

**WHOEVER SAID CHANGE WAS GOOD:  
THE TRANSFORMING BODY OF THE DISNEY VILLAINESS**

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## Abstract

This dissertation examines female figures in Disney animation through the lens of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA), a system for observing and articulating movement qualities. Drawing from six major films released between 1937 and 2010, I focus my inquiry on how the bodies and movement of Disney's villainesses reflect and/or perpetuate cultural imaginaries of women. I identify the influence of several cultural tropes of femininity, including fairy-tale archetypes, ballet conventions, and the Hollywood *femme fatale*, and explore how they constellate social understandings of age, beauty, and desirability. Coalescing around the theme of physical transformation, the study investigates how consistent movement patterns both support character animation and reflect gender ideologies encoded in the bodies of these wicked women. Through a methodology grounded in LMA and drawing from dance studies, feminist theory, and Disney scholarship, I interrogate popular conceptions of women and evil, articulate how movement contributes to cultural meaning, and demonstrate LMA's value to cultural analysis and animation.

Dedicated to 2013-2019

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## Introduction

“I’m not bad, I’m just drawn that way.”

-Jessica Rabbit, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (Zemeckis 1988)

Growing up watching Disney films, my imagination was always captured by the romantic stories and exciting adventures of the brave, upstanding heroes and heroines. I got dressed in the morning in my *Lion King* t-shirt adorned with Simba and Nala, and went to bed at night in my *Little Mermaid* sheets festooned with images of Ariel. As I grew older, however, my attention turned toward the villains and villainesses of these stories—their cynical outlooks and flawed logic made them infinitely more interesting than the naive, staunchly moral protagonists. Mystery shrouded their backstories and inner lives. And it seemed that the most iconic villains were often women, and always middle-aged or older—why?

Returning to these evil female characters as an adult scholar, I revisited Disney’s animated films through an academic lens, and found that my interest was further piqued by a particular recurring theme: transformation. Prior to the development and prevalence of digital effects, CGI, and other technological enhancements, Disney’s animated films brought transformations to life in a way not yet possible in live-action film, creating magic through animation. Bodies shifted instantly into completely new forms yet, somehow, still conveyed to the audience that they were the same character. While several scholars have addressed the topic of transformation and metamorphosis in film, animation, or fairy tales (Da Silva 2002; Eisenstein 1941; Klein 1993; Propp 1928; Sobchack 2000), I grew curious about the role of movement in these transformations and what it contributed to establishing or contradicting a character’s personality. Returning to my interest in female villains and observing that they changed forms

significantly more than other character types, transformation became the basis of my exploration of female characters and evil in the Disney oeuvre.

I wanted to explore these topics of transformation and female villainy with a deep focus on movement and chose to apply Laban Movement Analysis as my framework. Laban Movement Analysis, or LMA, is a system for observing, describing, documenting, and interpreting movement. Though it is largely situated and employed in dance-related fields, LMA provides a detailed language for identifying underlying qualitative elements of any movement. I was drawn to LMA as a methodological framework because I am intrigued by its non-dance possibilities, and I believe that it can provide particular insight regarding the role of movement in animation—both how it contributes to characterization, and how it contains and reveals cultural meaning in Disney films. Importantly, LMA's intended use is not to assign value or judgment to the qualities observed, but rather to identify patterns or shifts in movement, which may then support the interpretation of meaning.<sup>1</sup>

In this research I explore not only how movement contributes to cultural meaning, but specifically how LMA is instrumental in uncovering these meanings. By addressing the gap that can be filled by bringing the fields of animation and movement analysis together, my thesis offers a unique, complex way of reading animated films through the lens of LMA. In focusing on movement and the body, I invest in a detailed methodology to uncover patterns and meanings in the characters being analyzed. Further, through my focus on female villains and transformation, LMA provides insight, more specifically, on Disney's patterns of female representation in its films.

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<sup>1</sup> An example of the difference between meaning and judgment: Through LMA I might identify a person's movement as having Bound Flow Effort. LMA would not dictate that Bound Flow Effort always correlates with anger, for example, but I, as the observer, might identify that the person under observation is using Bound Flow Effort to express anger in this instance.



LMA has been used in both critical analysis and cultural ethnography (Abdul Ghani 2017; Bartenieff et al. 1984; Bishko 2007; Daly 1988; Frosch 1999; Hanna 1988; Kaylo 2009; Ness 1992; Sklar 1991, 1994, 2000; H. Thomas 2003), yet it remains underused as a tool for cultural analysis of popular media, and animation in particular. Scholars outside dance studies often overlook movement as a means of imparting or uncovering meaning in visual culture, prioritizing other elements such as character appearance, plot, and mise-en-scène. However, the moving body has the capacity to convey vast amounts of meaning, particularly in animation, a medium grounded in the communicative potential of movement. LMA can serve as an incredible resource for understanding movement, but it has yet to be applied as extensively as it could be in animation analysis. Aiming to demonstrate the efficacy of this approach, my research is framed by three main questions, all of which I address by applying Laban Movement Analysis:

1. How does Disney reflect and/or perpetuate cultural imaginaries of women and evil through the bodies and movement of its female villains?
2. How are manufactured traits of an animated character transposed (or not) onto a new form when that character's body changes, and how do these choices contribute to character/personality animation?<sup>2</sup>
3. How do these two questions intersect? In other words, how does the theme of transformation underpin Disney's cinematic approach to women and evil? And

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<sup>2</sup> Character animation (or personality animation), which I will explore in more detail in Chapter One, refers to the principle and techniques of animation, and particularly the Disney brand of animation, involved in achieving emotional and visual verisimilitude, bringing the “illusion of life” (F. Thomas and Johnston, *The Illusion of Life* 9) to animated characters. The terms “character animation” and “personality animation” are often used interchangeably; however, there is a general preference in written material toward the term “character animation.” In following with this convention, I primarily use “character animation” throughout my writing, switching to “personality animation” only when I feel it is necessary in order to avoid confusion with more general usages of the term “character.”

conversely, how might cultural imaginaries of women and evil conveyed through Disney characters inform the choreography of these changing bodies?

In exploring these questions, I have focused my research on the following six female villains who undergo significant physical transformations in Disney animated feature films:

- The Evil Queen (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, Hand et al. 1937);
- Maleficent (*Sleeping Beauty*, Geronimi et al. 1959);
- Madam Mim (*The Sword in the Stone*, Reitherman 1963);
- Ursula (*The Little Mermaid*, Clements and Musker 1989);
- Yzma (*The Emperor's New Groove*, Dindal 2000); and
- Mother Gothel (*Tangled*, Greno and Howard 2010).

I employ LMA to engage with a deep analysis of the animated movement of each of these characters, and to identify movement-based patterns between villainesses of different films. In so doing, by uncovering patterns in Disney's representations of evil women, I demonstrate LMA's effectiveness as a tool for cultural analysis of animated film.

The animated transformation is central to my analysis. Here "transformation" refers, in this case, to a physical change in form or appearance rather than a figurative shift, such as a change of heart or descent into madness. It is important to note that the focus of my inquiry is not the actual moment or process of transforming, but the different movement qualities of two or more bodily incarnations of the same character. For example, how does the evil fairy Maleficent move in *Sleeping Beauty*? Once she has transformed into a dragon, what changes are present in her movement, or conversely, what commonalities exist between the two movement profiles?

Using LMA, I explore how a character's traits are translated onto a new body as a means of

character animation. Does the movement style change or stay the same, and how do those changes or consistencies reveal character traits and motivation?

Though these questions about transformation grounded the initial intentions behind my research, others emerged as I continued with my analysis. These new questions constellated around historical and cultural meanings regarding female morality, agency, age, and beauty; the role of movement and physical form as part of characterization; and the connection between movement and how a villainess is presented as serious or comical. As my findings expanded, my research direction also began to shift, and I grew curious about these aspects that I had not previously considered. I found that my transformation-based observations of these characters repeatedly came back to issues of female age as a prerequisite for villainy, a connection which continued to reveal itself not only over the course of my research but during the writing process as well. As a result, rather than completely turn away from my initial questions about transformation and character animation, I aligned the transforming villainess with these recurring themes of age, desirability, and popular images of female evil. Thus, this research offers a means of exploring how Disney absorbs and disseminates prevailing attitudes toward women and the moral value placed on their youth and appearance.

I have also found myself increasingly curious about the question of agency in animated characters and the implications inherent in the process of encoding ideologies in their movement “choices.” These characters’ personalities, intentions, and choices are constructed by a team of animators, creating a separation between the “minds” (animators) dictating behaviours and movements and the “bodies” (animated characters) performing them. How is the transmission of ideologies complicated by this additional layer of removal between encoding and decoding? Recognizing the animated character as a virtual, non-living creation of a team of animators,

several variables uncommon to LMA's usual applications present themselves, including the application of LMA to two-dimensional—and often non-human—forms, and the role of the animator in constructing the character's “inner” intentions and personality. Performance studies and feminist theory scholar Elizabeth Bell (1995) has noted that unlike a live, human body, every action of an animated body is carefully and intentionally premeditated by a team of animators, storyboards, and other creative members (Bell 108). Film scholar Donald Crafton (2013) complicates this premise by theorizing animated characters themselves as actors with agency, suggesting a more bidirectional relationship with both animator and audience. Sociocultural imaginaries regarding women thus intersect with the viewpoints of Walt Disney and other creators and directors at the Disney studio to inform each other through the production of these films. These varied approaches to the quite literally constructed nature of cartoons facilitate a variety of perspectives on the meanings conveyed and contained within these characters' movements and personalities.

### **Positionality and Major Influences**

I approach this research from a background in dance studies, rather than one in animation. I have studied Laban Movement Analysis for eight years, and I am in the final months of training as a Certified Movement Analyst and Somatic Practitioner (CMA-SP). As such, my entry point and initial focus was LMA, which I have used primarily as an observational tool in gathering movement analysis data for a cultural studies-based inquiry. Though my experience lies primarily in dance studies and LMA, I have continued to expand my knowledge of animation, fairy-tale analysis, and cultural studies throughout my work on this dissertation, in order to support my explorations. Further, though I have studied a number of different dance

forms and movement traditions, my positionality within dance studies is informed by my background primarily in ballet, and I carry the awareness that this background informs my observations and shapes how I use LMA. In the words of dance ethnographer Deidre Sklar, “not only does every dance genre emerge from and depend upon cultural traditions, so does every dance researcher and writer” (“On Dance Ethnography” 8). Further, just as my own positionality is present in my application of LMA as a research tool, LMA’s development within a Western context (which I will explore in greater detail in the literature review) informs the framework of movement elements and terminology delineated in the system.

