FAIRY-TALE FILMS BEYOND DISNEY

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

EDITED BY JACK ZIPES, PAULINE GREENHILL, AND KENDRA MAGNUS-JOHNSTON

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The fairy tale has become one of the dominant cultural forms and genres internationally, thanks in large part to its many manifestations on screen. Yet the history and relevance of the fairy-tale film have largely been neglected. In this follow-up to Jack Zipes's award-winning book *The Enchanted Screen* (2011), *Fairy-Tale Films Beyond Disney* offers the first book-length multinational, multidisciplinary exploration of fairy-tale cinema. Bringing together twenty-three of the world's top fairy-tale scholars to analyze the enormous scope of these films, Zipes and colleagues Pauline Greenhill and Kendra Magnus-Johnston present perspectives on film from every part of the globe, from Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away*, to Jan Švankmajer's *Alice*, to the transnational adaptations of *1001 Nights* and Hans Christian Andersen.

Contributors explore filmic traditions in each area not only from their different cultural backgrounds, but from a range of academic fields, including criminal justice studies, education, film studies, folkloristics, gender studies, and literary studies. *Fairy-Tale Films Beyond Disney* offers readers an opportunity to explore the intersections, disparities, historical and national contexts of its subject, and to further appreciate what has become an undeniably global phenomenon.

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International Perspectives

Edited by Jack Zipes, Pauline Greenhill, and Kendra Magnus-Johnston

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FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In 2011, after I had finished writing *The Enchanted Screen: The Unknown History of Fairy-Tale Films*, I realized just how much I still did not know about the cinematic adaptation of folktales and fairy tales worldwide, and how much I had not covered in that book. Since I had spent five years working on *The Enchanted Screen*, I had also become fully aware that I would not be able to write a second, more comprehensive, book on the filmic adaptation of folktales and fairy tales by myself. Fortunately, soon after the completion of *The Enchanted Screen* I was invited by Pauline Greenhill to join a research group based at the University of Winnipeg. Indeed, her invitation was a stroke of good luck because I quickly recognized that Pauline, who had recently co-edited *Fairy Tale Films: Visions of Ambiguity* (Greenhill and Matrix 2010), was a dynamo and had gathered together a number of talented scholars of folktales and fairy tales, one of whom was Kendra Magnus-Johnston. After three days of presentations of projects and discussions at the first Winnipeg meeting, I knew I had to act and be opportunistic, not unlike the troubled and fortunate protagonists of fairy tales themselves. I asked Pauline and Kendra if they might join me and develop a second book dealing with fairy-tale films that would cover international developments and focus on cinematic adaptations of folktales and fairy tales in the latter part of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. Their welcome response and effective work have led to the production of the present book.

Although there has been an awakening among scholars in the fields of folklore, fairy-tale studies, and cinema studies, who have produced numerous significant essays and a few books about fairy-tale films, this development is still limited to a small group of critics.[1] The relative lack of attention to fairy-tale films is somewhat stunning, given the fact that the production of both Hollywood fairy-tale films, which tend to be global blockbusters, and the wealth of provocative, mainly independent fairy-tale films, have created what I call a cultural tsunami. What is even more astounding is that film critics seem to be puzzled by the attention filmmakers, producers, studios, and TV networks have been paying to fairy tales and folktales when these stories have provided the stuff of which *all* films are made from the 1890s to the present, beginning with the work of Georges Méliès.

I realize that this claim may seem a gross exaggeration; however, the history of folktales and fairy tales demonstrates the degree to which such narratives have pervaded cultural fields including theater, opera, radio plays, painting, vaudeville, musicals, comics, novels, and so on. Indeed, this cultural saturation demands that the motifs, themes, and structures of folktales and fairy tales must be studied if one wants to grasp the complex implications of the works produced in these respective fields. Yet, almost all the books that deal with the history of film and cinematic adaptation of literary works fail to cover or even mention the adaptation and use of folktales and fairy tales. The

fairy-tale film seems to be a neglected or abused stepchild, especially in those cultural fields where one would expect better treatment.

In Simone Murray's recent pioneer study *The Adaptation Industry: The Cultural Economy of Contemporary Literary Adaptation* (2012), there is not one word about the adaptation of literary fairy tales or even about the prolific Disney adaptation industry. Murray states:

> *The Adaptation Industry* is designed to showcase a broadly sociological approach to adaptation, foregrounding those issues usually pushed to the margins of adaptation studies work: the industrial structures, interdependent networks of agents, commercial contexts, and legal and policy regimes within which adaptations come to be. This economy-passing adaptation industry both constrains and—crucially—*enables* adaptations in little-analysed ways. In particular, this study posits cultural and commercial concerns not as mutually antithetical or self-cancelling but as complexly interrelated.
>
> (2012, 6)

This is all well and good, and Murray's book lays the groundwork for comprehensive sociological studies of the adaptation of literary works for the cinema. And yet, like other film historians and scholars, she neglects to include and analyze the adaptation of folktales and fairy tales. One would expect at least some remarks about the Disney industry and its socio-economic role in the development of literary adaptation not only in the United States, but in the world. Not a word. One would expect some mention of interrelated studies of fairy-tale films produced by folklorists and literary critics of fairy tales. Not a word.

Though our present book does not cover all the aspects of adaptation that Murray believes need to be addressed in her sociological approach, the writers speak to many facets she mentions and more. In keeping with what Cristina Bacchilega calls "the fairy-tale web" in her highly significant book, *Fairy Tales Transformed? Twenty-First-Century Adaptations and the Politics of Wonder* (2013), our contributors write about the development of fairy-tale films on six continents and discuss the interrelationships between local and global industries and the unique production of fairy-tale films in many different countries. While the essays in this collection examine and analyze films that have sought to transcend Disney's monopolistic network to produce highly experimental and innovative fairy-tale films, at the same time, we acknowledge the ongoing cultural legacies of Disney fairy-tale films as well as the potential that exists beyond them. As a result, I hope that this collaborative book will add to the growing interdisciplinary study of fairy-tale films and prompt more scholars to take fairy tales more seriously than they have in the past.

We all thank the contributors for their perseverance, and the editorial staff at Routledge, especially Erica Wetter, Simon Jacobs, and Emily How for their ongoing support. We gratefully acknowledge funding for the project, Fairy-Tale Films: Exploring Ethnographic Perspectives, from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada [SSHRC] 2011–2015, and for Fairy-Tale Cultures and Media Today, 2014–2018, also from SSHRC, as well as the University of Winnipeg Research Office for a grant. We thank Victoria Brown for copyediting, and Kristy Stewart for doing the index. Once again, I want personally to thank the faerie powers who brought me together with Pauline and Kendra and provided us with the indefatigable Lauren Bosc, who has added a magic touch to our efforts.

Jack Zipes
Minneapolis, January 2015

Note

1 Noteworthy works include Koven (2008); Greenhill and Matrix (2010); Cavallaro (2011); Whitley (2012); Moen (2013); Bacchilega (2013); Greenhill and Rudy (2014); and Short (2014).

PREFACE

Traveling Beyond Disney

Kendra Magnus-Johnston, Pauline Greenhill, and Lauren Bosc

Fairy-Tale Films Beyond Disney: International Perspectives was conceived as a continuation of the conversation developed in Jack Zipes's *The Enchanted Screen* (2011), a work that grapples with the socio-historical development of fairy-tale films with attention devoted mainly—but by no means exclusively—to European and North American cinema and television. While Zipes made considerable efforts to include fairy-tale films from Asia, South America, and Africa, his work—though quite comprehensive in its own right—was not as inclusive as he wished. Thus, the present collection seeks to go not only beyond Disney but also beyond *The Enchanted Screen* itself. The editors wanted to fill some of its gaps, but this project also offered us an opportunity to enrich Zipes's initial assertions, as well as giving international experts a chance to join us in propelling scholarly interest in fairy-tale adaptations beyond Disney. Zipes's own opening "Tsunami" chapter considers several films that have appeared since *The Enchanted Screen*, and underlines again his contention that independent films from outside the Hollywood machine, while by no means uniformly successful or critically and politically cogent, offer significant alternatives to the same old hackneyed clichés.

Predictably, turning to the countless cinematic developments outside Zipes's book has revealed more fissures to explore than it has sealed. Indeed, most contributors found our suggested chapter limit of 8000 words difficult or impossible; many reflected upon research yet to be conducted; and some even commented that they had enough material for a book-length study. This reaction is, of course, good news. We eagerly anticipate much more research and writing on fairy-tale films for years to come. In the meantime, however, we are pleased to offer a collection that provides, at the very least, concerted energy on fairy-tale adaptations in film the world over. Of the twenty chapters, only four focus on majority English-speaking countries. Less than half of the contributors are based at US universities, with the rest residing in Australia, Canada, India, Norway, Poland, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. In addition to insights gathered from different cultural backgrounds, the authors of this collection bring perspectives from criminal justice studies, education, film studies, folkloristics, gender studies, and literary studies, among others.

We judiciously employ as an organizing principle the concept of national cinemas, explicitly in the lower case, in the critical sense as aligned with film theorist, JungBong Choi, who differentiates the term from its potentially nebulous, politically suspect abstraction, "National Cinema," which speaks of nationalisms as "a timeless, space-defying totality" (2011, 177). Instead, the national cinemas referred to here embrace the innate pluralities of production, distribution, reception, and criticism that frame a transnational industry. While nations and nationalisms remain structures of

our current world, cinema does not express uniform demarcations of difference that paint a clear mythology about a given nation, nor is outlining national mythologies our intended purpose here. An awareness of geopolitical conditions, however, aids in contextualizing the trajectories from which films are created.[1] The choice to consider fairy-tale film mainly by nation is also a practical one; doing so safeguards from an overwhelming inundation or in Zipes's approximation, a "tsunami" of filmic texts from which to sift meaning. We invite readers to consider the influx of fairy-tale films as pooled by individual contributors and to embrace the reprisals, intersections, and disparities between the films themselves, appreciating the historical moment and national context from which they emerged, and reading across the chapters to appreciate what has become an undeniably global phenomenon.

Our guiding definitions for this volume are drawn from those we prepared for International Fairy-Tale Filmography (IFTF), an online archive launched at the University of Winnipeg in 2014 (Zipes, Greenhill, and Magnus-Johnston n.d.). The fairy-tale films from *The Enchanted Screen*, this volume, and much more, have been incorporated into the IFTF, and we strongly encourage readers to consult it frequently. Fairy-tale films, animated and live-action, short and feature-length, theatrically released, made for television, and direct-to-video, draw on the characters, titles, images, plots, and motifs of wonder tales. Fairy tales can be oral (told by people in different geographical locations and at various historical times up to the present) and/or literary (written by known authors). Fairy tales concern the fantastic, the magical, the dark, the dreamy, the wishful, and the wonderful.

