in this research are my own interpretations of the cases and while I tried to substantiate these interpretative choices, their subjective basis cannot be denied.

By posing actantial models for my cases, I felt that some aspects of the narrative were easily glossed over. Good examples of this are the traditional princesses. By looking at these actantial models alone, the fact that they are completely passive in their narrative does not become clear. Furthermore, the developments some characters go through in the narrative do not become clear in this model, while these developments can be pivotal for the production of authority. Thus, while on the one hand an actantial analysis does offer a very systematic approach, it carries within itself the risk to become too subjective and simplistic.

My combination of theories has functioned as a 'searchlight', illuminating certain aspects of my cases and guiding my research. Looking back on my research, though at some points my theoretical framework did not function perfectly, it did function the way it needed to and more importantly, it helped me answer my research question and challenge my hypothesis. However, it also left other aspects unexposed, which could be focal points for further research.

One aspect this theoretical framework has left unexposed is the visual aspect. All my cases are visual objects and while the composition of the movies has been discussed a little, through this theoretical framework the main focus was on the narratives presented. The aspect of authority is thus mainly discussed in terms of actions and interactions of the characters. In further research, authority could for example be analyzed in terms of character design or body language.

Another aspect that could be more elaborated in further research is the gender aspect. While gender narratology was included in the theoretical framework by using Lanser's

concept of discursive authority, this concept did not emphasize gender. In my final analysis I included some gender analysis but for further research, this aspect could be more deeply rooted in the theoretical framework to illuminate this aspect more. Furthermore, looking at the way princes and kings are portrayed in terms of authority could give interesting comparative data for this research.

My choice of case studies is another aspect that could be an interesting motive for further research. While Disney is very prominent in the field of fairy tale adaptations, other companies are also adapting fairy tales in different ways. In this research, I have included one case from another company (*Snow White and the Huntsman* from *Universal Pictures*), but in further research, more cases from other companies could be included, or the difference between Disney adaptations and adaptations by other companies could be looked into.

An aspect that unfortunately due to time constraints could not be included in this research is the princess and queen stereotype outside fairy tale adaptations. For further research, looking into the stereotype of the kidnapped princess in videogames or the portrayal of princesses in non-fairy tale movies could be interesting.

With Disney planning on making more live-action adaptations of their own animation adaptations and the fairy tale series *Once Upon a Time* being renewed for a sixth season, we clearly have not seen the end of the retelling of fairy tales. With each of these adaptations, producers have the opportunity to play with the conventions of the genre and change the traditional gender ideology that the traditional adaptations set up within this genre. However, as we have seen, playing with these conventions does not necessarily mean that the gender ideology is changed. It seems that especially products catered for adults still have to take some steps in portraying multi-dimensional female characters with authority. However, in the division of new animation adaptations, a lot of positive steps have already been taken. It will be interesting to see how, in the coming years, production companies will deal with the paradox of subverting and maintaining a genre, while also paying attention to the changing gender ideology. Whatever will happen in the field, and whether or not the princess and queen stereotype will change or disappear, one thing can be said in this field with certainty: the characters will always live happily ever after.

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## Appendix 1

Name	Princess by birth	Love-interest	Married/engaged in primary narrative	Married/engaged in sequel	Main antagonist
Snow White	Yes	The Prince (royal)	Implied	-	The Evil Queen
Cinderella	No	Prince Charming (royal)	Married	-	Lady Tremaine
Aurora	Yes	Prince Philip (royal)	Engaged	-	Maleficent
Ariel	Yes	Prince Eric (royal)	Married	-	Ursula
Belle	No	The Beast (royal)	Implied	-	Gaston
Jasmine	Yes	Aladdin	Engaged	Married	Jafar
Pocahontas	Yes	John Smith	-	-	Governor Ratcliffe
Mulan	No	Li Shang	-	Married	Shan Yu
Tiana	No	Prince Naveen (royal)	Married	-	Dr. Facilier
Rapunzel	Yes	Flynn Rider	Engaged	Married	Mother Gothel
Merida	Yes	-	-	-	Mor'du