As this dissertation brings together LMA and animation, I have conducted research in the areas of movement analysis and dance studies, animation and Disney studies, fairy-tale analysis, and cultural studies. The value of this interdisciplinary approach lies in its capacity to bring movement observation and meaning-making outside the realm of dance studies and onto the non-three-dimensional, non-human, non-dancing body. I believe that this value is twofold. From a cultural studies perspective, I propose LMA as a useful analytical tool and movement as a foundation for analysis of polysemic media artifacts. From a movement analysis perspective, I introduce animation as a new category of cultural material for movement-based exploration. Additionally, the work adds value through the sociocultural significance of its findings, which speak to the transforming body’s role in how Disney represents aging women as villains.

My inquiry was initially inspired and strongly influenced by the work of Certified Movement Analyst (CMA) and animation scholar Leslie Bishko, who brings LMA terminology into direct conversation with Disney's Animation Principles.<sup>3</sup> Bishko demonstrates the parallels

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<sup>3</sup> The Animation Principles refer to a collection of guidelines developed in the early years of the Disney studio, outlining animation techniques that served to create more realistic movement and characters. These guidelines were eventually codified into twelve Principles of Animation, or Animation Principles, which continue to be used throughout the animation industry (F. Thomas and Johnston, *The Illusion of Life* 47). I contextualize the Animation

between these two systems of understanding movement and identifies LMA's value in both the production and discussion of animation, with a primary focus on practical applications of LMA concepts that allow animators to create more authentic, believable characters through movement. Bishko's work provides a foundation on which my research is developed. However, unlike Bishko, I expand in the direction of discussion and cultural analysis rather than practical application. As such, I engage with cultural studies to explore how LMA can reveal meaning in existing animated film, rather than how animators can use it to imbue more meaning and verisimilitude in the creation process.

Over nearly a century of production, Disney has become a prominent source of what cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1973) refers to as “cultural encoding,” in which a message is constructed and circulated through verbal and nonverbal symbols, then “decoded” or interpreted by those who receive it. Through this dissertation I explore the role that animated movement plays in producing and reproducing cultural meanings in Disney films via Hall’s model of encoding and decoding, focusing specifically on gender presentation through female villain characters. I also demonstrate how LMA can be used to explore multiple links between Disney characters from different films, and I identify patterns based on three different ways of categorizing the characters in question. Each of these approaches allows for different ways of decoding meaning: by era of film production and release, by what “type” of villain they are (serious, comedic, etc.), and by transformation type. These three taxonomies of decoding form the structure for my analysis later in this dissertation. LMA thus allows me to uncover multiple codes in the characters being analyzed, providing a unique approach to analyzing movement in pop culture analysis.

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Principles further in the literature review in Chapter One, and I introduce and define specific Principles as they arise throughout my research.

While my application of LMA to animated movement is informed by Bishko, my approach follows fairy-tale and fantasy literature scholar Rebecca-Anne C. Do Rozario. Do Rozario's 2004 article, "The Princess and the Magic Kingdom: Beyond Nostalgia, the Function of the Disney Princess," explores the impact of time period and culture on the presentation of various Disney princess characters. This study has been influential in honing my own research focus and informing my diachronic character analysis. Do Rozario considers the historical and cultural context of film production for two eras of Disney princess films: the "Walt" era of the 1930s-1960s during which Walt Disney<sup>4</sup> was still alive and in charge of company operations, and the "Team Disney" era of the 1980s-1990s, during which the company was run by a management team led by CEO Michael Eisner (Do Rozario 35). She conducts a comparative analysis that situates five Disney princesses as representative of their time—not the diegetic time period of the story in which they exist, but the time period in which the film was produced: What does Snow White reflect of 1930s trends and sensibilities? How does Aurora portray shifting social attitudes in 1950s youth? What do Pocahontas, Ariel, and Jasmine tell us about predominant ideologies of the "girl power" era? I consider similar questions in my own research in terms of Disney's villainesses, examining what these more subversive female characters reveal about dominant gender ideologies, by using their movement as the primary lens through which to conduct this exploration.

In addition to Do Rozario, I found performance studies and feminist theory scholar Elizabeth Bell's writing on Disney women to be informative to my approach, if somewhat dated. Bell's 1995 essay, "Somatexts at the Disney Shop: Constructing the Pentimentos of Women's

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<sup>4</sup> In order to distinguish between Walt Disney the person and the entity of the Disney studio/company/corporation, I follow the common convention in Disney scholarship of referring to the entity as "Disney" and the man as "Walt Disney" or simply "Walt."

Animated Bodies,” links female Disney characters to “good” and “bad” roles based on age, establishing the underlying fairy-tale archetypes I likewise observe in Disney’s female heroes and villains and supporting my exploration of other cultural influences on these characters. I return to both Bell and Do Rozario in the literature review in Chapter One, as well as in a more detailed exploration of gender in Chapter Two.

My work positions the body, even the virtual one, as a means of knowledge and meaning-making. In *Corporealities: Dancing Knowledge, Culture, and Power* (1996), dance scholar Susan Leigh Foster presents the body as a “substantial category of cultural experience” that not only plays an active role as an object for transmitting cultural meaning, but also develops its own meanings and discourses (S. Foster, x). As Foster introduces, movement not only conveys meaning, it contains meaning. Dance scholar and sociologist Helen Thomas applies the body’s capacity to create or discern meaning to social and cultural theory, arguing the body as a site of experience, expression, and history (H. Thomas 2003). Further reflecting on the relationship between the body and meaning-making, dance ethnographer Deidre Sklar has written extensively on the concept of “kinesthetic empathy” as a means of relating or understanding, bringing the vast amount of cultural knowledge contained in both the body and movement to equal status with the mind and intellectual understanding (Sklar 1991, 1994, 2000). Although these and other dance scholars acknowledge the body’s central role in experiencing and interpreting the world, I have often been told by scholars outside of dance studies that my movement-centred approach to the cultural analysis of Disney animation is unexpected. At best, it is novel and interesting, and at worst, it is pointless, unless it focuses on something unique to animation—after all, why would I bother writing about animation if I can ask the same questions of live action? I believe that movement analysis has value in studying animation itself as a cultural artifact, regardless of how



unique the particular elements under consideration may be. Animation presents many elements and possibilities that are not available in live-action film and real bodies, including magical transformation, but its capacity to mimic live action also merits attention. There is value in exploring these less “unique” aspects of animation precisely because they are found in real bodies as well. As I address later in this dissertation, I believe that Disney’s desire to portray animated characters as realistically as live-action actors brings added significance to the movement subtleties LMA excels at identifying.

This research goes beyond simply demonstrating how dance studies can be used to explore another field; it proposes LMA, a system founded in dance<sup>5</sup> and focused on the body, as a methodology and theoretical framework that can serve as a foundation for cultural inquiry. I am also advocating for the possibility of a methodical approach through the framework of LMA to explore how movement is used to establish, maintain, and disrupt identity, and to create meaning/meaningfulness. Using LMA to observe how movement contributes to both character and cultural meaning on a two-dimensional, animated body presents a unique application of these tools that can contribute to the fields of dance and animation studies and simultaneously “erode” the boundaries of dance scholarship (H. Thomas 2). Bishko has demonstrated the value of LMA in creating animation, and Bell, Do Rozario, and others have offered analyses of Disney films and characters and their cultural meanings. I combine these two possibilities, conducting deep analyses of animated movement using LMA and correlating those analyses with other cultural and historical factors. In considering the topic of Disney animation from the uncommon entry point of movement, I expand on the potentialities of Bishko's work proposing LMA as a

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<sup>5</sup> Though founded in dance, LMA does have early roots in industrial settings, examining movement patterns of workers for efficiency and injury prevention (Preston-Dunlop 235). I will further detail the history and various applications of LMA in the literature review.

tool for understanding cartoon animation. To quote Rudolf von Laban, the creator of LMA, “a character, an atmosphere, a state of mind, or a situation cannot be effectively shown . . . without movement, and its inherent expressiveness” (Laban, *Mastery of Movement* 2). Bodies and movement are important in sharing knowledge and meaning, whether dancing, writing, or virtually existing.

### **Research Objectives and Methodology**

The overall aim of this dissertation is to demonstrate the value of LMA as a means of cultural analysis by investigating Disney’s patterns of female representation in its villains and by uncovering potential cultural meanings therein. In service of this goal, I have devised a number of objectives:

1. To use LMA to analyze the movement patterns of villainesses from six films across the Disney canon;
2. To determine patterns not only in these characters' movement profiles, but in the capacity for their movement to change or stay the same depending on the type of transformation they undergo;
3. To explore the relationship between Disney villainesses and traditional fairy-tale archetypes with special attention paid to female age;
4. To contextualize observations from objectives 1-3 diachronically in light of both animation development and gender ideology; and
5. To explore the connection between transformation and age via character animation-based observations.

These objectives underpin both the methodology and structure of the dissertation. Beginning with the movement analysis of each character's appearances in their respective films, I identify patterns both within the individual character's movement and among various groupings of characters based on the previously mentioned taxonomies of time period, villain type, and transformation type. I then explore how these patterns connect to and reflect the influence of fairy-tale archetypes and other female images such as the *femme fatale*, and I investigate potential meanings in these patterns and connections in a historical and cultural context. In this way I have situated LMA not only to expose but also to reflect or confirm my own readings of gender, age, and archetype in the films. In some instances, the use of LMA did not in fact confirm my expectations, and instead allowed me to reflect on why my observations differed from my assumptions.

### ***Description of Design/Method***

Following Bishko ("Animation Principles" 198), my methodology is divided into three stages: observation, which includes "watching movement, live or from video sources"; description, "using movement notation or writing to record observations"; and synthesis/analysis, or "making meaning of what is observed and described, finding patterns" (Bishko, "Animation Principles" 198).<sup>6</sup> Building on this basic structure, my process involves further situating the films and characters in relation to the films' source material (fairy tale, novel, etc.), cultural ideologies, and historical context through the work of scholars in various fields, as detailed in the literature review. I begin by outlining the selection parameters and delimitations for my case studies, before detailing the observation, description, and synthesis stages of my analysis.

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<sup>6</sup> Other movement analysts offer similar structures with varying degrees of detail (see C. Moore, *Beyond Words* 224; Fernandes 275).

### *Delimitations for Case Studies*

Because LMA is so central to my thesis and research objectives, my methodology developed in tandem with my research questions rather than out of them. In other words, I did not begin with a specific question about Disney animation and then decide to use LMA to answer it, but rather I set out to explore what LMA could reveal about Disney animation. As questions about physical transformation grew out of this exploration, I viewed numerous Disney animated features to determine which films to include as case studies and what delimitations to set. In considering the range of characters who fit my criteria (Disney characters, appear in animated feature films, transform physically during film), I found the need to further narrow the scope of my study. I chose to focus on villains, as I found that they represent the largest sample of transforming characters and demonstrate the greatest agency in transforming—Disney protagonists and most ancillary characters who transform usually do so because another character (villain or otherwise) does it to them.<sup>7</sup> Within this decreased sample, I chose to further delimit my study to focus on female villains, who tend to transform with higher frequency than their male counterparts. This decision felt at first like a practical choice, serving only to reduce my sample size. However, I quickly discovered that delimiting my study allowed me to identify several patterns in the nature of Disney's portrayal of women across nearly a century of filmmaking, as well as connections between these patterns and other popular images of women and evil. It was this discovery that led to the evolution of my initial goals, moving away from focusing only on transformation to explore larger questions of socially constructed imaginaries and cultural ideologies regarding women and evil in Disney animation.