To be clear, the IFTF—like *Fairy-Tale Films Beyond Disney*—is somewhat flexible in its borders. Many contributors use television programming to delineate the trans-mediated climate from which numerous films are produced, such as Napier's examination of Japanese fairy-tale films that includes intermedial franchises like *Sailor Moon* (1992–1997) and *Revolutionary Girl Utena* (1997) which encompass multiple modalities ranging from manga to television to feature films. Lee's chapter on Korean fairy-tale cinema also discusses the diversity of adaptations and uses two made-for-television films to demonstrate variations in adaptations of the "Gumiho" figure from Korean oral tradition. Lee's and Napier's inclusion of television facilitates their making observations about broader trends in fairy-tale adaptation.

Historically, scholars of folklore understood fairy tales as traditional narratives of wonder and magic transmitted not only orally, but also informally, locally, and face-to-face within communities and social groups. As discussed by William Bascom (1965), folklorists distinguish myths and legends from folktales (which include fairy tales) not by their forms but by the *attitudes* of the community toward them. Myths are "both sacred and true . . . core narratives in larger ideological systems. Concerned with ultimate realities, they are often set outside of historical time . . . and frequently concern the actions of divine or semi-divine characters" (Oring 1986, 124). Legends "focus on a single episode . . . which is presented as miraculous, uncanny, bizarre, or sometimes embarrassing. The narration of a legend is, in a sense, the negotiation of the truth of these episodes." This genre, "set in historical time in the world as we know it today . . . often makes reference to real people and places" (125). Folktales, in contrast, "are related and received as fiction or fantasy [and] appear in a variety of forms" (126), one of which is the fairy tale. Most folklorists understand fairy tales as *Märchen*, the wonder tales or "tales of magic" numbered 300–749 in the Aarne-Thompson-Uther classification of international folktales (Uther 2004, vol 1, 174–396). These distinctions, as played out in this collection, have not been employed to limit what contributors could deem relevant to their discussion, but offered instead as principles for judicious consideration and sometimes outright rejection.

We welcomed international scholars to share their interests and create a dialogic space to bring about a novel interdisciplinary conversation; though often speaking to similar issues, there are clear differences in scholarly attentions and even definitional foundations. Wells, for example, offers an

essay on fairy-tale films from the United Kingdom, cognizant of the collapse between fairy tales and other narratives that include fairies, and discusses how stories about fairies can be included in his chapter's rubric. In contrast, Napier prefers the term wonder tale because of its (at least superficially) greater accuracy in that many so-called fairy tales actually have no fairy characters in them. In further contrast, Li developed her focus to include an interest in "folktale film," and in doing so, details the shift from legend (specifically, Mulan narratives) *to* fairy tale archetype in Chinese cinema. Such variation speaks to the deliberate ambiguity of our project's parameters and our willingness to indulge in it; the inclusion of such a rich assortment of cinematic adaptations and theoretical underpinnings acknowledges the diversity of scholarly approaches to the subject of fairy-tale film, as well as the unique conditions of production from which films emerge.

Literary fairy tales also concern wonderful and magical events and times but are "written by an individual, usually identifiable author . . . [may] draw upon preexisting published material for some or all of their characters and plot . . . [but] put them together in a new way . . . [and] exist in only one version, fixed in print" (Harries 2008, 579). Thus, fairy tales with known authors like Hans Christian Andersen, Lewis Carroll, Edith (Bland) Nesbit, Carlo Collodi, or Mary Louisa (Stewart) Molesworth derive primarily from an individual writer's creativity. But the actual differences are not always that clear. Oral fairy tales can be found in written forms (such as the works of the Grimm brothers), and most North Americans now encounter all kinds of fairy tales mainly in books—but also in film, television, music, video games, online, and in countless other mediated forms.

Some fairy tales come in both traditional and literary forms. Andersen's "The Princess and the Pea" is based on a traditional folktale type called "The Princess on the Pea" (ATU 704). And the two forms are rarely discrete in the popular imagination; Andersen's "The Little Mermaid" is generally seen as the same kind of story as the traditional "Little Red Riding Hood" (ATU 333). Yet there can be distinguishing characteristics beyond their origins and transmission. Traditional wonder tales usually end happily, while literary tales often do not. Most North Americans expect the main protagonists of all fairy tales to "live happily ever after." But in the tales of Andersen and Oscar Wilde, for example, the conclusion can be sad or depressing. Indeed, in contrast to the Disney film's happy ending, the Andersen version of "The Little Mermaid" concludes with the title character being transformed into sea foam when she fails to marry the prince.

Zipes defines a fairy-tale film as "any kind of cinematic representation recorded on film, on videotape, or in digital form that employs motifs, characters, and plots generally found in the oral and literary genre of the fairy tale, to re-create a known tale or to create and realize cinematically an original screenplay with recognizable features of a fairy tale" (2011, 9). Fairy-tale films do not simply repeat the content of an oral/traditional or literary original; they are adaptations that create new versions in a significant intertextual relationship in which each form informs the other. Our interest in fairy-tale film is not to delineate any alleged origins or trace some perceived progression/regression of narrative adaptations; we are, however, interested in what Linda Hutcheon calls adaptation: "repetition without replication" (2006, 7). The reiteration, then, need not be absolutely faithful to the original; many fairy-tale films transgressively break rules North Americans may associate with the genre.

This process is by no means new, as Jessica Tiffin suggests: "any fairy tale—classic or modern—positions itself intertextually within a complete discourse of fairy tale as cultural artifact, so that any tale becomes a necessary dialogue between its own specific instance and the (unreal) textual expectations of fairy tales in general" (2009, 23). Though his schema is not about film, we find Kevin Paul Smith's description of relations between literature and fairy tale useful. Based on Gérard Genette's (1997a) idea of intertexts, Smith posits eight possible ways for fairy tales to work in literature: authorized (explicit in the title); writerly (implicit in the title); incorporation (explicit in the

text); allusion (implicit in the text); re-vision (giving an old tale a new spin); fabulation (creating a new tale); metafiction (discussing fairy tales); and architextual/chronotopic (in a fairy-tale setting/environment) (2007, 10). Contributors were therefore encouraged to include a wide variety of fairy tales—from original fairy-tale fabulations like L. Frank Baum's *Wizard of Oz* or J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*, to older tales popularized in European literary tradition, to those from the many non-European oral and written traditions of other continents; but each does so with conscious purpose. Even the definition of fairy-tale author is pressed. Widening her scope from writers only, Magnus-Johnston includes filmmakers like Georges Méliès and Walt Disney as their present-day incarnation. The fairy tales and even the authors considered in the collection are therefore dependent on the contributors' discretion.

Working from these basic notions from the outset, we felt that the best way to ensure that we could produce an exciting and engaging book was to encourage each contributor to bring her/his own background and knowledge. Our work, then, is partial in Donna Haraway's (1988) double sense; the story it tells is necessarily incomplete but reflects the perspectives and enthusiasms of its many authors. In our requests for chapters, we left contributors to their own devices in adjusting the focus of their analytical lens and defining the limits of their inquiry. Apart from the initial chapters that review the international prevalence of cinematic fairy-tales, authorship, and transnational adaptations of "One Thousand and One Nights," the majority of *Fairy-Tale Films Beyond Disney* focuses on cinematic production by country, and how authors interrogate, broaden, or narrow this scope is their own choice.

Thus, for example, as already mentioned, while some chapters focus exclusively on cinematic and feature-length productions, others extend their scope to look at televised fairy-tale adaptations, a choice that depends not only on the author's interests, but also on the particularities of the area they address. The resulting breadth of some chapters, in contrast with the resolute focus of others, provides a complementary balance. It also honors notions regarding nationalism and what constitutes national cinemas in a current context, one that is punctuated by transnational, multinational (often corporate) partnerships. Divergence, of course, is also a realistic outcome of compiling a variety of voices speaking from contexts as varied and particular as the national locations and interdisciplinary perspectives that demarcate the chapters.

A rich diversity of academic concerns and proclivities are reflected throughout the collection. Rather than constrain her discussion to cinematic versions of traditional folktales collected in India, Naithani frames her consideration of Indian films around the fairy-tale elements in Bollywood cinema; her chapter meditates on the mélange or "masala" of commercial cinema. Wells turns his attention to animated fairy-tale films along with other children's films, primarily from England. Given Wells's international renown as an expert in animation studies and Naithani's specialization as a folklorist, their foci provide precise and measured contributions. By no means exhaustive in their coverage of *all* cinematic instances of fairy tales, they offer engaging and pertinent genealogies. Further, research interests of the contributors are also reflected in, for example, Duggan's consideration of satire and queer filmmaking; Balina and Beumers's, Lee's, and Li's of gender issues; and Greenhill and Kohm's of cultural criminology.

In addition to avoiding hamstringing our contributors, giving them considerable leeway has also enabled contributors to be attentive to distinctive cross-cultural but also specifically local and regional manifestations. For example, while the Christmas season has been significant for fairy-tale films and television in North America, the chapter on Poland by Deszcz-Tryhubczak and Oziewicz and the one on Scandinavia by Oxfeldt reveal localized inflections, such as animals being endowed with human speech in Poland or the televised "Christmas calendar" specials in Finland, Sweden, and Norway. Other threads include the emergence in Italian cinema, as outlined by Bacchilega, of the character of Pinocchio, who reappears in Russian film, as observed in the Balina and Beumers chapter, via Tolstoi's character Buratino.

Fairy tales and fairy-tale films alike are paradoxically simultaneously culture-specific and transcultural, a characteristic readily observable in the earlier chapters, from Zipes's extensive catalog of adaptations that form his fairy-tale tsunami to Samatar's fascinating international expedition through "One Thousand and One Nights." Magnus-Johnston makes similar observations in the appropriation of fairy-tale authors in film; alongside their creative works, these individuals are reinvented as (American) global citizens to be consumed by a present-day viewing public. Accordingly, many similar concerns emerge even in otherwise distant and disparate locations. Contributors wrestle with issues that are common to fairy-tale studies in general, including reception-oriented interrogations regarding the value of fairy-tale films and television for child and adult viewers (e.g. Balina and Beumers; Bullen and Sawers; Li); whether or not they can be conceived as serious interventions in cultural, social, and political discourses (e.g. Samatar and Hubner); and ruminations on a Disney-inflected cultural climate—ranging from harmless to hazardous (Bacchilega, Balina and Beumers, Duggan, Hubner, Zipes) but also of other auteurs (e.g. Napier on Hayao Miyazaki in Japan; Duggan on France's Catherine Breillat; Samatar and Zipes "German" on Lotte Reiniger; Hames on the Czech Jan Švankmajer; and Zipes "American" on Tim Burton). Zipes's "Tsunami" and "American" chapters, not surprisingly, consider Disney influence, acknowledging that, particularly with *Maleficent* (2014), the corporation may be moving beyond a simplistic compliance with patriarchal norms, even if their capitalist/commercial focus remains unabated.