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<sup>7</sup> Examples include Pinocchio in *Pinocchio* (Luske et al. 1940), the Beast/Prince Adam (and his staff of servants) in *Beauty and the Beast* (Trousdale and Wise 1991), and Tiana and Prince Naveen in *The Princess and the Frog* (Clements and Musker 2009). Exceptions to this pattern do exist, including Merlin in *The Sword in the Stone* and the Genie in *Aladdin* (Clements and Musker 1992).

I have limited my study to Disney animated feature films, excluding live-action and hybrid films by the same studio as well as non-Disney animation and the rapidly developing field of computer-generated or digitally enhanced effects in live-action film. This choice is in part for the sake of consistency, allowing me to explore the patterns within one studio's animation methods and consider their overarching ideologies. Further, as perhaps the most famous and commercially successful animation studio in the world, Disney in many ways presents a standard of comparison for other studios and their works, occupying a hegemonic position in both the animation industry and the larger cultural zeitgeist (which I discuss further in the literature review) that imparts significance to the ideologies they espouse in their films.

After all these delimitations, six films/characters remained that fit my criteria. By focusing on these six villainesses and building case studies around them, I have excluded numerous other characters that may complement or contradict various aspects of my observations, from non-transforming villainesses to transforming protagonists. Additionally, a handful of more recent Disney films likewise fulfill these criteria but simultaneously disrupt some of the patterns observed throughout this dissertation, subverting typical villainess roles and suggesting a shifting approach to female representation. I will explore both these potential lines of further inquiry in the Conclusion.

### ***A Note on Laban Movement Analysis***

LMA as a system has grown since its inception, as those who studied under Laban have continued to expand and refine his work posthumously. Several experts have written thorough introductions to LMA's principles and terminology (Bartenieff and Lewis 1980; Dell 1970; Fernandes 2015; Newlove and Dalby 2004), and I will not attempt here to reproduce their work.

Instead I explain terminology as it arises, either in the text or via footnote. I have also provided a glossary of LMA terms used in this dissertation in Appendix A. While many of these terms can generally be understood based on their common English-language definitions, further explanations often allow for a deeper understanding of their nuances.

It is germane to note that LMA terminology is typically capitalized in order to distinguish its specific meanings from more general usages of the same words. For example, the capitalized “Effort” indicates an LMA term referring to the dynamic qualities of how bodies move (Fernandes 143), as opposed to a more general meaning of exertion, trying, or making an attempt at something. The formal Animation Principles devised by the Disney studio are also generally capitalized (e.g. Squash and Stretch, Follow Through), resulting in high volumes of capitalization throughout the dissertation. The terminology of these two frameworks does not overlap, but rather parallels, and while I primarily use LMA terminology, when I introduce an Animation Principle I identify it as such.

## **Stage One: Observation**

### ***Fieldwork and Primary Sources***

After setting the delimitations of the project and selecting my six case studies, I watched each of the films a second time, focusing on the villainesses. During these early viewings I took minimal notes, focusing primarily on overarching patterns, first impressions, and observations to explore further. I then returned to each film for a closer viewing, making note of the time stamps for the respective villainess’s appearances on screen, briefly describing each scene, and noting the length of each appearance and when transformations occur. Finally, I conducted a detailed movement analysis of each character, viewing and reviewing all appearances in each film, both

with and without sound, and typing movement observation notes amidst frequent starting, stopping, and rewinding. I repeated this last step multiple times, each time focusing on a different category or specific element within LMA (Effort, Space, etc.).<sup>8</sup> Interspersed with these stop-and-start close viewings, I periodically reviewed each scene in its entirety for general impressions, overall patterns, and to check in with my observations on a larger scale (to avoid losing sight of the forest for the trees, as it were).

A key element in this stage of observation is the use of a broad focus to see what stands out as significant in a character's movement, serving as a guide to help determine on which elements to narrow my focus. As it would be impossible (or at the very least, impractical) to try to observe and describe every element to the degree of depth that LMA allows, this broad focus provides the ability to determine when to zoom out on larger patterns or zoom in on minutiae. This method of allowing the movement to "wash over you" and following threads of inquiry as they arise is described by a number of movement analysts (Bishko 2014b; Fernandes 2015; C. Moore 1988). Throughout this process of viewing and reviewing, I engaged physically with the material, embodying the movement I witnessed on screen both during and in between viewings. This process of embodiment allowed me to gain clarity in what I was observing visually, whether during this extended process of viewing, afterwards while trying to make sense of my copious notes, or at various later points throughout the writing process. It allowed me to "know" the movement in a different way. I invite the reader to experience the material in this way as well, moving my written observations (even while remaining seated) in order to feel them in the body while reading them on the page.

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<sup>8</sup> As definitions of Effort and Space are not necessary for further understanding at this time, see Appendix A for more information.

LMA-based movement observation often engages the viewer's kinesthetic empathy, the practice of "feeling with" the mover (Sklar, "On Dance Ethnography" 7). However, the bodies I moved and felt "with" were not real; there was no reciprocity or shared space when I observed them, even if I did move my own body as theirs moved on my screen. During this stage, and throughout the entire analysis process, I found myself reflecting on the sometimes-paradoxical application of LMA to two-dimensional, drawn forms that can only give the illusion of human movement. As a drawing, *Snow White's* Evil Queen, for example, has no weight, yet I discuss her tendencies toward Strong versus Light Weight Effort<sup>9</sup> in my written reflections. The characters in my study are not real people with brains and thus cannot have their own motivations or intentions, yet I reflect on how their movement qualities indicate their personalities, attitudes, and even goals. I consider factors such as pathways and distance covered in space in their movement, and yet the space they occupy does not truly exist. *The Sword in the Stone's* Madam Mim may bounce all around her cottage, but she technically only uses the small amount of space that exists in the flat cel upon which she is animated—or the space of the screen on which she is viewed, or perhaps the piece of film on which her animated image has been captured. To fully explore and elaborate upon the intricacies of the animated illusion and how it relates to a system and vocabulary based upon three-dimensional movement would require a level of theoretical discussion beyond the scope of this paper; however, I find these contradictions and questions fascinating and look forward to investigating them further.

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<sup>9</sup> Weight Effort refers to "changes in the quality of the body weight, becoming either light [Light Weight Effort] or forceful [Strong Weight Effort]" (Dell 20). "Weight" in LMA terms is not related to an individual's measurements in pounds or kilograms.



### ***Source Material and “Archival” Research***

It was important in this research to familiarize myself not only with each of the six films I decided to study, but also with the source material on which they were based. I read multiple versions of the “Snow White,” “Sleeping Beauty,” and “Rapunzel” fairy tales, Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Little Mermaid” (1837), T. H. White’s *The Sword in the Stone* (1938), and Mark Twain’s *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881), the closest form of source material to be used for *The Emperor’s New Groove* (Silverman 305).<sup>10</sup> For the fairy tales, I cross referenced texts from anthologies by fairy-tale scholars Martin Hallett and Barbara Karasek (2002), Maria Tatar (2002), and Jack Zipes (2001), comparing multiple translated versions of each tale for consistency.

I also viewed additional relevant visual media, including other animated Disney features, live action film and television adaptations of the six selected films, and various live embodiments of the characters, such as Disneyland park characters and stage performances. In the case of *Sleeping Beauty*, I viewed multiple versions of the Tchaikovsky/Petipa ballet *The Sleeping Beauty* (1890), and even more versions of Carabosse’s scenes via online clips. As I was unable to access official Disney archives (as I will discuss later in this chapter), I visited museums and special exhibits and accessed bonus features on DVD copies of each film, many of which featured interviews with animators, producers, and in one case, audio of Walt Disney himself discussing the film *Snow White*. Other pseudo-archival material included publications on the Disney company and/or specific films and characters distributed by Disney-owned presses or authored by former Disney artists and production members, as detailed in the literature review.

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<sup>10</sup> While early drafts of the film’s script loosely followed the premise of *The Prince and the Pauper*, it had dropped this literary connection by its final version (Silverman 305).

## Stage Two: Description

### *Organizing Data*

A common tool in movement analysis is a coding sheet,<sup>11</sup> which can function as a checklist or questionnaire with key LMA elements to keep in mind during observation. I developed my own version of a coding sheet that I used to collect the raw data (observed movement patterns) through visual and kinesthetic observation, forming my field notes. I processed the notes for each film by converting them into chart form, with columns to sort my observations based on which main category of LMA they fell under (Body, Effort, Shape, or Space, commonly referred to by the acronym BESS)<sup>12</sup> and rows to separate each appearance or scene within the film. While this conversion process did not ultimately contribute directly to the final presentation of movement analysis data, it proved to be an important step. Attempting to categorize my observations allowed me to note which elements I struggled to place and needed to revisit. I was able to further process my findings and begin to recognize patterns and tendencies, not only across different characters, but also between one character's different scenes. I determined what movement elements I identified as most significant and why: Did they reflect an important aspect of the character's personality or motivation? Did they contribute to a regular pattern in the character's movement, or perhaps a pattern across multiple case studies?

I ultimately returned to my original non-charted notes, incorporating the movement analysis into individual film summaries organized around the villainess's appearances and featuring detailed movement descriptions. For this task, the chronological nature of my

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<sup>11</sup> See Bishko ("Animation Principles" 199) and Fernandes (285-86, 290-95) for examples of coding sheets.

<sup>12</sup> LMA terminology generally falls under one of these four categories, or Modes of Intent. Though these four categories integrate with each other and are always present in all movement (Fernandes 85), identifying which category's elements appear to be most significant or crystallized in someone's movement can provide a useful place to begin analysis. Definitions of each category can be found in Appendix A.

shorthand notes was more useful than the categorized charts in most cases. However, certain films, such as *The Sword in the Stone*, lent themselves better to a semi-chronological, semi-BESS-based organization, due to the large number of transformations the film's villainess, Madam Mim, undergoes during the one scene in which she appears.

### **Stage Three: Synthesis**

After the observation and description stages, I synthesized my findings, identifying and articulating movement patterns I had begun to observe in the previous stages. I identified other patterns I encountered across the six films, including those related to age, appearance, behaviour, and gender; explored their possible links to the characters' movement patterns; and applied historical and cultural lenses to interpreting these connections. This process yielded intersectionalities of movement patterns with patterns of female representation and allowed me to consider which cultural meanings might be encoded in these characters and why. Out of this step, I formed the three aforementioned taxonomies, which constitute the three main analytical chapters of this dissertation. Each taxonomy prioritizes a different lens for decoding meanings in the characters' movement patterns—patterns based on the film's production time period, patterns based on the “type” or role of the villain (i.e. what “kind” of villain they are—funny, scary, etc.), and patterns based on type of transformation. The time-period taxonomy and villain-type taxonomy primarily reflect the cultural situatedness of each film, while the transformation taxonomy prioritizes addressing the role of movement in character animation, a key component of Disney's work.

## Changing Directions

Initially, I designed each case study to form its own chapter, beginning with a summary of the film, source material (fairy tale, novel, etc.), and any other influences; continuing into the in-depth movement analysis described above; and ending with a synthesis of the patterns found in the movement analysis and the meanings that I extrapolated from them. I prioritized unfiltered movement observation and LMA terminology in these chapters, followed by varying amounts of comparative analysis, whether between a character's different physical forms, between the villainess and another character in the film, or between villainesses from multiple films. This method resulted in a rigidly structured, clearly delineated presentation of the six case studies. Not only did these clear-cut divisions impede a cohesive, interconnected exploration of the intersecting patterns found between films and characters, I also found that reading six thirty-page chapters composed of thirty to fifty percent detailed movement analysis was a lot to ask of any reader (myself included). Ultimately, I relocated the summaries and detailed analyses to appendices, with synopses of each film and corresponding source material in Appendix B, and full, descriptive movement analyses for each case study in Appendix C. I have instead focused the main text on broader patterns and included select movement highlights as evidence in the analytical chapters. Even with this shift in direction, the time spent observing, writing, and rewriting each character's analysis proved imperative to my research, allowing me to observe patterns in movement that ultimately led to my shift in focus, from the technicalities of transformation to the interconnectedness of gender- and age-based representations of evil women. My current chapter structure positions all of the case studies in relation to each other through three different lenses, forming the taxonomic groupings of time period, villain type, and transformation type.

It is also important to note the focus I placed on process during the description stage. Because movement analysis is continuous and ongoing, the documented field notes in Appendix C do not represent a static understanding of the movement I observed, but rather offer a snapshot of one moment in time. I have continued to make new observations and reconsider previous conclusions over the course of writing and refining my work, and this appendix represents only one stage of the analysis process. Further, just as it was important in the observation stage to spend time with the films and characters and get to know them and their movement both visually and in my own body, it was also necessary to review, organize, and reorganize my notes as I grew familiar with the characters' movement in this written format as well. This process at times took on a quality of "reconstructing" the observed movement in my body based on my notes and memory, checking in to ensure that it agreed with what I had described. I could not help but feel like a baker during these times, making the academic equivalent of a puff pastry—kneading dough, folding it into a new shape, and letting it rest and rise, repeating the cycle as many times as necessary before it was ready to go in the oven. While those charts and detailed summaries were ultimately discarded, I believe they were essential in producing the light, flaky layers of my research.

## **Limitations and Challenges**

### ***Limitations***

Though I have mentioned why I determined LMA to be the best choice of methodology for this research, it is not without its limits as a system. Somewhat paradoxically, LMA presents limitations grounded in both objectivity and subjectivity, an interplay that I explore in more depth in the literature review. What many scholars describe as LMA's "universal" or "style-

neutral” system of understanding and articulating movement (Bishko, “Empathy in Virtual Worlds” 234; “Uses and Abuses” 24) often leads to it being taken up in overly prescriptive ways (Bishko, “Empathy in Virtual Worlds” 231). Additionally, as a system that describes, rather than prescribes, movement qualities, scholars and practitioners take pride in LMA’s applicability to a wide range of movement contexts. While I have taken advantage of this versatility in my own decision to apply it to the animated medium, suggestions that LMA is universal or style-neutral appear to neglect that it is a system that grew out of a specifically Western modern dance tradition and a white, European, male perspective.

Furthermore, the subjective process of observing movement can limit results based on the observer’s own understandings and positionality. Despite offering a framework of terminology that aims to describe movement neutrally, without assigning judgment or meaning, LMA’s movement observation process is inherently subjective. A limitation of my study, therefore, is that I am only one observer, and my use of LMA determines which elements I find significant. What catches my attention or what I deem to be important may not be the same as what someone else would identify as meaningful. Though eliminating my own subjectivity would be impossible, engaging multiple observers might mitigate this limitation in future studies following this methodology.

As I have mentioned previously, the scope of my study presents another limitation. Because of the delimitations made in selecting the six case studies, I have not compared my findings against other samples, such as comparing these six characters synchronically with other characters from the same films, considering male versus female villains, comparing the work at Disney to that of other commercial animation studios such as Dreamworks, or considering the patterns found in animation as compared to live-action representations of the same characters.

Ultimately, I view these limitations as directions for future inquiry, and will revisit them in the Conclusion.

### ***Challenges***

In addition to these limitations, I encountered several challenges throughout the research and writing processes. Though my largely inductive analysis process allowed me to follow my observations and see what patterns arose, establishing more concrete guidelines and allowing specific aspects of LMA to direct my analysis would have benefitted the early observation stage. As Bishko observes, “LMA looks at the big picture, but also captures the fine details” (Bishko, “Animation Principles” 198). I found that, by employing a soft, macro-level focus to guide me to zoom in on particular elements, I struggled with my desire to zoom in on all the elements and often became overwhelmed with data. Nonetheless, I do believe there is value in the more open approach I took, particularly when considering the unexpected lines of inquiry it led me to pursue.

This project’s primary focus, applying LMA to two-dimensional animation, has also been its main recurring challenge. I applied movement analysis tools that were created for the three-dimensional body existing in a three-dimensional space to a two-dimensional medium, the screen. The animated screen in particular deviates significantly from these usual observation parameters, displaying a virtual space which exists not even as a record of that which initially took place in a three-dimensional environment (as is the case in live-action film), but as a flat simulation of three dimensions (Furniss, *Art in Motion* 5). Distinguishing particular LMA elements or categories in animated movement often proved difficult, with variables including the medium's expression of three-dimensional bodies, movement, and space in only two dimensions;

a lack of weight, gravity, or internal structures and volumes in the bodies under analysis; and the separation of impulse (movement intentions from animators) from execution (movements performed by characters). I found this challenge manifested less in the practicalities of observation or in identifying LMA elements in the movement on screen—thanks to Bishko's work paralleling LMA concepts and Disney's *Animation Principles*—and more in comprehending the assumptions necessary to analyze character movement. As acknowledged above, I am aware that the “bodies” I analyze are not real bodies. They are not even filmed recordings of real bodies. They are a collection of lines and colors that have never at any point held real volume or weight, nor created physical shapes or used real space in three dimensions. As such, I must essentially “buy in” to the illusion of a three-dimensional world that the animators have created, and analyze the illusion or suggestion of movement, weight, bodies, etc. that I see.<sup>13</sup> In my written analysis I often acknowledge that a particular movement quality may be the result of an animator’s intentions in conveying something, while simultaneously carrying a plausible diegetic purpose as if the character were a real person with autonomy and movement habits. This complex understanding of animated characters as both constructed and agentic follows the concept of distributed agency present in Crafton’s approach to cartoon “actors,” which I explore in greater depth in the literature review.

Another significant challenge has been my own self-perceived lack of experience. When I began this research, I had taken approximately 225 hours of graduate-level coursework related to LMA, but I lacked formal training as a Certified Movement Analyst. I worked closely with CMAs when possible to ensure my observations did not go astray, and I continually

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<sup>13</sup> Bishko’s work, including her discussion of how the illusion of weight is achieved in animation (“Uses and Abuses” 30), has aided in my comprehension of some of these questions, as has the writing of former Disney animators Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston on character animation and verisimilitude (*The Illusion of Life* 59).



supplemented my knowledge from prior coursework and research through reading, auditing courses, and consulting with CMA mentors. At the time of this project's completion, I am finishing the eighteen-month CMA-SP (Certified Movement Analyst and Somatic Practitioner) training program. This training has been a boon to my research, but it has also presented a challenge not only in juggling these two commitments, but in continuously reevaluating my research and struggling to refrain from allowing my new knowledge and interests to take my work off course.

Practical challenges include denied access to the Disney archives in Burbank, California, a common experience for many Disney scholars (Bell et al. 1; Davis 4; Pallant ix).<sup>14</sup> Restructuring my work and moving the bulk of my analysis into an appendix also presented a challenge, but one that I recognized as necessary. Because somatic work values process, I was able to acknowledge the value in this refining, reorganizing, and redoing. Determining how and to what extent to incorporate LMA language in the text of the dissertation presented another practical challenge. I often struggled to create a balance between including the detailed descriptions central to my initial research intentions and providing a readable document not overloaded with jargon-like terminology.

### **Outline of Dissertation Structure**

This research is, in equal parts, an exploration into the cultural meanings found in these characters' representations and a demonstration of how LMA can be a useful tool in conducting such an exploration. As such, I begin by providing a review of relevant literature organized

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<sup>14</sup> Disney historian Amy Davis writes of the increasing difficulty for researchers to gain access to the Disney archives after the 1980s. The response that the "archives were no longer open to outside researchers" that she received in 1999 (Davis 4) is nearly identical to the one I received in 2016.

around the dual themes of Disney animation and LMA. In bringing these fields together and considering how they inform each other, I have drawn from a bricolage of subject areas: analyses of fairy-tale character archetypes and narrative structures; traditions and conventions of cartoon-style animation; cultural criticism of Disney, including research on cultural inscription of the female body; applications of LMA related to gender and cultural studies; and the intersection between LMA and animation.

Due to the diversity of the fields I engage, the literature review is largely organized by theme, bearing in mind that there is some overlap in how topics relate to each other. I first focus my discussion on key elements of Disney animation, beginning with an exploration of fairy-tale narrative structures and character archetypes. I also consider the possibility of Disney films as “modern fairy tales,” both in terms of their narrative structures and in how they reflect the culture and history of the eras in which they are produced. Moving from content to form, I turn to the development of Disney’s realistic approach to animation and the company’s place within the cartoon animation industry, and I conclude with a brief discussion of female characters and movement in Disney animation. I then shift to an overview of Laban Movement Analysis, situating Laban’s original work and outlining how the system has continued to develop after his death. Following a discussion of gender considerations in LMA, I explore a variety of research areas that incorporate LMA as a methodology, and I consider its complexities in terms of its various scholarly applications as a simultaneously “objective” and “subjective” system. After discussing the two major themes of LMA and Disney separately, I bring them together by exploring Bishko’s work on LMA and animation in detail, identifying the gap that my research fills.