Fairy-taleness and the relation of film to fairy tale is, not surprisingly, also a concern for many contributors. Zipes's "Tsunami" chapter relates fairy tales to Roland Barthes's idea of myth but also Disney's renditions of fairy tales to Augustin-Eugène Scribe's nineteenth-century "well-made play" structure. Indeed, Balina and Beumers, Deszcz-Tryhubczak and Oziewicz, Hames, and Oxfeldt consider the theme of fairy tales in relation to legend and mythology generally; Li's chapter on fairy-tale films in the Republic of China considers at length the Mulan legend, which she sees as having been rendered fairy-tale-like in part because of its association with the Disney film. Deszcz-Tryhubczak and Oziewicz note that Polish fairy-tale cinema usually either employs international fairy tales from oral tradition or develops narratives that are original to the film, rather than using literary fairy tales. Naithani's discussion of Bollywood films opens the question of whether or not fairy tale can be helpfully understood as a genre of cinema and television. Magnus-Johnston links the shifting representations of fairy-tale authors as a means to showcase the technological innovations of cinema and a frequent site for filmmakers to reflect on their own responsibilities as fairy-tale storytellers. And in his chapter on German fairy-tale cinema, Zipes describes how the Grimm brothers' brilliant legacy of collecting and disseminating oral tradition has paradoxically stymied fairy-tale film production in Germany. He addresses the complex relations of the Grimm collections to German political developments as well as to German fairy-tale films.

The dynamics of colonial appropriation and postcolonial reflexivity are central concerns to those discussing locations with sizable Indigenous populations. Indeed, the relationships between fairy tales, fairy-tale cinema, Indigenous traditions, and settler colonizers can be expressively traced in many national cinemas. The chapters on Africa, Australia, Canada, and Latin America explicitly note the ways in which Indigenous traditions, regardless of their place and significance in their source cultures, have been presumed by White European and North American cultures to be unproblematically homologous to fairy tales; that they are imagined (unlike otherwise similar types of texts like Christian dogma for example) to be entirely fictional.

While the conflation of Indigenous lore with fairy-tale film is explicitly avoided throughout *Fairy-Tale Films Beyond Disney*, the interrogation of racist and colonialist ideologies in postcolonial contexts shapes the treatment of fairy-tale films for many contributors. Bullen and Sawers, for example, note that the ambivalence about homeland, home, and national identity in post-1970s Australian cinema is a result of colonial relationships. Though they decline to detail cinematic

works based on Indigenous traditions, their coverage of mainly original Australian fairy-tale films evidences the birth of unique fairy tales shaped by the country's colonial history. Greenhill and Kohm note a few significant works based on Indigenous traditions because of their importance to Canadian cinema and television, but their chapter, for the most part, draws attention to the paradoxes inherent in Canadian cinema—the otherworldly places invoked that are simultaneously in Canada and marvelously elsewhere.

By contrast, Tiffin's chapter on African cinema focuses attention almost exclusively on films of indigenous African traditions, those that are in fact intended as fictional and/or fantastic (as opposed to those which are secret and/or sacred). Tiffin's attention to productions like *Kirikou et la Sorcière* (1998), directed by French filmmaker Michel Ocelot, emphasizes the western colonial gaze (also crucial in Samatar's chapter) that often imposes upon adaptations of West African folktales. Hubner's chapter on Latin American film acknowledges the particular sycretisms of African, Indigenous, and European wonder frames, tropes, and characters, and the political ambiguity of the results. She emphasizes the verisimilitudes of cinema from Latin American countries, including materials and influences from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Guatemala. The films include literary adaptations based on Hans Christian Andersen's "Little Match Girl" to Indigenous Brazilian figures, illustrating the fusion of African-American folklore with the influence of settlers, colonizers, and traders, all framed in a native Latin American folklore that may echo tropes from "One Thousand and One Nights."

The ways in which our contributors take up their subjects is often inflected by the historical trajectories of filmmaking techniques in the context of the region under investigation. For example, Bacchilega and Hubner consider the influence of neorealism as an important thread in Italian and new Latin American cinema (respectively) and both devote considerable attention to live-action film, as a result. Indeed, Hubner's analysis envisions many films as both decolonizing practice and an urgent call for social change; using techniques developed in the cinemas of the French New Wave and Italian neorealism, the films she discusses react against European hegemony and internal social issues. Realism has also strongly affected work in Canada, as discussed by Greenhill and Kohm, as much as for example the financial constraints of government funding for film production. Further, the re-emergence of particular films in multiple chapters conveys the challenge of any nation laying its claim to a specific fairy-tale film, let alone to the fairy tale that inspired it! Duggan's chapter on French fairy-tale film and Tiffin's on African cinema both consider Michel Ocelot's adaptation of West African characters and stories; and Duggan also considers the themes from "One Thousand and One Nights" (Samatar's focus) reflecting colonial relations between France and North Africa.

Another often-cited issue is the place of government involvement in filmmaking and how it has influenced fairy-tale cinema, including by way of funding objectives (as in Canada) and regulation of content (as in India, Germany, Soviet and post-Soviet Russia, Korea, China, and Poland). Political interpretations of films are explicitly linked to nationalism and other ideologies in China, England, Germany, Korea, Poland, and Russia. Indeed, as Zipes's "German" chapter details, the complicated political history of East and West Germany explains to some extent the divergences in their fairy-tale films. Yet though the many joint productions that cross national boundaries are more often initially driven by financial incentives than by a more free-flowing desire for creative and cultural linking, the results can be dynamic and compelling or simply dismal.

Some contributors return to films already discussed in *The Enchanted Screen*, to offer more details and extensive comparative discussion (e.g. Bacchilega on "Pinocchio" films, Hubner on *Pan's Labyrinth*, or Magnus-Johnston on Andersen biopics) or to offer quite different perspectives (e.g. Greenhill and Kohm re-examining Atom Egoyan's *The Sweet Hereafter* as a film about harms against children, a topic also addressed by Hubner). Others, like Lee on Korea, mention important works that Zipes admires and discusses, like Pil-Sung Yim's *Hansel & Gretel*, but choose to detail other

films. Yet the vast majority of works discussed here are gathered for the first time under the rubric of fairy-tale film, and many are given serious academic attention for the first time, or for the first time in English. Nevertheless, some lacunae remain. There are certainly fairy-tale films from Finland, Ireland, Israel, New Zealand, the Middle East, and parts of the former Soviet Union other than Russia, for example; work specifically on these areas remains to be undertaken.

The collection begins with three thematic chapters—on the recent global surge of (interest in) fairy tales and fairy-tale cinema and television (Zipes); on Hollywood representations of fairy-tale collectors, authors, and filmmakers (Magnus-Johnston); and on "One Thousand and One Nights" as a transnational source for fairy-tale filmmakers (Samatar). By opening the collection from nowhere and everywhere, we draw attention to the extensive sourcing and reception of fairy-tale cinema across national boundaries. In many ways, Zipes's "Tsunami" chapter provides the *cogito ergo sum* logic underlying the collection; it is necessary because it results from a palpable cultural phenomenon. Whereas Magnus-Johnston's chapter considers English-language Hollywood films, appraising the representation of storytellers and the shifting technological modalities of fairy tales, Samatar traces the genealogy of a tale often used to negotiate the spectacle of Otherness through an exotic and erotic lens. The following seventeen chapters are organized by their national contexts, beginning with European, followed by Asian, and concluding with postcolonial cinemas. European cinema includes Wells, who looks at the UK (mainly England); Duggan at France; Zipes at Germany; Bacchilega at Italy; Oxfeldt at Scandinavia; Balina and Beumers at Russia; Hames at Czech Republic and Slovakia; and Deszcz-Tryhubczak and Oziewicz at Poland. Asian cinema includes Japan (Napier), China (Li), India (Naithani), and Korea (Lee), and is followed by considerations of postcolonial nations: Africa (Tiffin), Australia (Bullen and Sawers), Canada (Greenhill and Kohm), Mexico, Central and South America (Hubner), and the United States (Zipes).

We hope that our readers will make new discoveries and revisit the old with fresh perspectives. Beyond a mere encounter with the familiar and the strange—if such a dichotomous relationship between an audience and the cinema even persists—we hope the familiar will be made strange, and vice versa. This international collection seeks to explore the horizons beyond Disney, yet leave room for future scholarly innovation. Between the good, the bad, and the ugly; the expected and unexpected—and though he is surely still awaiting his wish to curate a gigantic film festival including all the neglected fairy-tale films discovered in his first collection (Zipes 2011, and in the preface)—we trust readers will find this to be a wondrous extension of a project Zipes began with his *Enchanted Screen*.

Note

1 For an extended discussion of national cinemas see Willemen (2006), Nairn (1997), and Hayward (1993).

1

THE GREAT CULTURAL TSUNAMI OF FAIRY-TALE FILMS

Jack Zipes

Fairy-tale films have been swamping big and small screens throughout the world ever since the beginning of the twenty-first century, seeking to overwhelm audiences with innovative and spectacular adaptations in a kind of globalized cultural tsunami. Indeed, journalists and critics often talk about a phenomenal surge or tidal wave of fairy-tale films, and wonder why and how this seemingly perplexing cultural phenomenon originated and spread. Meanwhile, numerous contemporary cinematic fairy-tale films continue to draw attention by shattering and altering the global public's understanding of traditional fairy tales with happy endings. Though many films are frivolous spectacles, an impressive number are fantastic pastiches and explorations of classical tales that stretch the imagination of viewers in unusual ways.

Discussing the web of fairy-tale transformation, circulation, and reception in the twenty-first century, Cristina Bacchilega remarks:

> The contemporary proliferation of fairy-tale transformations in convergence culture does mean that the genre has *multivalent currency*, and we must think of the fairy tale's social uses and effects in increasingly nuanced ways while asking who is reactivating a fairy-tale poetics of wonder and for whom. Even in mainstream fairy-tale cinema today, there is no such thing as *the* fairy tale or one main use of it. This multiplicity of position-takings does not polarize ideological differences, but rather produces complex alignments and alliances in the contemporary fairy-tale web.
>
> (2013, 28)

The more unusual and usual twenty-first-century position-takings in fairy-tale film production come from a variety of directors and countries. The diverse examples offered below will serve to contextualize the critical analysis later in this chapter.