As a result of my interest in female villains, my approach to this analysis is inherently gendered. Though Laban did not particularly focus on gender in his work, there is some evidence that he saw movement as gendered, based on his observations in British factories during World War II (Laban and Lawrence 1947). His partner in this industrial work, Warren Lamb, expanded this line of inquiry after Laban's death (Davies 2001). CMA and Jungian scholar Janet Kaylo engages Lamb's conclusions to further address questions of gender by exploring the connection between LMA and Jung's concept of anima/animus (Kaylo 2009). Following the literature review, I focus more closely on the impact of gendered cultural ideologies and media representation on Disney's female characters. I discuss patterns in the presentation of female villains versus protagonists, how these characters reflect gender-based power dynamics, and patriarchal ideologies that influence such representation. I then engage with literature on transformation in fairy tales and animation, as well as its connection with the *femme fatale* icon of early Hollywood, a major influence on the Disney villainess (Bell 115).

After introducing these topics and linking them with the key themes that inform my analysis, the core of my dissertation unfolds in the three taxonomies. Each taxonomy forms its own chapter and consists of three categories, within which I have organized the six case studies in various combinations. The first taxonomy organizes characters by time period, identifying patterns in presentation and movement based on the respective production periods of the six films. The second is based on the "type" or role of each villainess—whether the character's primary trait is meant to be serious, comedic, or somewhere in between. In the final taxonomy, transformation type, I group characters into categories based on transformations from human to animal, human to human, or other, and explore patterns in how movement signature is treated in pre- and post-transformation bodies. In the Conclusion, I review key observations from my

findings and discuss how they relate to existing scholarship in the fields of animation studies, Disney criticism, and applied LMA. Expanding the application of my findings, I address more recent Disney films and the company's evolving presentation of increasingly complex female characters, consider future directions for my research, and address this dissertation's contributions of knowledge to the field(s).

## **Chapter One:**

### **Literature Review**

This literature review can be loosely divided into two sections, based on the main themes of my research: Disney and Laban Movement Analysis. I have organized the Disney portion of the literature around three major components of Disney films: narrative, animation/form, and gender and movement. I begin by considering the role of the fairy-tale narrative central to so much Disney animation, focusing on those elements most relevant to my research: “universal” narrative structures, archetypal characters, and Disney films as modern fairy tales. I then explore the early history of American cartoon animation and the Disney-led shift from surreal to real in graphic form. Finally, I look at movement and the female body in Disney Animation, before turning my attention to Laban Movement Analysis. In the second half of the literature review, I begin with a discussion of Rudolf von Laban and an early history of LMA, followed by approaches to gender in LMA. I then explore various applications of LMA outside of dance, focusing on cultural studies and ethnography. I conclude by introducing Leslie Bishko’s body of work combining LMA and animation, and identifying where my research deviates from Bishko’s and the gap it addresses.

## **Disney**

### ***Narrative and Character***

Though they have drawn from a variety of source material for their films over the years, the Disney name has become nearly synonymous with fairy tales. The aim of this section is not to provide a deep exploration of the extensive field of fairy-tale analysis, but to explore those scholars and themes that overlap with my own consideration of fairy-tale narrative structure and

archetypal characters as they relate to the films I have chosen. This section of the literature review introduces the study of common folk- and fairy-tale narrative frameworks, allowing me to situate the female archetypes I explore later in my analysis. Understanding the placement of women in these narrative structures also contextualizes Chapter Two's discussion on how the active role of Disney's villainesses contrasts the often-passive role of its heroines.

### *Monomyth and Archetypes*

In his foundational work, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), literature scholar Joseph Campbell proposes a universal narrative structure known as the monomyth, or hero's journey. Campbell links psychoanalyst Carl Jung's psychological journey and archetypes of the collective unconscious to the narrative structure and character types found in mythology and fairy tales, arguing that certain characters, events, and obstacles manifest in all mythological traditions. Though his work may be considered outdated due to its structuralist understanding of a vast range of narrative traditions, it is significant both historically and in its ongoing influence on story development. For example, in his book, *The Writer's Journey* (1992), Hollywood screenwriter and former Disney story consultant Christopher Vogler offers a detailed instruction guide for screenwriters on how to apply Campbell's hero's journey and Jung's archetypes to plot structure in their own work, based on Vogler's time working at Disney in the eighties and nineties. The presence of these structures and archetypes in Disney's fairy-tale films, and the enduring influence of the hero's journey on contemporary storytelling, make Campbell's work relevant to my consideration of Disney villainesses as archetypal characters situated within a particular narrative formula.

Campbell's and other structuralist approaches to identifying universal narrative patterns, such as the work of folklorist Vladimir Propp (1928, 1946), tend to ignore the limitations of their positionalities in assigning "universal" labels to their observations. Several scholars have acknowledged Campbell's male-centric stance, which fails to consider girls and women as protagonists in the hero's journey.<sup>15</sup> Jungian psychotherapist Maureen Murdock and novelist Valerie Estelle Frankel are among those who value Campbell's work while remaining critical of its lack of female agency,<sup>16</sup> and have theorized variations on a heroine's journey in response to Campbell's male-centric monomyth. Murdock's *The Heroine's Journey* (1990), which functions primarily as a psychological self-help book, draws heavily from Jungian analyst Sylvia Brinton Perera's *Descent to the Goddess: A Way of Initiation for Women* (1981), which outlines the Mesopotamian goddess Inanna's self-sacrificial descent into the underworld as a vehicle for the Jungian process of individuation. Frankel's *From Girl to Goddess: The Heroine's Journey through Myth and Legend* (2010) provides a more literary and contemporary imagining of the heroine's journey. Frankel theorizes inherent differences between male and female experience and how these differences affect the literary structure of the journey, including the role of female archetypal characters such as evil witches and stepmothers. Author Victoria Lynn Schmidt (2001) applies the monomyth and archetype frameworks to creating storytelling guidelines for writers, demonstrating, like Vogler, that these narrative structures continue to influence creators. Influenced by Campbell and Perrera (Schmidt 3), Schmidt's distillation of both the hero's and heroine's journeys into condensed, parallel sequences creates a straightforward means by which to compare the two.

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<sup>15</sup> Campbell has responded that this exclusion stems from the primarily male focus and perspective of mythology.

<sup>16</sup> Campbell argues that women are "there" in the hero's journey, but simply exist at or as the goal or endpoint of the quest (Murdock 2).

These heroines' journeys offer a counterpoint to Campbell's approach, which places women in limited and usually passive, but often integral, roles. However, they still suggest the possibility of a universalizing narrative structure for female experience, thus presenting many of the same structuralist biases as Campbell's and others' approaches. Based on her in-depth expansion of Jung's female archetypes of the maiden, mother, and crone, which have become central themes of my analysis, I have found Frankel's heroine's journey in particular to offer insight on potential approaches to Disney's female villain characters, despite these limitations.<sup>17</sup> While Frankel's maiden archetype typically manifests in the form of the Disney princess or heroine, the mother and crone can be found in a number of supporting female roles, from fairy godmothers to kindly servants. Most often, however, they appear as villainesses. As such, I focus on the mother and the crone as they manifest in the characters of my study, and I discuss the maiden only in relation to these two older female archetypes.

With Campbell's hero's journey suggesting a paradigm wherein male characters are active subjects and female characters are passive objects, Schmidt suggests that this inactive role women are meant to occupy manifests as a major struggle in the heroine's journey. Schmidt identifies this struggle not within the journey itself, but in the woman becoming the active subject of her own tale to begin with, rather than the passive damsel in distress or reward at the end of the male hero's journey (Schmidt 272). The journey on which she embarks, and the challenges she faces in being able to set out upon it, are dictated by her female role, and her body plays a more significant role in her journey than the hero's due to its inherent otherness. Her body is often the source of her struggles, as in the Disney film *Mulan*<sup>18</sup> (Bancroft and Cook

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<sup>17</sup> Other scholars who explore these archetypes in their writing on women in fairy tales include Sibylle Birkhäuser-Oeri (1988), Marie-Louise von Franz (1997), and Marina Warner (1994).

<sup>18</sup> Based on the *Ballad of Mulan*, the Chinese legend of Hua Mulan, first transcribed in the sixth century.



1998), in which the majority of the heroine Mulan's trials and dangers arise from trying to hide her forbidden female body when she joins the army disguised as a man. She experiences the descent into darkness when she is discovered to be a woman and banished from fighting, and ultimately it is her reconciliation with and integration of the feminine that bring success and save the family of fellow soldiers she has created (along with all of China, and consequently her original, biological family). Other fairy tales made famous by Disney also feature an aspect of the heroine's body as the primary source of conflict, including several of the case studies from this research, whether Ariel's legs in *The Little Mermaid*, Snow White's beauty in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, or Rapunzel's magic hair in *Tangled*. Often the name of the story or of the heroine herself reflects some aspect of her body or physical appearance, further emphasizing its importance.

In *The Witch Must Die: How Fairy Tales Shape Our Lives*, psychology professor Sheldon Cashdan categorizes fairy tales based on which well-known vices they demonstrate. Within his categories, stories revolving around vanity, envy, deceit, and lust are almost entirely occupied with examples of female protagonists, while those about gluttony, greed, and sloth consist of examples of both male and female characters in almost equal measure. Interestingly, male characters do not dominate any categories (Cashdan 259-70). Thus, struggles between good and evil in fairy tales often (though not exclusively) play out on the female body. Archetypal characters provide a clear way of embodying negative qualities, such as *Snow White's* Evil Queen, who represents vanity both in her obsession with her magic mirror and in her desire to be fairest in the land.

These texts have led me to uncover patterns in Disney's villainesses and their representation of older female characters through the mother and crone archetypes. Throughout

my research I examine how these archetypes manifest through animated movement, and how they are applied in conjunction with other elements of female representation, such as the Hollywood image of the *femme fatale*, which I will introduce in greater depth in Chapter Two. Though the heroine's journey focuses on the female protagonist and not on the villainess, a number of aspects of her journey, particularly when considered in contrast to the male hero's journey, have raised questions for me regarding the role of the villainess in female representation. The above discussion highlights the othering and problematizing of the female body in fairy tales and their adaptations, even within the heroine's own story. The villainess represents a doubly othered role as both woman and outsider, and her own body, older and less desirable than the maiden's, further sets her apart from the protagonist. Female characters with agency often tend to be villains, particularly in earlier Disney princess films, raising questions about how active women are seen and portrayed on the Disney screen, which I explore in Chapter Two and throughout my analysis.

### *Fairy-Tale Film and Modern Fairy Tales*

At first glance, *Snow White*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and Disney's other animated fairy-tale films seem to be fairly straightforward, traditional<sup>19</sup> tellings of classic stories, and not anything that would fall under the rubric of "modern." The settings remain in the historic and fantastical "once upon a time"; the characters fall into the classic roles of hero, villain, and damsel; and the storylines and endings are far from subversive. But in fact, several elements of the "Disney versions" suggest that they qualify as modern fairy tales in their own right.

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<sup>19</sup> Perhaps "old-fashioned" would be a more fitting description, as many who have read the original versions of these stories would argue that they deviate too much to be considered "traditional" versions.

Fairy-tale scholar Jessica Tiffin offers one possible definition for the modern fairy tale, focusing primarily on form and easily recognizable aspects of structure, pattern, style, content, voice, and motif (Tiffin 4, 8). She states that “structural recognition” is what allows fairy-tale narratives to “retain their characteristic shape and function despite a changing social context” or hybridization with other narrative styles (Tiffin 1-2). Tiffin suggests that fairy tales in a range of formats and contexts can be identified by their “texture” (5), making it difficult to identify one consistent defining factor. While Tiffin states that “the strength of *texture* as a defining term relies precisely in its complexity and hence, in some ways, *lack* of definition” (Tiffin 8), she does elaborate on her use of the term, referring to “characteristics which rely heavily on clean lines, deliberate patterning and a geometry of structure and motif, but also include style, voice, and some aspects of content and mimetic approach” (Tiffin 7). Tiffin identifies the structural element of fairy-tale texture as “the carrier of ideology, codifying social power relations and . . . institutionalizing them” (Tiffin 12). Modern fairy tales have the power to deconstruct and trouble these structures and question their ideologies, or to reiterate and reinforce them, as Disney so often does.

Modern elements are apparent in more recent Disney films, from *The Little Mermaid*’s incorporation of musical theatre-style camp and musical numbers in the 1980s to cheeky nods to pop culture, such as 2016’s *Moana* (Clements and Musker), which features a gag in which the character Maui states, “when you use a bird to write with, it’s called tweeting.” Elements such as the type of humour and roles of female characters shift over time, and they can be tracked over the course of Disney history, further supporting a “modern fairy tale” reading of more recent Disney films. However, earlier Disney films also reflect ideologies (and concerns) of their

production eras, as seen in the Depression-era sensibilities in *Snow White* and 1950s Baby Boomer ideals in *Sleeping Beauty* (Do Rozario 38).<sup>20</sup>

A number of scholars discuss the tendency of fairy tales to shift and evolve over time to reflect societal changes. Prolific fairy-tale scholar Jack Zipes, in *The Enchanted Screen: The Unknown History of Fairy-Tale Films* (2011), considers the capacity of fairy-tale narratives to carry meaning in an ever-shifting variety of social and historical contexts, arguing that fairy tales serve to reflect the realities of cultural events, anxieties, and ideologies through their recognizable structure and metaphor (Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen* 10). Film and animation scholar Amy Davis also explores the capacity of fairy tales to transmit information about cultural ideologies, identifying not only fairy tales as a site for this knowledge, but fairy-tale films as well, in particular through “examining not only what types of stories have been made into films, but also how the stories were presented, what was left in the story, what was altered, what was left out altogether, and what new elements were added to it” (Davis 12). Vladimir Propp refers to these shifts in how a tale is told over time as “variants” and identifies them as crucial to understanding a society through their capacity to reveal its changes over time (Propp, *Theory and History* 8-9). In this way, “Disney films carry on the tradition of telling these stories in ways which are relevant to their audiences” (Davis 13).

Perhaps, rather than modern fairy tales, the Disney canon exists as its own microcosm, creating its own fairy-tale genre and following or subverting its own rules and conventions as it becomes recognizable over time.<sup>21</sup> Animation scholar Seán Harrington proposes a Disney "genre" as distinguished by several stylistic elements and narrative trends that appear throughout

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<sup>20</sup> I will discuss Do Rozario's work regarding these shifts in greater detail later in this chapter.

<sup>21</sup> Interestingly, if one does view Disney as their own fairy-tale genre, the company's current trend of reimagining their own classical animated works of past decades as (heavily CGI-enhanced) live-action films presents a striking echo of their early years of reimagining classic fairy tales as realistically animated films.

classic-era Disney films. Harrington identifies *Snow White* as the first Disney film to establish repeating characters and tropes that would become standard in Disney animation (Harrington 70). He refers to media and communications scholar Janet Wasko and the six character roles (clearly influenced by fairy-tale archetypal roles) that she identifies as repeating throughout Disney films: Hero/Heroine ("embodiment of American sex appeal"), Love Interest, Sidekick, Mentor, Villain ("who desires omnipotence and is typically pictured as snobbish"), and Henchman (Wasko 72).

Zipes<sup>22</sup> also argues that Disney's "predictable fairy tale film schemata became classical in the same way that the Grimms' stories served as the model for most early collections of fairy tales in the nineteenth century" ("Grounding the Spell" xi). Taking a different approach, Tiffin suggests that Hollywood film past and present executes a "radical rewriting of fairy tale as folklore" (Tiffin 5) exactly *because* it commercializes a traditionally "communal" medium. A number of scholars have written about fairy tales and film (Bacchilega 2010, 2013; Greenhill and Matrix 2010; Moen 2013; Mollet 2013, Murphy 2015; Tiffin 2009; Wood 2006; Zipes 2011), and not many would call the Hollywood (and particularly Disney) commercialization of fairy tales "radical," making Tiffin's reading intriguing. Disney's saccharine characters and stories and their insistent happily-ever-afters are, if not *subversive*, actually a *subversion* of the "original" fairy tales they are based on—contemporary audiences may view the ending to Disney's *Snow White* as "stereotypically" fairy-tale, but the original tale in fact ends quite differently. And perhaps they are subversions needed by society at the time. *Snow White* begins

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<sup>22</sup> Zipes's known anti-Disney bias (Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen* xii) is present and acknowledged in his condemning of the "Disneyfication" of fairy-tale films (*The Enchanted Screen* 16). Zipes argues that as Disney has come to be the biggest name in fairy-tale film, the company's formulaic and commodifying approach has had a detrimental impact on audiences and thus on other fairy-tale films, which must tailor their approach to suit audiences' "brainwashed" desire for more of the same if they want to compete (*The Enchanted Screen* 17).

her film in rags, but works hard and eventually rises back to her position of princess, an appealing narrative when the film was released during the Great Depression. A number of scholars have identified the capacity for cartoons to reflect viewers' desires, not just their realities (Greenhill and Matrix 2010; Leslie 2002; Wasko 2001), as I will discuss in the following section.

### ***Disney Animation***

“An animator creates with movement the way a painter creates with color.”  
 -Leslie Bishko, “Our Empathic Experience of Believable Characters” (47)

### ***Cartoon Animation History***

The writings of animation scholars Donald Crafton, Michael Barrier, and Norman Klein in this section have allowed me to contextualize Disney's work within the American cartoon industry and explore how the genre's conventions impact the films and characters I am studying. Beginning with an exploration of the earliest years in cartoon animation, Donald Crafton's text, *Before Mickey: The Animated Film 1898-1928* (1982), employs a “documentary-theoretical” approach (Crafton, *Before Mickey* xix). Crafton situates his overview of the silent animation period historico-culturally and theorizes that the trajectory of the animation industry is shaped by the impact of “the industrial and cultural environment of the time” (xviii) on both the content and the structure of cartoon animation. By exploring various early cartoon formats and the shifting presence of the animator on screen, he traces the “individualization process” of creating personalities in animated characters (*Before Mickey* 4). Crafton theorizes this idea of animated personality into the concept of the “cartoon star,” which he explores further in his more recent

volume, *Shadow of a Mouse: Performance, Belief, and World-Making in Animation* (2013), to which I will return later in this chapter.

Other historical resources include animation historian Michael Barrier's *Hollywood Cartoons: American Animation in its Golden Age* (1999), which contains a largely Disney-centred history of the American animation industry from the thirties through sixties. Barrier focuses his overview primarily on character animation, highlighting the evolution of various animator approaches to character development. Media historian Norman Klein's *7 Minutes: The Life and Death of the American Animated Cartoon* (1993) situates the evolution of cartoon animation in relation to other graphic narratives and media, including live-action film and theatre; newspapers, magazines, and comics; and popular illustration. Like Crafton, Klein considers social and economic contexts, addressing the impact of the Depression, World War II, and shifting media formats such as the rise of television on various studios individually and on the industry as a whole. Focused on the traditional cartoon short's seven-minute format, Klein addresses the shift away from the gag-driven graphic narrative unique to cartoon animation, and toward the Disney-led realistic, full animation style and dramatic narrative meant to mimic live-action film that came to dominate the animation industry.

For Disney's own historical narrative, I examined a number of books written by former Disney animators or produced by the company's publishing subsidiary. These texts are not scholarly, but they function in my research as a form of primary source material, providing insight into the internal processes and priorities of the Disney studios. They also provide visual supplementation to the range of scholarly writing I have consulted, works which are often precluded from including images due to copyright barriers and fees. One such resource is *The Illusion of Life: Disney Animation* (1981), written by former Disney animators Frank Thomas

and Ollie Johnston, which provides a historical overview of the Disney studios from Walt's beginnings to the 1970s, including the authors' own tenures at the company (1934-1978). The book is structured around an in-depth exploration of Disney's twelve Principles of Animation,<sup>23</sup> a set of guidelines developed during the early years of the Disney studios that distilled and codified the shifts in animation techniques with which Disney animators had been experimenting in their quest toward believability and character animation. These Animation Principles, which I will discuss further in the following section, spread throughout the industry and are now foundational in teaching the basics of animation.

### *Surreal, Real, Hyper-Real*

These historical overviews of cartoon animation history often highlight the shift in form, instigated by Disney, from "surreal" to "real." Early cartoons indulged in physics-defying worlds and characters, taking advantage of the animated medium with morphing characters and objects, absurd situations and settings, and impossible solutions to characters' problems. Klein identifies the "controlled anarchy" of cartoons at this stage (*7 Minutes* 32), with characters constantly doing the unexpected and breaking rules—both social norms of appropriate behaviour and the laws of physics. The latter often happened through physical transformation or metamorphosis, manifesting in what film director and theorist Sergei Eisenstein describes in his essays on Disney as the "plasmatic" quality of animation. Eisenstein defines "plasmaticness" as the ability to dynamically shift and change form, the "freedom from ossification" and "liberation of forms from the laws of logic and forever established stability" (Eisenstein 21-22). Writing in the early

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<sup>23</sup> As the Principles of Animation (or Animation Principles) do not feature in my research as prominently as LMA concepts, I will define specific Principles as they arise throughout my writing rather than providing a glossary. For further information, see F. Thomas and Johnston 1981; Bishko 1991, 2007.



1940s, Eisenstein focuses on the surreal qualities of early Disney cartoons such as the Silly Symphony series, applauding their realization of the “plasmatic.” Ironically, despite Eisenstein’s praise, Disney instigated a shift away from the anarchic, surreal nature of early cartoon animation, establishing rules—the Animation Principles—to help animated characters adhere more closely to the laws of physics in the quest toward mimicking real bodies and movement.