In France, Catherine Breillat produced a new sexually loaded feminist version of "Sleeping Beauty" in 2010 that made her provocative "Bluebeard" film of 2009 appear tame; while Christophe Gans created a spectacular and lavish *Beauty and the Beast* (La Belle et la Bête 2014) in an attempt to supersede Jean Cocteau's great classic, *La Belle et la Bête* (1946). In South Korea, there appears to be a trend to turn fairy-tale films into horror films that led to Kim Jee-woon's terrifying adaptation of a Korean folktale, *A Tale of Two Sisters* (2003); Yong-gyun Kim's transformation of Hans Christian Andersen's "The Red Shoes" into a gory mystery (2005); Man-Dae Bong's

Cinderella (2006) into a scintillating trauma; and Pil-Sung Yim's chilling *Hansel & Gretel* (2007) into a dramatic defense of children.

However, horror is not just reserved for South Korea. British director Iain Softley produced the disturbing *Trap for Cinderella* (2013), about an amnesiac young woman traumatized by a fire that killed her best friend and left her without a sense of her real identity. In another British film, *The Selfish Giant* (2013), directed by Clio Barnard, Oscar Wilde's famous fairy tale is totally transformed into a tragic story about two working-class boys who seek to make themselves rich in a swindling owner's junkyard.

While the fairy-tale films of other countries may yield less horror, the prospects for innovation remain high. After great success with such animated films drawn from West African folklore as *Kirikou and the Sorceress* (1998), *Kirikou and the Wild Beasts* (2006), *Azur and Asmar: The Princes' Quest* (2006), and *Tales of the Night* (2011), the talented French filmmaker Michel Ocelot produced a charming didactic prequel, *Kirikou and the Men and Women*, in 2012. In it, the tiny nude hero once again comes to the rescue of his villagers in five different stories told by his grandfather. Of course, when it comes to animated films, the great Japanese filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki has had a profound influence on directors throughout the world with such works as *Spirited Away* (2001), *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004), and *Ponyo* (2008). Miyazaki's and Ocelot's works demonstrate without deliberate artifice that animated fairy-tale films can stimulate critical reflection, pleasure, and joy by not following a conventional Disney schema.

Miyazaki's direct influence in Japan can be seen in the beautiful and sumptuous hand-drawn film, *The Tale of the Princess Kaguya* (2013), directed by Isao Takahata, which is based on a Japanese folktale, "The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter." There is no happy ending in this film that recounts the struggles of a miniature girl discovered in a bamboo shoot to determine her own destiny, and yet, after Kaguya realizes that she is a moon resident and must return to the moon, one can only admire her true natural nobility when she unwillingly departs for the moon. Moreover, like many of Miyazaki's films, Takahata's story is striking because it uses traditional hand-drawn animation in unconventional ways that go beyond the Disney model.

Indeed, some American "non-conventional" stop-animation films have also gone beyond Disney and suggest that they have been influenced more by Miyazaki than by Disney. For instance, *ParaNorman* (2012), directed by Sam Fell and Chris Butler, explores how Norman, an eleven-year-old boy in the small Massachusetts town of Blithe Hollow, is mocked, bullied, and marginalized because he visualizes and speaks with his dead grandmother and other ghosts victimized by witch hunts of the past. With the help of a book of fairy tales and compassion for the persecuted "witch" Agatha, Norman saves the town from a catastophe, and the former outcast becomes a hero.

Similarly, in *The Boxtrolls* (2014), directed by Graham Annable and Anthony Stacchi, a young boy by the name of Eggs is treated as a dangerous provocateur, who lives with the monstrous scavengers called boxtrolls. In reality, these creatures are merely peaceful and harmless souls who collect discarded items to build unusual machines in the underground, while the pest exterminator, Archibald Snatcher, is the real monster, who seeks to exterminate the boxtrolls for his own profit. But Eggs exposes him and becomes the town's hero instead of an outsider. In both these films, marginalized young boys dramatically oppose the norms of society, and the digitalized animation that reflects their struggles is innovative, the images, enthralling, and the characterization, extraordinary.

Stop-motion digital animation will probably dominate fairy-tale filmmaking in the years to come and produce such mainstream dreadful films as the American disaster, *Strange Magic* (2015), directed by Gary Rydstrom and produced by George Lucas, which Justin Chang calls "mirthless and derivative" (2015), but they will be contested from the margins of the cultural field by such

films as *Jack and the Cuckoo-Clock Heart*. In a review published in *Variety*, Peter Debruge describes the film this way:

> A boy born on the coldest day on Earth survives only by the grace of a magical ticker in "Jack and the Cuckoo-Clock Heart," a Steampunk rock musical reverse-engineered from an album by French band Dionysos and the popular tie-in book written by its frontman, Matthias Malzieu. Co-directed by Malzieu and musicvideo helmer Stephane Berla, this charming yet oddly miscalibrated computer-animated fairy tale combines gothic, Tim Burton-esque elements with a younger-skewing porcelain-doll look, confusing auds as to who's being targeted exactly. The answer; no one in particular, as Malzieu seems to be making this idiosyncratic, overly precious film mostly for himself.
>
> (2014)

Whether this last comment is true, this extraordinary film uses fairy-tale motifs of a frozen heart, noble quests, and the joys of art in such a charming manner that its unique eccentricity can be shared by audiences worldwide and not just enjoyed by Malzieu.

Other directors still rely on more traditional animated techniques to capture such eccentricity. For instance, the fabulous Russian animator Garri Bardin continues to use clay animation and has stunned audiences with his beautiful, politically charged *The Ugly Duckling* (2010), which cleverly transforms Andersen's tale into a parody of pretentious Russian glory and oligarchy, and which satirizes the changes that have supposedly occurred in the "new Russia" (see Figure 1.1). Here a gentle innocent duckling rises above the dilapidated barnyard symbolic of present-day Russia to embrace the freedom of flying on his own.

Turning back to live-action fairy-tale films in our discussion of works that comprise the cultural tsunami, I should like to note some other diverse experiments. For instance, Sheldon Wilson and Catherine Hardwicke, two American directors, introduced werewolves into their versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" in *Red: Werewolf Hunter* (2010) and *Red Riding Hood* (2011), seeking to

FIGURE 1.1 The Ugly Duckling/Swan mocked by real ducks, *The Ugly Duckling* (2010).

titillate audiences with bizarre incidents and contrived plotlines. In contrast, Czech director Maria Procházková's brilliant *Who's Afraid of the Wolf?* (2008) retold the same famous tale from the perspective of an imaginative six-year-old girl, probing the capacity of children to deal imaginatively with family conflict. While not directly adapting "Little Red Riding Hood," Joe Wright's thriller, *Hanna* (2011), constantly alluded to the tale in his pastiche depicting a savvy young girl who learns to take care of herself in a world filled with predators.

Of course, "Little Red Riding Hood" is not the only classical fairy tale which has been cinematically re-envisaged. There has also been a wave of fairy-tale films about "Snow White" such as American productions like Tarsem Singh's *Mirror, Mirror* (2012), Rupert Sanders's *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012), David DeCoteau's *Snow White: A Deadly Summer* (2012), Rachel Goldberg's *Grimm's Snow White* (2012), Pablo Berger's *Blancanieves* (2012), and Jacco Groen's *Lilet Never Happened* (2012). In addition, "Hansel and Gretel" has received special attention in such diverse films as Mike Nichols's *Bread Crumbs* (2011), Tommy Wirkola's *Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters* (2013), David DeCoteau's *Hansel & Gretel: Warriors of Witchcraft* (2013), Duane Journey's *Hansel & Gretel Get Baked* (2013), and Danishka Esterhazy's *H & G* (2013). Adaptations of Andersen's "The Snow Queen" include David Wu's *Snow Queen* (2002), Julian Gibbs's made-for-TV musical *The Snow Queen* (2005), and Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee's well-made film for Disney fans, *Frozen* (2013), which has won many awards for seeming to be an untypical Disney film while once again merely celebrating elitism, the sentimental American musical, and, most importantly, the Disney brand. The other live-action Disney films of this period, Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) and Robert Stromberg's *Maleficent* (2014), tend to break from the conventional corporate model and may indicate a more serious feminist approach by the Disney studio to traditional fairy tales. Of course, as Burton's *Sleepy Hollow* (1999) and *Corpse Bride* (2005) indicate, his predilection for endorsing weird outsiders will always make his interpretations of fairy tales somewhat unconventional.

Returning to animation, Tomm Moore and Nora Twomey created an unusual Irish fairy-tale film with *The Secret of Kells* (2009), which combines legend with folklore and depicts the struggles of a young apprentice named Brendan to save an illuminated manuscript of the Bible from the invading Vikings during the eighth century. In the course of the action he is aided by a pagan forest spirit whose presence brings out the sacred relationship between religion and nature. In 2014 Moore directed another superb Irish fairy-tale film, *Song of the Sea*, based on tales about the marvelous Selkies, which poignantly portrays a young boy's quest to save his sister and fulfill a promise to his dead mother. But it is not so much the sentimental story that is so compelling in this film, it is its aesthetics. As Carlos Aguilar has written in the *Toronto Review*:

> Resembling rustic watercolor paintings enhanced with movement, there is an artisanal quality to every frame. From the sea, to the city, to the forest and the fantastical underworld, the amount of details employed in every creature and space is breathtaking. Nothing is overlooked. So meticulous is their approach that even transmission towers have a distinct design. Unattainable by solely using computer animation, the film's visual aesthetic feels simultaneously handcrafted and otherworldly. Filled with a classical warmth, "Song of the Sea" should remind everyone why animation, when done as flawlessly as it is here, is such an incredible medium. Color, form, and fluid motion delivered in an unforgettable style that's at the service of a similarly compelling story.
>
> (2014)

In another tender American film, based, this time on folkloric Viking stories, Dean DeBlois and Chris Sanders created a startling film about war and peace that depicts dragons as "the others" in *How to Train Your Dragon* (2010). Unfortunately, DeBlois's sequel, *How to Train Your Dragon 2*,

despite some beautiful digital landscaping, is a lamentably sentimental film that borders on glorifying war instead of peace. Following the great success of the first *Shrek* (2001), directed by Andrew Adamson and Vicky Jenson, *Shrek 2* (2004), *Shrek the Third* (2007), and two further "Shrek" films have appeared, *Shrek Forever After* (2010) and the spin-off *Puss in Boots* (2011). The commerical marketing of these mediocre sequels has diminished the poignancy of the original film, which thrived on its hilarious critique of Disney conventionalism. The sequels rendered the "Shrek" narrative predictable and conventional; *Puss in Boots* was irritatingly boring. Fortunately, the animated *Brave* (2012), directed by Mark Andrews and Brenda Chapman, stirred a debate about feminist fairy-tale films just as the live-action trilogy, *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* (2012), *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* (2013), and *The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies* (2014), directed by Peter Jackson, gave rise to a quarrel about the proper way to adapt J.R.R. Tolkien's fairy-tale novel for the screen. These lavish adaptations demand to be taken seriously, for they draw upon an epic fairy tale that addresses the ravages of war experienced by Tolkien himself. It is, therefore, not by chance that Jackson's three films shed light on the perils of war in our contemporary conflicted world.

In addition to films produced for the big screen, fairy-tale films continue to be created for television, the internet, and iPods. America has at least three concurrent TV fairy-tale series: *Once Upon a Time*, *Grimm*, and *Beauty and the Beast.*[1] Germany has *Sechs auf einen Streich* and *Märchenperlen*, and important series have also appeared in Japan and South Korea. In the United Kingdom, Scotland, and Canada, the BBC *Shoebox* series appealed to large audiences. Significantly, these works are often accompanied by commercials and other peripherals that celebrate the magic qualities of fairy tales and urge us to change our lives by purchasing miraculous products.

Just as Georges Méliès revolutionized the fairy tale at the beginning of the twentieth century and was immediately followed by scores of other European and American filmmakers, numerous directors and artists are now revolutionizing the fairy-tale film, in part due to new technology that enhances cinematic special effects. But again, why such a revolution or tsunami now? Is this twenty-first century wave of fairy-tale films really so startling and new? (Consider the cinematic tsunami of fairy-tale films at the beginning of the twentieth century.) A look at the popularity of fairy-tale films in a historical context offers a more comprehensive perspective on the present.

Plays, operas, and vaudeville shows called *féeries* during the nineteenth century offered early signs that folktales and fairy tales would become a staple of storytelling in the modern mass media throughout the world. But fairy-tale films also stir our minds and emotions as part of our cultural socialization, what Norbert Elias termed the civilizing process.[2] Today, fairy tales inundate homes and schools at all levels; they are also taught at most universities in the UK and North America. They provide advertisements and commercials with narrative plots and characters to sell products. They are found in all walks of life, and to some degree we even try to transform our lives into fairy tales. As the French semiotician Roland Barthes might say, they have become mythic in a negative sense—artificially produced to appear universal and natural versions of the way life should be, all the while concealing their instrumental motives and their basic history and ideology. We are induced to accept fairy tales as part of our lives and as pure amusement without questioning them.

Yet, in my book, *Fairy Tale as Myth/Myth as Fairy Tale* (1994), I remarked that it is impossible to grasp the fairy tale's history and relationship to Barthes's (1973) notion of myth as second nature without considering the basic manner in which they have been adapted, revised, and duplicated either to reinforce or subvert dominant ideologies. Storytelling's memetic nature suggests that cultural memories concerning fairy tales began to form in pre-Christian times. The development of these narratives as a cultural genre has been marked by a process of dialectical appropriation involving storytelling, memorization, duplication, and revision that has set the cultural conditions for its mythicization, institutionalization, and expansion as a mass-mediated form through radio, film, television, and the internet. Indeed, film—animated and live-action, short and feature-length—has

been most significant for the fairy tale's great dissemination in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. In my opinion, the fairy tale has become the dominant cultural form of storytelling in our daily lives, thanks in large part to film and other mass-mediated technologies. Consequently, as an accessible and memetic popular genre, the fairy-tale film, along with other adaptations such as literature, drama, opera, cartoon, and so on, purposely brings people together to share relevant stories that speak to common problems. The more bewildering, if not distorted and perverted, our lives become, the more people seek refuge and meaning in fairy tales and other figments of the human imagination like religion. Yet, unlike religion, fairy tales have a secular wondrous appeal geared to help us order our lives and endorse our hope for harmony and peace.

In the twenty-first century, when the world is beset by social and political conflicts that occur with lightning speed, more fairy-tale and fantasy films have been created to address the symptoms that contribute to our present dilemmas. Though many contemporary films are open-ended or tragic, often questioning the possibility of a happy end or harmonious solution to conflicts, they tap into the utopian verve that stamps the fairy-tale tradition in all cultures and countries. And, of course, numerous fairy-tale and fantasy films end in joy. The Méliès and Disney films at the beginning of the twentieth century are exuberant, and their pioneer films, among many others, have fueled the exuberance of brash utopian films of the twenty-first century as can be seen in the Shrek films, Ocelot's Kirikou films, Miyazaki's original Japanese adaptations, and Garri Bardin's Russian interpretations of fairy tales, to name but a few.

More than a hundred different kinds of fairy-tale films produced in the twenty-first century respond, in my opinion, to the utopian longing of audiences who need stories to help them position themselves in relation to the disturbing and relentless changes that continue to occur and threaten to engulf them. Fairy tales are secular and yet seriously spiritual because of their utopianism, because they place faith in humanity, that is, in the human capacity to undo the destruction that humans cause one another and our natural and social environment. Fairy-tale films provide a metaphorical means to step back and, for a brief moment, regard solutions or ways to strategize one's approach to daily existence. And, of course, fairy tales also provide diversion, allegedly pure entertainment, that often apologizes for the unfathomable, dominant ideological forces that pervert our lives. As a result, there is no such thing as a definitive fairy-tale film because there are so many means nowadays to utilize and re-utilize the arsenal of traditional folktales and fairy tales via the medium of film. Consequently, each film which evokes the fairy-tale aura must be understood in the context of its relationship to the socio-economic conditions of the times. The aesthetics and subject matter of each film constitute a position-taking. Fairy-tale films can shed light on human predicaments in a given time, and, at the same time divert our gaze so that we cannot recognize their causes. This socio-cultural function has been part of fairy-tale films from the very beginning, that is, from Méliès's first fabulous *féeries* up to the present blockbusters that use the marvelous to sell themselves and the notion that happiness means belief in the status quo.

Kristian Moen's insightful *Film and Fairy Tales: The Birth of Modern Fantasy*, which examines the origins of fairy-tale films in relationship to modernism, demonstrates that many were produced from the beginning of the twentieth century to the 1930s, and he shows that the basic narrative thread of all kinds of fairy tales formed the narrative structure of all films, live-action and animated. Though the massive early twentieth-century production of fairy-tale films and their offshoots cannot be called a tsunami, one could call it a tidal wave that flooded audiences and certainly laid the basis for the cinematic fairy-tale adaptations that followed. From 1890 to 1940, Moen maintains, the fairy-tale film became popular because it was an outgrowth of modernism. As he remarks:

> [S]ome of the most prominent fairy tale films of the era focused on negotiated modern life through fantasy. Attuned to a world of instability and transformation, cinema fairy tales were

> especially conducive to contending with the effects of modernity; while often set in far-off realms of fantasy, they nevertheless helped articulate the ways in which we might see, understand and feel the effects of a changing modern world.
>
> (2013, xvi)

Due to the fast pace of a daily life that included work and leisure time, fairy-tale films reflected through spectacle, wonder, and fantasy how industry and technology affected people's lives in western cultures. However, after the Great Depression beginning in 1929, change was no longer to be glorified but questioned or stabilized, hence the rise of the harmonious, pleasing, and well-made Disney fairy-tale films, which predominated in the second half of the twentieth century.

However, the era of relative stability (1945–1990) in which global capitalism established itself and assumed new forms of control and dominance—despite the Korean and Vietnam wars—came crashing to an end. Technology and politics combined to foster what Zygmunt Bauman (2005) has called a liquid life in which nothing is stable and nothing holds people together because truths have been proven false and traditions revealed as a means to manipulate and limit ordinary citizens' lives. The havoc of our times has, of course, not gone unnoticed by producers of fairy-tale films but has swayed them to forge the current cultural tsunami.

Today, the fairy tale has become a hybrid mode that borrows from other genres and technologies and infuses fairy-tale films with plural meanings and functions. Ultimately, the source of fairy-tale films seems to be a whirlpool of conflicting themes, elements, characters, styles, and ideologies that stir viewers and audiences worldwide. Though the Disney Animation Studio has retained its near monopoly over fairy-tale films, its jurisdiction has become uncertain. With the invention of DVDs, digital art, the internet, and multiplex movie theaters, among others, the Disney Corporation's endeavors to stabilize the fairy-tale film in its name seem outmoded and are openly undermined. Globalization and postmodern technology have provided filmmakers throughout the world with the means to challenge the Disney worldview and conventional narrative. Before turning to these experiments, I want to add a few words about the "well-made" Disney fairy-tale film.

The "Well-Made" Disney Fairy-Tale Film

To my knowledge, nobody has hitherto drawn a connection between the nineteenth century's most influential dramatist, Augustin-Eugène Scribe (1791–1861), and the twentieth century's most popular and successful filmmaker, Walt Disney (1901–1966). To grasp the overwhelming popularity of the Disney fairy-tale films from their inception to the present day, it is helpful to recall Scribe's significance for the development of European drama and how and why he influenced the writing and staging of plays up through the present. Scribe wrote over 400 plays that were translated, adapted, and produced in Europe and North America, and their common structure has come to be known as the "well-made play," or "la pièce bien faite."[3] Though this term is often used derogatively, its prescriptive structure enabled many excellent dramatists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries such as Henrik Ibsen and George Bernard Shaw to shape their plays with effective plots.

A "well-made" play generally has six elements: (1) A secret is disclosed to the audience but is unknown to the characters of the play; its revelation leads to the climatic scene in which an unfortunate hero is restored to grace. (2) The first scene sets off a pattern of intense action and suspense filled with contrived entrances, unexpected letters, and other devices. (3) The unfortunate hero engages in a series of conflicts with his adversary. (4) The conflict ends with a peripeteia or a sudden fall in the hero's fortunes followed by an obligatory scene in which the adversary learns about the secret. (5) The audience is informed about a central misunderstanding but not the hero and the adversary. (6) Finally, everything is clarified and made plausible to the characters of the play in a

logical dénouement. Variations include focus on a woman as heroine, and the six key elements are not a rigid formula. To Scribe's credit, he discovered flexible dramatic functions that were highly effective, appealed to audiences, and influenced numerous playwrights up through the present day including those for the cinema and television, whether they realize it or not.

When Disney began making his first feature-length animated film, he became the Scribe of animated fairy-tale films. He used the storyboard to design a careful and effective structure for *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), and he borrowed elements from the Hollywood and Broadway musicals to add color and to sentimentalize the cinematic stories. Thanks to the enormous success of *Snow White*, he realized that he had found the recipe for a universal appeal, and thereafter he sought to cultivate the taste of family audiences, while simultaneously adjusting the fairy tale's structure and contents to comply with his puritanical and capitalist values. In short, the "well-made" fairy-tale film structure of all Disney studio productions, including those after his death, can be summarized as follows:

1 Traumatic and Unfortunate Incidents

An upsetting and often tragic event marks a young woman or man, generally a member of the aristocracy or an extraordinary person, unfortunate and liable to be persecuted. A key ideological function of the Disney "well-made" film is to arouse sympathy for elite characters.

2 Songs of Woe and Joy

The hero or heroine sings a melancholy song that indicates her or his desire and/or plight, building audience anticipation for the recovery of lost status. Other songs throughout the movie indicate the protagonists' moods, especially their emotional state and longing for love, security, and happiness.