Walt Disney encouraged his animators to think critically about the work they produced and to consider what exactly they were doing to create more realistic movement, leading to the development of several unofficial rules, which over time were codified into twelve Principles of Animation. These Principles put formalized, mechanical laws to a multimorphic world in order to make that world more believable, and have had a lasting impact on the genre of cartoon animation (Klein, *7 Minutes* 50; F. Thomas and Johnston, *The Illusion of Life* 47). They pervaded the industry, setting a new standard for realistic animation, with characters demonstrating expressiveness on a level akin to live film actors and conveying the illusion of an interiority of thoughts, emotions, desires, and personality. This signature style of the Disney studio came to be known, appropriately, as character or personality animation (Crafton, *Before Mickey* 44).

The shift toward realistic animation began with *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in 1937, Hollywood’s first feature-length animated film.<sup>24</sup> Prior to *Snow White*, cartoons generally fit into a seven-minute format and were played as theatrical shorts preceding feature films. Rather than focusing on dramatic narrative or character development, they were built around vaudeville-style gags and graphic narrative—the “first principles” of cartoon animation—with

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<sup>24</sup> Though *Snow White* is commonly regarded as the first feature-length animated film, a small number of works predate it, perhaps most famously German director Lotte Reiniger’s *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* in 1926. In addition to the greater renown reached as a mainstream Hollywood film, *Snow White* is also well known for being the first full-length animated film to use cel animation (*Prince Achmed* uses cutout animation techniques) and synchronized sound (Crafton, *Before Mickey* 245).

story and character following the form dictated by these elements (Klein, *7 Minutes* 32). Graphic narrative, according to Klein, stems from the still-image comic predecessors to animated cartoons and privileges the lines and flatness of the image as a means of conveying story (*7 Minutes* 15). This form of narrative has no aspirations toward the illusion of reality; rather, it revels in the "freedom" of the graphic image as "an object in itself, within its own fantasy boundaries" (Klein, *7 Minutes* 15). Though early Disney cartoons also took this more surreal approach to form and movement, by the 1930s they had changed dramatically, prioritizing story and character believability and creating what Klein refers to as "a cartoon version of movie acting" (Klein, *7 Minutes* 32).

Where Barrier, Crafton, and Klein all discuss Disney's shift toward a realistic style in terms of form, aesthetics and culture scholar Esther Leslie (*Hollywood Flatlands* 2002) considers their relationship with the "real" in terms of content and narrative. Leslie theorizes Disney (and cartoons more generally) not as real, but as a reflection of the real, arguing that "it is not . . . the formal . . . which is the basis for the massive success in these films, but that the public recognizes their own lives in them" (Leslie 83). Grounding the history of animation in the politics and corresponding world events of the 1920s through 1950s, Leslie demonstrates that the "real" is best seen in terms of how animated works reflect socio-political realities: "Cartoons outlined political stances. Cartoon shapes and fantasies modeled social situations and the frustrations and joys that accompanied them" (Leslie *vi*). She argues that Disney animation of this era, especially Mickey Mouse shorts, served to both affirm the negative reality audiences were facing and depict "important, vital experiences without misty symbolism, and without melodramatic pretension" (Leslie 82). In a way, these cartoons presented everyday realities as fairy tales, allowing audiences to acknowledge their concerns while still maintaining a distance

from them—reflecting reality through palatable fantasy. Leslie’s perspective on this role of Disney content echoes the discussion in the previous section of this literature review, of the capacity of fairy tales and fairy-tale films to carry and reflect cultural meanings, realities, anxieties, biases, and ideologies, sublimating these elements into fairy-tale situations to allow audiences to process them comfortably.

Continuing the progression from surreal to real, animation scholar Paul Wells (*Understanding Animation* 1998) identifies Disney’s approach to animation not as real, but as “hyper-real.” Wells states that, though Walt Disney exhibited the aesthetic principles related to surrealism that Eisenstein praised in his early works, his increasing interest in technological development led him “away from the plasmatic flexibility of many of the early Silly Symphonies, and coerced the animated form into a neo-realist practice” (Wells 22-23). Following philosopher Jean Baudrillard and semiotician Umberto Eco, Wells defines this hyper-reality as “neither a completely accurate version of the real world nor a radical vindication of the animated form” (Wells 27), a simulacrum of a reality that does not exist.<sup>25</sup> Klein also refers to the “cinematic simulacra” of Disney’s innovations in animation, citing imaginary camera point of view, zooms, pans, and other techniques of live-action film (Klein, *7 Minutes* 4).

Wells expresses a highly critical view of Disney, arguing that Walt’s (and the company’s) drive to mimic live-action film was—and continues to be—detrimental to the field of animation as a whole. While Disney may have intended to elevate animation to the level of live-action film with its more realistic approach, Wells proposes that the company has simply created a similar dichotomy within animation and taken up the hegemonic place of live action in it as the

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<sup>25</sup> Zipes has likewise argued that the ability of fairy-tale films to engage with social realities makes them “more realistic than so-called realistic fictional films” (*The Enchanted Screen* 366), similarly evoking the concept of hyper-reality.

“yardstick by which other kinds of animation may be measured for its relative degree of ‘realism’” (Wells 25), continuing to marginalize other, less realistic animation styles (35). Like Zipes, who feels that Disney has homogenized and monopolized the genre of fairy-tale film, Wells argues not only that Disney’s shift toward realistic animation fails to take advantage of the seemingly unlimited possibilities of the form as compared to live-action film, but also that this shift has redirected the entire genre away from those possibilities and toward prioritizing this realistic (or hyper-realistic) style as the pinnacle of successful animation (Wells 23). While I find Wells’s relentless negativity toward Disney to be repetitive and one-sided, his views are representative of many scholars in the field of animation studies and provide an important counterpoint to some of the texts discussed above, which focus more on the innovations and contributions of Disney’s legacy, rather than the restrictions it has created.

I view this trajectory from surreal to real to hyper-real as a timeline of sorts, reflected in the different time periods each writer examines. Eisenstein experienced only early Disney work, and while he did see a small number of Disney’s early feature films, his views focus more on the “anti-realist” (Klein, *7 Minutes* 3) Mickey Mouse shorts and Silly Symphonies. Leslie, though writing in 2002, focuses on Disney’s transition to becoming more established in feature films and realistic styles in the 1920s-1950s, while Wells, writing in 1998, at the peak of the Disney Renaissance (a common name for the influx of Disney animation between 1989 and 1999), includes in his critique the later image of Disney, after their rise to the top of the animation field.

This discussion of Disney and their relationship with the “real” provides a foundation for how I apply LMA to the non-real bodies that make up my case studies. I believe that the intention behind animating these characters to move and function like live bodies makes the subtleties of their movement qualities, as identifiable with LMA, significant. If the characters are

meant to be realistic or “real” (even when exaggerated or caricatured as in some of the later film examples), then the way they are portrayed says something about societal views of real women. If they were cartoonish or surreal, their movement would still be saying something, but it would perhaps be less about the nuances of their movement qualities and more about which feature or features are exaggerated and what the animators’ hyperawareness of those particular aspects might suggest.

In his 2013 book, *Shadow of a Mouse*, Crafton theorizes characters as real actors and celebrities, expanding on his theorization of animated personality and the cartoon star from his 1982 book, *Before Mickey*. Crafton considers animation through the lens of performance studies, presenting a unique perspective on the relationship between animation and the “real” by suggesting that animated characters are actors and stars in the same way human performers are. The audience knows that they are drawings, yet their performances seem live and present, and characters often have a presence outside of the animated stories in which they appear, such as Mickey Mouse or the members of the Disney Princess franchise. In many ways Crafton treats animation and live action as the same, but he does highlight some key differences in animated performances. For example, Crafton distinguishes non-animated films as records of performances, while cartoons *are* the performances themselves—the animated performance only exists in the animation, whereas a live-action performance also exists outside of its film recording. Crafton also observes that when a cartoon acts, it is not only the performance of the animated character *in* the animation, but also the performance *of* the animation; in other words, the work of the animators prior to the film’s presentation becomes part of the performance as well, as does the role of the audience (Crafton, *Shadow of a Mouse* 4-5).

Crafton's definition of "real" is perhaps closer to Wells's designation of Disney as hyper-real, suggesting that "the liveness in animation (and . . . perhaps all performances) comes down to everyday systems of belief . . . The real is not in the medium but in the viewer's volition. Their performances are as real as we deem them to be" (Crafton, *Shadow of a Mouse* 296-97). By putting the distinction between real and not real into the hands of the audience, Crafton argues that cartoon characters are capable of being "stars" in the same capacity as live-action actors, as the concept of stardom arises out of the audience's relationship with an on-screen character and the "star" constructed out of that image. The physical, human body of the celebrity is not actually involved, thus it is not necessary, and animated actors can function in the same way as live ones.

Crafton's theory of animated actors raises questions of agency, which Crafton defines as "the ability to cause events to occur, to control other beings, to react to events sentiently, or simply to assert autonomy" (*Shadow of a Mouse* 58). Crafton acknowledges the agency of the animator, while simultaneously proposing that animated characters also have agency—within the context of their animated worlds. He also addresses the agency of the audience in investing in the illusion of the animated characters' agency and in interpreting the animation and animated characters through any number of cultural, personal, or other frameworks (*Shadow of a Mouse* 72). Crafton's approach to agency as "sets of flexible relationships" between these three agents (*Shadow of a Mouse* 72) suggests a "distributed agency" (Enfield and Kockelman 2017; Garud and Karnøe 2003), wherein "intentionality, causality, flexibility, and accountability . . . are distributed—not just across individuals, but also across bodies and minds, people and things, spaces and times" (Enfield and Kockelman xi). While Crafton identifies the capacity for distributed agency to be a good thing, performance studies and feminist theory scholar Elizabeth Bell, who writes on female characters in Disney animation, suggests that it can be problematic in

issues such as representation, identifying Disney's female characters as "'cyborg' women composed of the language and bodies of [primarily male] others" (Bell 108). Considering the distributed agency among a group of animators working toward the creation of one character, Barrier highlights the potential for struggle with "consistent and satisfying characterizations" (Barrier 218), citing the multiple animators assigned to the dwarfs in *Snow White*, which "made it hard to prevent variations in the personality of each dwarf" (Disney qtd. in Barrier 219) and raises questions of who has authorship over certain characters. Crafton's theory of character agency and its implications regarding animator agency are relevant to my research approach as well, affecting my understanding of the "inner intent" behind characters' movements and how that "intent" (or understanding thereof) influences potential meanings.<sup>26</sup>

### ***Movement and the Female Body***

Countless scholars have explored the question of decoding meanings in Disney animation through a range of dominant, negotiated, and oppositional readings and a variety of lenses, including race, class, politics, disability, sexuality, and gender (Ayres 2003; Bohas 2016; Brode 2005; Brode and Brode 2016a, 2016b; Bryman 2004; Byrne and McQuillan 1999; Cheu 2012; Garlen and Sandlin 2016; Griffin 2000; Lee and Madej 2012; Pallant 2011; Pinsky 2004; Pugh and Aronstein 2012; Rodosthenous 2017; Smoodin 1993, 1994; Telotte 2008; Ward 2002; Wasko 2001; Wasko et al. 2001; Wills 2017). Rather than address each of these scholars' contributions in depth, I will focus on the two Disney scholars who have been most influential to my research, Elizabeth Bell and Rebecca-Anne C. Do Rozario. Both Bell and Do Rozario write about female representation in Disney with focuses on the body and movement.