3 Banishment and Isolation

The unfortunate heroine or hero is in danger at home and may be banished or flees. During isolation or travels, she or he must learn how to survive.

4 Quest, Conflicts, and Comic Relief

Sometimes a friend undertakes a quest to rescue the unfortunate heroine/hero. Animals, little men, insects, household objects, fairies, snowmen, trolls, or birds help the protagonist to overcome obstacles and provide comic relief. Often more amusing and smarter than the heroine/hero, they make the simplistic storyline palatable. Meanwhile, the evil adversary, frequently a female witch, intensifies her efforts to destroy the likeable protagonists, who often resemble Barbie and Ken dolls.

5 Peripeteia

Once it seems that the heroine/hero is safe, his/her fortunes are, however, reversed. Given the crisis, the helpers desperately try to save the heroine/hero who appears to be doomed. The help often includes comic relief through the antics of the helpers.

6 Miraculous Resolution

A deus ex machina or miraculous intervention leads to a contrived and predictable happy ending. The resolution often involves the harmonious restoration of the status quo, and the incarceration and/or death of the adversary.

Using this "well-made" flexible structure, Disney and the Disney Studio not only found a dependable means to transform the storylines of every fairy tale they adapted for the screen, using the latest technological inventions to embellish the same plot and message, but they also gradually built audience-standardized tastes and expectations on a global scale. By 2015, the time of this writing, the Disney brand has become a powerful meme. As noun or adjective, when spoken, read, or seen, the term Disney immediately gives rise in the minds of millions of people to predictable notions: the "well-made" fairy-tale film with an appropriate happy and joyful ending; a seemingly utopian theme park of bountiful pleasure where Disney film characters come alive; and clean fun and faith in a father figure who waves a magic wand each time his name is pronounced.

Indeed, Walt Disney is not dead; he has fulfilled his wish for immortality. He and his brother Roy realized that if the Disney animated films were to dominate the fairy-tale film market, they would not only have to find the suitable formula or structure to sell their films successfully, they would also have to create an intricate network that would transform their name into a meme, readily recognizable by the masses in America and now throughout the world. The brand is reinforced through the merchandising of books, films, toys, clothes, gadgets, and food in Disney stores and other venues; attractive and amusing advertisements and commercials in newspapers, journals, billboards, radio, the internet, Amazon, iPhones, and Twitter; theme parks in the United States, France, and Japan; the collaboration and co-option of other film studios such as Pixar and the establishment of a cable TV channel; musicals on Broadway that tour the United States or are performed locally by children's theaters; Disney ice shows; and all kinds of local and cultural events such as the Macy's parade in New York City. In short, there is hardly a medium of communication that has not been infiltrated by the Disney brand. Though the memetic brand may have different connotations for each recipient, the acclamation of the brand name is all that matters for a gigantic corporation that has made culture into commerce. The Disney Studio has established a monopoly over the fairy-tale film without having to announce it, and it plays a massive role in the cultural tsunami.[4]

Its recent production *Frozen* (2013) is a good example of how the "well-made" Disney fairy-tale film manages to create an aura of originality and modernity while actually repeating the same story and embracing the same ideology that Walt Disney fostered in the 1930s. Examining this film's "well-made" structure clearly reveals just how it reproduces its predecessors. The action takes place in a faux-idyllic Nordic realm, for the film is loosely based on Andersen's "The Snow Queen," which the Disney company previously had thought too dark, complicated, and long to adapt for young audiences. The plot had to be simplified and the villainous Snow Queen transformed into a role model, a pliable beautiful Barbie doll, thanks to computer animation. It employs the six functions of the "well-made" fairy-tale film:

1 Traumatic and Unfortunate Incidents

Elsa, princess of Arendelle, is born with the magic capability of turning things into ice and snow, but she is unable to control it, and the capability becomes a curse. She almost kills her young sister Anna. Fortunately, her parents rush Anna to the submissive trolls who heal her. However, from that point onward the children must be separated in the castle until they become teenagers. Tragedy strikes when their parents are drowned at sea.

2 Songs of Woe and Joy

Anna is not told of Elsa's magic powers and sings melodramatic songs of sorrow because she cannot see her beloved sister. Though singing continues throughout the film to denote how a character is feeling, Anna does not learn the truth about her sister through song.

3 Banishment and Isolation

A few years after her parents' death, Elsa is to celebrate her coronation as queen. Anna announces that she intends to marry the handsome Prince Hans of the Southern Isles, whom she has just met. Elsa refuses to give her blessing, and the vivacious and naïve Anna protests. Elsa explodes and cannot control her magic powers, resulting in the petrification of the entire castle and village that will apparently suffer an eternal winter of snow and ice. Elsa, accused of being a witch, escapes to the nearby mountains where she creates an ice palace and feels she can finally be herself. She expresses her sentiments in the film's popular hit song, "Let It Go."

4 Quest, Conflicts, and Comic Relief

Anna, feeling guilty that she caused her sister's rage and its result, decides to search for her. She leaves Prince Hans in charge of the realm and rides off into the mountains where she encounters the helpful and likeable Kristoff, who supplies ice on a sled drawn by an even more likeable reindeer named Sven. They agree to help Anna, and provide comic relief with Olaf, a snowman. Once they reach the ice palace, Anna encounters Elsa, who adamantly refuses to return to Arendelle.

5 Peripeteia

The unfortunate heroine Anna is accidentally struck in her heart by her unfortunate sister, who still cannot control her magic power. She drives Anna and her helpers from the mountain. Kristoff notices that Anna's hair is turning white and that something is wrong. He takes her to the trolls who perform a hilarious song, and then tell him that Anna's heart has been frozen, and unless it is thawed by an act of true love, she will be petrified forever. Anna's condition worsens when Kristoff carries her back to the castle. They discover that Prince Hans is a scoundrel who wants her to die so that he can take over the realm. Moreover, he plans to kill Elsa, whom he has imprisoned in a dungeon.

6 Miraculous Resolution

Kristoff, thanks to his reindeer, realizes that he loves Anna, and vice versa, and rides into Arendelle to show his true love by kissing her. Meanwhile, Anna gathers her strength as she is freezing when she sees Prince Hans about to kill Elsa with his sword. She intervenes, and just as she is frozen solid, Hans's sword breaks on her body. Because of Anna's act of true love, Elsa realizes that she can thaw the realm through true love that modifies her destructive powers. Prince Hans is then sent off in a brig to be punished in his own country. Kristoff is rewarded and will likely marry Anna, who is reconciled with her sister. Arendelle is saved, and the rightful rulers are restored to their proper regal places.

Despite its hackneyed plotline and message that all that is needed to save a person and a realm is true love, *Frozen* has received great praise and achieved extraordinary success. Much of it was due to the hundreds of thousands of dollars invested in the production and publicity. As with most of its big-budget blockbusters, the Disney Studio took great care to hire highly gifted animators, artists, actors, musicians, screenplay writers, producers, and directors. The producers spent huge sums on trailers and other advertisements months in advance of *Frozen*'s release to hype its meaning as *Disney* merchandise, predetermined by paratexts and peripherals. It was the ticket seller Fandango's top advance ticket seller among animated films, and by January 2014, it became the top-selling animated film in the company's history. It also won two Academy Awards, one Golden Globe, and a BAFTA for best animated film of 2013, among many others. Most reviews were enthusiastic.

Frozen set records and has thus far earned well over a billion dollars. Walt Disney Company chair and CEO Bob Iger stated in an interview that *Frozen* has "'franchise' potential" (quoted in Reingold 2014), meaning that the film would be adapted for the stage and other venues, produce more and more dolls, toys and other merchandise, and possibly produce a sequel or two for the cinema or DVD market.

There is no doubt that *Frozen* deserves all these accolades within the current culture industry. As a "well-made" Disney fairy-tale film, its artwork and images are splendid. The computer-generated imagery and hand-drawn animation are perfectly synchronized. The scenes of the ice palace, the mountains, the harbor, the Arendelle castle, and village are drawn with meticulous attention to the slightest detail. Though sisters Elsa and Anna have the same curvaceous figures, bright smiles, vivacity, preternaturally giant eyes, and innocence as all the Barbie-doll Disney heroines, they display winning personalities, especially the younger sister, neglected by the cursed Elsa. Indeed, Anna's dedication and love for her older sister transforms the "well-made" fairy-tale film into a touching melodrama.

Yet, despite all *Frozen*'s winning features, its ideological problems and aesthetic weaknesses manifest themselves only to become merchandise and a franchise. In typical Disney fashion, most characters speak with American accents and a certain denigrating parody appears in the store owner's comic Scandinavian accent to designate his lower-class status. Yet, Kristoff, also a member of the lower class, and none of the other townspeople speak this way. Making fun in the film is often at the expense of the lower classes and Scandinavian folklore. For instance, the trolls are cute little dolls (bound to be sold in Disney stores) that have nothing to do with the profound Scandinavian tradition in which these generally frightening and devious creatures play a significant role. The film's greatest weakness, however, is its celebration of elitism, a mythic given in Barthes's sense of the term. From the first Disney feature to this 2013 production, young and old viewers are expected to be concerned about the destiny of monarchies. If the realms and lives of princes, princesses, kings, and queens are disturbed, we are expected to respond to their urgencies and emergencies. Characters and audiences alike are naturally expected to bow to and help restore challenged monarchies. With the exception of *Pinocchio* (1940) and *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), Disney fairy-tale films do not generally focus on the struggles and lives of members of the lower classes. Though thousands of folktales and fairy tales have plot lines that do not concern upper-class people, the Disney Studio has never chosen one that is not among the classical canon. A "well-made" Disney fairy-tale film seeks to appeal to aspiring lower-class and threatened middle- and upper-class families to retain an appropriate respect for hierarchy and harmony. Perhaps this is the reason why Disney films so dominate these politically tumultuous times and play an essential role in the cultural tsunami. Fortunately, however, numerous fairy-tale films in the global cultural tumult challenge the Disney monopoly's authority.

Marginal and Marginalized Fairy-Tale Films

While Disney fairy-tale products and many other live-action and animated fairy-tale films cry out for stability and the maintenance of current power relations, many more creative and inspiring productions subvert the "well-made" fairy-tale film and delve deeply into the social and political problems that the Disney films avoid. Since the turn of the twenty-first century, well over a hundred unique fairy-tale films that constitute part of the cultural tsunami seek to speak to audiences from the social margins. Many are never promoted, distributed, or noted in the United States, and may even have difficulty finding audiences in the countries in which they were produced. The monopolistic system of film distribution in North America, Europe, and the rest of the world ensures that some of the most extraordinary fairy-tale films of the twenty-first century can only be seen at film festivals or art theaters where runs are short and reviews scarce. Given the questionable

monopolistic tendencies of the film industry, I want to draw some of the marginal films into the center of discussion in the balance of this chapter.

In animated fairy-tale films, early signs of subversion or rebellion against the "well-made" fairy-tale films of the Disney Studio started at the beginning of the twenty-first century. *Shrek* (2001), the highly successful computer-animated version of William Steig's picture book *Shrek!* (1990), a delightful parody of "Beauty and the Beast," literally attacked the Disney Studio by drawing parallels to the autocratic manner in which Michael Eisner, head of the Disney Corporation at that time, conducted his business. Lord Farquaad, who controls a sanitized Disney world in perfect symmetry, is a caricature of Eisner. The dictator Farquaad banishes all fairy-tale creatures from his kingdom because he dislikes anything connected to fantasy. Farquaad/Eisner wants to sanitize the world. The frightened fairy-tale characters flee to Shrek's swamp and disturb him so much that he demands that Farquaad take them back. Farquaad agrees if the ugly ogre will rescue the princess Fiona from a dragon. After a number of hilarious escapades, Shrek not only saves Fiona but also wins her heart, and Farquaad is exposed as a petty tyrant. Meanwhile, all the fairy-tale (lower-class, weird, and improper) characters make their home in Shrek's swamp along with Fiona, who will marry him and have his children in sequels. At the end of this film, Shrek, Fiona, and the fairy-tale creatures decide to remain on the margins of society where they are accepted and happy despite their bizarre looks and ways. Ironically, the swamp is their utopia, or at the very least, their refuge from normality.

It is thus from the margins, from the outside, from beneath, that unconventional forces happily create and produce fairy-tale films that compel those who are established in the culture industry to question themselves. They know deep down that they are helpless without the creative artists, thinkers, and workers on the margins. And it is from the margins that unanticipated fairy-tale films are created to challenge the "well-made" positivist cinematic fairy tales that are at the center of the status quo in each society and country of the world. I do not mean to suggest that everything produced on the margins is culturally necessary and valuable for enriching our lives. But, as this book that covers the world intends to show, many strange fairy-tale films have a vitality that sparks our imagination as thinkers and artists in a way that "well-made" fairy-tale films do not. Whether utopian or dystopian, they compel us to confront our social realities and to imagine better worlds and, yes, better human beings. To close this chapter I discuss several marginal examples to demonstrate how filmmakers contest the rigid filmic interpretations of fairy tales that are related to the exceptional films I examined at the end of *The Enchanted Screen*.

As I mentioned above, several bombastic cinematic adaptations of "Snow White" in the past ten years demonized women, stereotyped the fraught relationship between stepmother and stepdaughter, and trivialized some of the tale's key themes. In contrast, Jacco Groen's *Lilet Never Happened* (2012) and Pablo Berger's *Blancanieves* (2012) offer sobering perspectives that provide insights into the particular cultures from which they originate and into universal problems that young women encounter as they reach an age when they must take charge of their own bodies and possible futures.

Despite her talent and intelligence, thirteen-year-old Philippina-American Lilet, who sees herself as Snow White, has no future. She will not become a princess or queen and rule a magnificent realm regardless of how much she tries. As Groen's film commences and the titles flash on the screen, a pretty adolescent girl strides down a brightly lit street, walking gingerly by nightclubs and peddlers. She wears a blouse, jean shorts, and sandals. It is as if she owns the streets, and after she vainly tries to proposition a man, she moves into another district, a shantytown, where an old toothless woman asks, "Snow White, any customers?" The old woman smirks. The girl does not reply but arrives at a place where younger boys are squatting and voraciously eating food. They offer her some, but she declines. They are starving. Then a voiceover in English tells a story. Once upon a time there was a girl in the Philippines named Snow White, who wanted to become an actress. But one day her mother and stepfather made her eat a poisoned apple—we are shown a made-up Lilet

being offered as a prostitute to an elderly man by her mother. As she is taken away by the man, the voiceover comments that after eating the poisoned apple, she fell asleep and has been waiting for a long time for someone to kiss her and wake her up.

Groen's disturbing film stems from his experiences in Manila where he met a young prostitute in a mental asylum; she serves as the protagonist in his documentary-like fairy-tale drama based on several years of research. Similar to the German documentary plays of the 1970s and the American political documentary films of the late twentieth century, *Lilet Never Happened* is a fictional account of child prostitution that speaks more potent truths than some allegedly factual documentaries. In *Lilet*, the fairy tale about Snow White is transformed into a scintillating account of a thirteen-year-old girl, who holds on to her dream of becoming a movie star and being rescued by a prince, while she is compelled to work in a nightclub/brothel with other prostitutes symbolically representing the seven dwarfs. A blonde Dutch social worker tries to counter the witch/mother and offer her help, but Lilet is bent on using her street smarts to save herself—an impossible task. While Groen adapts the tale of "Snow White" to speak out against child prostitution, he is never didactic, nor sentimental. He rewrites the story to reveal, in contrast to films like the Indian *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), that impoverished children will invariably be drained of their potential and will very rarely if ever enjoy the fairy-tale ending. In this respect, Groen's cinematic adaptation undermines the "well-made" fairy-tale film in form and content (see Figure 1.2).

Pablo Berger's *Blancanieves* (2012), a black-and-white silent rendition of "Snow White," also subverts the "well-made" fairy-tale film. It takes place in Seville during the 1920s and can be considered a carnevalesque adaptation of both the Grimms' and Disney's versions of "Snow White." However, unlike Groen's critique of child abuse, there is no explicit political agenda here. Berger's film can be regarded as transgressive more than anything else, and by ironically queering the classical versions of "Snow White," he ridicules their sentimentality and uncovers their happy endings as illusory. The story is quickly told through nostalgic music and grainy black-and-white images. A famous, wealthy bullfighter is gored by a bull and becomes paralyzed. At the same time, his wife dies in childbirth. The bullfighter rejects his newborn daughter whose grandmother becomes her caregiver. Meanwhile, a sinister nurse takes care of the bullfighter, marries him for his money, and connives to dominate the household. Eleven years later, the daughter returns to the family because the grandmother dies, and the bullfighter realizes that the wicked nurse is exploiting him. As he spends time with his daughter Snow White and comes to love her, he teaches her everything he knows about bullfighting. Realizing how much the bullfighter cares about his daughter, the

FIGURE 1.2 Angry Lilet yells at a client, *Lilet Never Happened* (2012).

nurse decides to kill Snow White to prevent her from inheriting her father's money, but she only manages to kill her husband the bullfighter, while Snow White escapes into the woods and is discovered by six dwarfs in a caravan. She joins the members of this troupe, who work in a traveling freak show, and she teaches them about bullfighting. Eventually, they convince her to cross-dress and disguise herself, and she becomes a professional bullfighter in her father's likeness. Soon Snow White becomes famous, and the stepmother discovers who she is and seeks to kill her with a poisoned apple. She succeeds, but the dwarfs pursue her and cause her to be gored to death by a bull. Afterward, they put Snow White into a glass coffin, and she becomes part of the freak show in which spectators must pay to try to wake her. In the final scene the dwarf who loves her the most enters the coffin to sleep with her as he does at the end of each performance. When he does this, a tear trickles down from Snow White's eye along her cheek.

A sad film told through an ironic lens, *Blancanieves* is prevented from becoming a well-made fairy-tale film through estrangement. The film's darkness and subversive twists not only eclipse those offered in the classical Disney film, but also signal that the recent American blockbuster films such as *Mirror, Mirror* and *Snow White and the Huntsman* are nothing but a couple of faint flashes in the pan that should be allowed to flicker out into nothingness. Though *Blancanieves* is no masterpiece, as a marginal work, it offers an alternative to those films that are nothing but bland entertainment. Indeed, *Blancanieves* endeavors to deal with the harsh realities of child abuse and filicide that are also depicted in the American film *Hanna*. In the case of *Blancanieves*, however, the witch's end does not bring a resolution but demands reflection on the part of viewers.

The same could be said about Clio Barnard's 2013 filmic adaptation of Oscar Wilde's "The Selfish Giant." Barnard completely revamps Wilde's sanctimonious religious fairy tale in which the Christ child tempers a mean giant's selfish heart. The giant learns that children can bring him great joy if he allows them to play in his garden, and for his kindness he is rewarded with a trip to heaven. Instead of fostering Wilde's preposterous illusions, Barnard sets her film in the impoverished town of Bradford in northern England where two working-class boys, Arbor and Swifty, spend their days collecting scrap metal and selling it to the monstrous junkyard owner, ironically named Kitten (see Figure 1.3). He has greed written all over him and also wants to make huge sums in harness racing.

FIGURE 1.3 Kitten and the boys in the junkyard, *The Selfish Giant* (2013).

He allows the talented Swifty to train his horse. But when the boys begin to steal scrap metal from Kitten's yard, the "giant" becomes more ruthless and sends them to off to rob a piece of high voltage electric transmission wire to repay him. Unaware of the danger, Swifty is electrocuted while trying to help Arbor to lift the wire. In an unusual gesture of humanity, Kitten accepts the blame for Swifty's death and is sent to prison, while Arbor goes to Swifty's home and persuades the boy's mother to forgive him and to allow him to share her grief.

The Selfish Giant appears on one level as a social realist depiction of a depraved junk owner's destruction of a close friendship between two poverty-ridden teenagers in a region of contemporary England that looks like a devastated war-torn city unfit for human habitation. But the film has greater ramifications, as Will Brooker writes:

> The selfish giant is the system of government that prompts Kitten to run a semi-legal shadow industry, but polices him for his enterprise, keeping him on the edges of official business without safety checks or healthcare. The selfish giant is the society that structures the lives of Arbor, Swifty and their adult equivalents, boxes them into poverty and offers them only limited and risky avenues for escape: the society that keeps them in these desperate, reckless spaces where they run, dodge, swerve, struggle and sometimes die. This ultimately is the power of Barnard's modern fable, that is not a fairy tale, but—in its broader sense if not its specifics—a true story.
>
> (2013)

This is exactly the point that Barnard and other marginal filmmakers want to make: a fairy-tale film today cannot be a "well-made" narrative if it seeks any relevance in our lives.

This perspective can also be seen in the experimental animated fairy-tale films such as the Czech Jiří Barta's *Toys in the Attic* (2009). Commenting on the premiere of the film in New York, Manohla Dargis notes:

> Mr. Barta is more than a decade younger than his compatriot the animator Jan Svankmajer, and less well known, at least in the United States. "Toys in the Attic" isn't as unsettling as Mr. Svankmajer's work, but even in this English-language version, it's scarcely a cute and cuddly family film of the generic type often foisted on American tots. Leaving a screening, a colleague remarked than it may not be right for children, though much depends on the kids. In truth, the movie should be manna for anyone who likes animated fantasies without wisecracks, commercials and overwrought warbling about self-actualization, meaning that it's suitable for those who will grow up either to be the next Tim Burton or simply to enjoy the movies.
>
> (2012)

The plot is simple, while the artwork and politics are intricate. In a forgotten trunk in a musty attic, divided into East and West, a cute antique doll by the name of Buttercup keeps house for a cuddly teddy bear, who is the stationmaster for toy trains, a marionette named Sir Handsome, who resembles Don Quixote, and a clay shape-shifting blob, Laurent, who speaks with a French accent. Every day Buttercup bakes a birthday cake for one of the toys in the attic who roll dice to see whose birthday it will be. This idyllic community in the West is infiltrated by toy spies from the East, and one day Buttercup is kidnapped by secret agents from the East under orders of the bald Head of State of the Land of Evil, who has a human half body, green skin, and smokes cigars. As soon as they are aware of what has happened, Teddy, Sir Handsome, and Laurent set off to rescue Buttercup, joined by a Yiddish-speaking mouse, introduced as inventor Madame Curie. Ironically,

Buttercup does not really need their help, for this modest unassuming housewife-doll turns into a courageous and feisty protagonist, who eventually causes the head of state to collapse, that is, to bring about his own downfall.

The political parable is clear, and though it is enjoyable to view the film as a parody of Eastern European states before and after the fall of the wall in 1989, the art of the stop-motion animation is what makes this film so captivating. Barta, who made a brilliant animated fairy-tale film, *The Pied Piper*, in 1986 with hand-carved wooden puppets and sets that recalled German medieval art and expressionism and dealt with the corruption of totalitarianism, takes a different approach in *Toys in the Attic*. Here every found object that has been cast away or neglected is reincarnated and given new life. It is as though the imagination knows no bounds and must preserve its freedom so that all objects and beings can live with one another in a gentle, but weird, community. Again it is the queering of the fairy tale in which all objects, species, atmospheres, and spaces intermingle, which suggests we can approach the genre and create new narratives in innovative ways. Here the attic becomes a tangible utopia indicating that old worlds can come alive again in new forms.

I see a similar motivation behind Garri Bardin's brilliant claymation animated film, *The Ugly Duckling* (2010), an explicit critique of the authoritarian Russian state. Bardin also produced two superb short parodies, *Grey Wolf and Little Red Riding Hood* (1990) and *Puss in Boots* (1995), which mocked Russian social and cultural policies both before and after 1989. With *The Ugly Duckling*, his first feature-length animated film, he pressed beyond his earlier work in a compassionate portrayal of a bewildered duckling who is constantly stepped upon and marginalized. Moreover, Bardin employs the music of Tchaikovsky and sets the action in a squalid coop in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by majestic lakes and forests that the conformist members of the huge coop can never enjoy. As Richard Scheib remarks:

> Bardin depicts the coop as one modelled along the lines of the classic Communist regime in its heyday. Everybody sings rousing anthems in unison about how great their coop is than any other. There are plentiful parades and dances arranged to show off their glory, even scenes where they come out showing off their production of eggs. Up against this, Bardin clearly favours the downtrodden and pitifully rejected ugly duckling as a voice of non-conformity—the fairytale is broad enough that the ugly duckling can be read as everything from the spirit of individuality to the voice of artistic freedom.
>
> (2012)

Bardin transforms Andersen's tale from a celebration of biological elitism, that is, hereditary rule, to one that depicts the duckling's longing for beauty and freedom. Incidentally, the duckling is not ugly in this film but sweet-looking and forlorn. He tugs at audiences' hearts in his desire to test the limits of his confines and to break out on his own into nature where he is fortunate to join the flying swans, symbols of liberty.

Coda

The five marginal films that I discuss above contest the "well-made" blockbuster fairy-tale films from 2000 to 2015, but are very rarely shown or distributed in English-speaking countries. There are well over 50 other quality fairy-tale films that I could add; some are discussed in other chapters. But they have unfortunately been marginalized by the monopolistic film industry, and this systematic control means that the majority of viewers will not have heard about, nor seen, these films. In addition, they can be difficult to obtain through online stores or services. This unfortunate situation means the cultural tsunami has driven such films to the margins of global cultural

production. However, many unconventional fairy-tale films have an impact. Most of the innovative impulses in fairy-tale aesthetics and contents of fairy-tale filmmaking come from the margins of the film industry, and most filmmakers, talented or conventional, are aware of these films. Directors such as Švankmajer, Bardin, Ocelot, Miyazaki, Breillat, Barta, Groen, and others have influenced well-known, successful American and British filmmakers. Yet, given the tendencies of major film studios to put their money into blockbusters or celebrity films and to cater to the lowest possible denominator of viewership, it is debatable whether the unique marginal fairy-tale films will ever enter the mainstream or form a major part of the cultural tsunami. But perhaps it is better this way. Perhaps it is better always.

Notes

1 For critical analyses of these TV series, see Hay and Baxter (2014); Schwabe (2014); and Willsey (2014).
2 See Elias (1978) and my discussion of his work in Zipes (2006b).
3 See Stanton (1957), Taylor (1967), and Cardwell (1983).
4 See the film *Mickey Mouse Monopoly: Disney, Childhood & Corporate Power* (2002).

2

"MY LIFE AS A FAIRY TALE"

The Fairy-Tale Author in Popular Cinema

Kendra Magnus-Johnston

Though somewhat contestable as a self-contained, readily identifiable genre in and of itself, broadly described, a biopic is any film "that depicts the life of a historical person, past or present" (Custen 1992, 5). The biopic "narrates, exhibits, and celebrates the life of a subject," and does so "in order to demonstrate, investigate, or question his or her importance in the world" (Bingham 2010, 10). This chapter focuses on a sampling of live-action biopics that pursue the representation of authors and collectors of the fairy-tale canon. These cinematic portrayals create a paratexual dimension to the fairy tale that exists *across* these films[1] and offer insight into the cultural value of fairy tales themselves and about cinema as a narrative mode. For the sake of continuity and cogency, I treat adaptations author by author. Most films discussed are American, and are a far cry from what could be considered independent or unconventional productions. The chapter concludes by considering the most recent focus on fairy-tale filmmakers, namely, icons Georges Méliès and Walt Disney, and the critical potential offered by depictions from the margins of popular cinema.

Famous Authors and their Function on the Silver Screen

For many, thinking about fairy tales in the present moment invariably calls to mind the famous authors who became mass-mediated tellers, the authorities generally recognized by a modern reading public.[2] For Hans Christian Andersen, Charles Perrault, or the Brothers Grimm (among many others), their names, their lives as historical persons, and their roles as intermediaries have provided considerable fodder for the modern culture industry. But these authors are not alone. Numerous canonical writers have been subjected to fictional resurrections. Fictionalizations have the capacity to rejuvenate the timeworn stiffs into appealing, occasionally errant young men and women,[3] who—through prowess and ingenuity—become successful adult members of society. Especially for fairy-tale authors, these works have the curious habit of recasting the signals of queer[4] tendencies—life-long bachelorhood, unconsummated marriage, and eyebrow-raising relations with children—into family-friendly caricatures whose quirks are attributed to their creative spirit or used for comic effect.

Historical figures depicted in popular film are—like the era in which they lived—unknowable, yet they remain forever tethered to the fictions they created. Michel Foucault positioned the author as an ideological product and identified the "author function" as the cultural and historical assumptions governing the production, classification, and consumption of literature (1979, 159). The discursive fictional identity of popular authors—who I imagine J.M. Barrie *really* was, for

example—can be integral to the cultural connotations of their work. In concert with Foucault's argument and in response to Roland Barthes's suggestion to liberate texts with the "death of the author," Kate Douglas explains that "those who now resurrect authors have found similarly specific and empowering functions for them: to sell books, to manipulate the economic power of the celebrity product, and to strengthen the social importance of the arts community and its cultural capital. Authors are useful to consumer culture" (2010, 71). In short, the author is fictionalized and made functional for profit. This arrangement is historically linked to the mass production and consumerism of books as a commercial enterprise. The marketability of the author is not only used to *sell* literature, but their cultural capital is exploited in contemporary popular film.

These claims are especially problematic for authors who cannot contest the terms of their representation. Jack Zipes baldly asks, "is it ethical to produce a film that not only warps Andersen's intentions as a serious writer, but also overshadows his work and his life to such an extent that he and his tales are literally obfuscated and erased?" (2011, 274). While contemporary representation may rejuvenate or modernize artists who have long since died, transparently false autobiographical accounts (biopics) can obscure/deny the legitimacy of the artist's cultural contribution(s). More than debunk these films' historical inaccuracies and anachronisms, exploring the recurring themes and depictions has revelatory potential. For if the appeal of contemporary biopics, as Dennis Bingham argues, "lies in seeing an actual person who did something interesting in life, known mostly in public, transformed into a character" (2010, 10), examining these characterizations can reveal who filmmakers desire these authors to be, or perhaps more intuitively, who filmmakers need them to be when they reflect on their own accountability for contemporary adaptation.

Because traditional fairy tales are retellings and/or adaptations of timeless stories, fairy-tale authors present unique subjectivities for adaptation. When adapting a storyteller's life for a biopic, filmmakers often emphasize the singularity and importance of the stories the figure produced, rather than the details of her/his life; this process becomes manifestly reflexive for filmmakers who identify with their subjects' creative pursuits. Consequently, fairy-tale authors are more than just framed by their cultural production; they are read through it. In other words, the lives of fairy-tale authors are repackaged as fairy tales.

The multiply-mediated conditions of contemporary cultural reception necessitate that scholars recognize the paratextual dimensions that infuse reading practices. The mobilization of authorship as a commodity to be packaged alongside market goods is conspicuous in these biopics as a paratext to their literary productions. To use French literary theorist Gérard Genette's definition of paratext, these films and the characters/stories they relate offer a "threshold," otherwise understood as the "fringe of a printed text" that controls the reading experience (1997b, 2). This threshold is a "zone not only of transition," between the text and off-text, "but also of transaction" because it is a space that structures the public reception of the text (2). Jonathan Gray extends Genette's analysis to consider the proliferation of contemporary mediation. This dimension creates a complex geography of consumption that is generated by industry as well as authors and consumers; Gray argues that paratexts have "considerable power to amplify, reduce, erase, or add meaning" (2010, 46). Authorial identity, however, in the sense that I am implying, cannot be cleanly categorized as something controlled by any single source; it is part of a constellated imaginary reformulated over many years, and in this case, generations.

Hans Christian Andersen: Upbeat Song-Singer, Tale-Spinner, and Downtrodden Day-Dreamer

There have been two live-action American biopics about Hans Christian Andersen.[5] Samuel Goldwyn produced the first in 1952 and the second, an American-British-German co-production with Hallmark Entertainment, was released in 2003. Despite the half-century separating them and the