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<sup>26</sup> For more on identity and stardom in animated characters, see Batkin 2017; McGowan 2019.

Elizabeth Bell's 1995 essay, "Somatexts at the Disney Shop: Constructing the Pentimentos of Women's Animated Bodies," brings together two ideas central to my work: the influence of a multiplicity of cultural images placed on female Disney characters, and the role of age in representations of female good and evil in Disney animation. Bell theorizes these animated women as pentimentos, "cultural accumulations" of images of femininity layered one over the next. Constantly aware of the constructed nature of these bodies, Bell identifies their function in guiding the audience toward aligning particular moralities with various points in the female life cycle—specifically, that younger and older women are good, and middle-aged women are bad (109).

Elaborating on this "somatic triumvirate" (Bell 108), Bell begins by exploring how Disney artists modeled the youthful beauty of the early princesses on contemporaneous female icons such as the silent film *ingenue* for Snow White and Barbie for *Sleeping Beauty*'s Aurora (109-10). She also observes the influence of dancers, and classical ballet dancers in particular, on the bodies and movement of early Disney princesses (Bell 110-11) and identifies differences in movement styles as forming distinctive characteristics in various female character types (for example, contrasting the graceful Cinderella with her clumsy, clunky stepsisters) (112). Bell discusses feminine influences on Disney's villainesses too, focusing on the classic Hollywood *femme fatale* and the silent film diva, again considering elements of movement, such as exaggerated hip and arm movements (115). Bell's assessment diverges from my own in her classification of the oldest female age category as good and nurturing, identified by Bell as "drawn in contrast to the *femme fatale*" (118), with their soft, round bodies indicating their non-threatening nature. While Bell's examples of fairy godmothers and kindly servants support her argument, I explore in my research a number of older female villains, and have found that, while



the maiden is certainly never placed in a villainous role, both the middle-aged mother and older crone occupy the position in equal measure. Bell's female life cycle theory is echoed by Valerie Frankel in her exploration of the heroine's journey and female archetypes, as she observes that the "shadow goddess wanes, dwindling from destroyer to godmother" (Frankel 301). Where Bell places this shift between middle and old age, Frankel describes instead the transition from the powerful, active, agentive crone such as the Destroyer or the Trickster, to the spirit guardian, existing to guide and protect rather than to fulfill her own desires.

Bell's theory of Disney's animated women as *pentimentos* begins with the images present in Disney's source material for these princesses and their stories: the fairy tales recorded or written by Charles Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, and Hans Christian Andersen. "But as the painting accrues, with layers of contemporaneous film and popular images of women, live-action models for the characters, and cinematic conventions of representing women, the levels become increasingly coded and complex" (Bell 108-09). This reading supports my own similar observations regarding the convergence of female influences on Disney villainesses, allowing me to go beyond Bell's work to focus on the element of movement in these images.

Influenced by Bell, Do Rozario also explores how female bodies in Disney reflect popular images of femininity, focused primarily on the iconic Disney princess character. Her 2004 article, "The Princess and the Magic Kingdom: Beyond Nostalgia, the Function of the Disney Princess," offers a diachronic exploration of five Disney princess characters. Do Rozario focuses on two production periods—the "Walt" era, from the company's inception to Walt Disney's death in 1966, and the "Team Disney" era, encompassing the period from the late 1980s to the early 2000s, when the article was written. She considers how Disney princesses reflect the shifting social ideologies of their respective eras, such as a shift from domesticity in the Walt era

to active adventuring in the Team Disney era (57), supporting the possibility of Disney films as modern fairy tales discussed earlier in this chapter. She also identifies a blurring of roles between princess and villainess, observing that “where once it was the role of the *femme fatale* to disrupt patriarchal continuity, under Team Disney, the princess herself has taken an active role in the disruption” (Do Rozario 57). Do Rozario explores this shift’s social influences as well as its effects on the villainess’s role.

Significantly, Do Rozario includes the body and dancing in her analysis of the shifting image of the Disney princess, expanding on Bell’s observations about the role of ballet in early Disney films (Do Rozario 46). Do Rozario further explores the role of movement in later Disney princesses, noting that the Team Disney-era princesses of her study—Ariel (*The Little Mermaid*), Jasmine (*Aladdin*, Clements and Musker 1992), and Pocahontas (*Pocahontas*, Goldberg and Gabriel 1995)—demonstrate a shift toward “more ‘democratic’ and popular forms of dance and movement” (Do Rozario 46) in the eighties and nineties, making them more athletic and focusing on “heroism, egalitarianism and autonomy” (47) over grace, domesticity, and complacency. The attention to the influence of dance and other forms of movement paid by both Bell and Do Rozario provides support for my own analysis, and their approaches to the image of the female body as a carrier of meaning provide an entry point for my own in-depth analysis focusing specifically on movement. However, both of these scholars’ essays predate a number of more recent Disney films featuring princesses and villainesses that merit consideration in relation to these ideas. One of these films, *Tangled*, is a case study in my research, and a handful of others, while not meeting the criteria for this study, are discussed in the Conclusion as points of further inquiry.

As the topic of gender in Disney is large, requiring further contextualization in relation to my own analysis, I return to Bell and Do Rozario in Chapter Two, situating their work within larger conversations about popular images of femininity and specifically female evil, such as the *femme fatale*, and considering the link between gender and another key theme in my research, transformation. In order to explore these themes in terms of movement, I will now shift the focus of this literature review to Laban Movement Analysis.

### **Laban Movement Analysis**

“We have mouths all over our body.”  
 -Hélène Cixous, *The Third Body* (79)

### ***Laban and His Theories***

While Walt Disney was establishing himself as an innovator in the field of cartoon animation in early twentieth-century United States, in Europe, Austro-Hungarian artist and choreographer Rudolf von Laban was developing theories of the body’s movement in space that would have a lasting impact on modern dance and dance scholarship. Laban was interested in the connection between mind and body, between a dancer’s “inner attitude” and the dynamics of their outer expressive movement (Partsch-Bergsohn and Bergsohn 6). Over his lifetime, he developed theories of movement that would become the foundation for movement analysis, dance notation, and somatic education and therapy.

Born in Bratislava to an upper-middle class family, Laban built a career in Europe dancing, choreographing, and developing and teaching his theories of movement. Many of his biographers suggest that his father’s military career and his own brief military training as a young adult influenced his interest in the relationship between the individual and the group, and

in the interplay between functional versus expressive capacities of movement (Bradley 4). He developed his theories of movement and his choreographic practice throughout the first half of the twentieth century, and was primarily active in Germany and surrounding countries until he made his way to England in 1938, shortly before the start of World War II (Preston-Dunlop 204).<sup>27</sup>

Laban saw value in approaching dance through research, and his work with dance and movement was influenced by a range of scientific fields, mathematics, philosophy, art, music, architecture, mysticism, and counterculture movements such as Dadaism (Bradley 12, 65; J. Foster 16, 51, 61, 68-69). Out of these disparate fields he distilled several common threads, among the most salient being the theme of polarity and dualism, echoing Hegel's dialectics of synthesizing oppositions (J. Foster 42), a method of argument structured around a thesis, an opposing antithesis, and a synthesis resolving the differences between the two. Laban's approach to polarity similarly involves the "resolving of tensions" (J. Foster 34) and the "union of opposites" (Bradley 14), understanding the relationship between two opposing concepts and the continuum that exists between them. Certified Movement Analyst (CMA) and dance scholar Karen Bradley identifies "naturally occurring symmetry in both nature and art" (Bradley 10) as a popular theme of the time, and one that can be found in Laban's theories in the underlying structure of polarities and the tendency for various elements within one delineated category of movement to correspond neatly to those of another (often identified as "affined" qualities).

Laban's interest in identifying relationships, particularly between opposites, recognizes variation in movement. Particular aspects of a movement or movement sequence can be placed

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<sup>27</sup> For a more detailed account of Laban's life, including deeper explorations of his experience during World War II and the rise of the Nazi party in Germany, see Bradley 2009; Davies 2001; Doerr 2007; Laban 1975; Partsch-Bergsohn and Bergsohn 2003; Preston Dunlop 1998.

along a spectrum between two opposing elements or qualities in the categories of both Effort and Shape,<sup>28</sup> and a movement can consist of varying combinations and degrees of different elements. Rather than dichotomous representations, Laban sees how each end of a polarity contains the other and allows for varying interplays of each element in a whole movement. This paradigm, built on the integration of opposites and identified by Bradley as a “core value” of LMA (Bradley 66), forms the foundation of several aspects of Laban Movement Analysis, including its four major themes: Inner-Outer, Function-Expression, Mobility-Stability, and Exertion-Recuperation.<sup>29</sup> These themes underlie all movement and inform all elements of LMA, and importantly, just as the two polarities of each theme support and influence each other, so do each of the themes impact, contain, and support the others. This concept of polarity, interplay, and the continuum between opposites materializes throughout Laban’s work and the work of his students, and is apparent in opposing Effort elements (Quick/Sustained, Direct/Indirect, Free/Bound, Light/Strong), Shaping qualities (Advancing/Retreating, Ascending/Descending, Spreading/Enclosing),<sup>30</sup> and other aspects of LMA.

During his lifetime, Laban organized his theories of movement into the systems of Choreutics (also referred to as Space Harmony, and later Shape) and Eukinetics (later Effort). Both of these categories are underpinned by the idea of relationships, with Choreutics focusing on the relationship of the human body with its environment as it moves through space, and Eukinetics on the relationship of the body and the mind as expressed through movement. Choreutics and Eukinetics represented for Laban a new approach to modern dance, one that

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<sup>28</sup> Effort refers to variation or change in movement quality; Shape refers to how (and why) the body adapts or forms itself in space in relation to itself, objects, others, or the environment.

<sup>29</sup> As detailed explanations of each of these themes are not necessary for further understanding at this time, see Appendix A for more information.

<sup>30</sup> As definitions of each of these Effort and Shape qualities are not necessary for further understanding at this time, see Appendix A for more information.

understood movement through the connection between the body and the mind—another “dichotomy” of intertwined factors. These two schemes were later developed and expanded into the four categories of Body, Effort, Shape, and Space (BESS) that now make up Laban Movement Analysis.

### *Objectivity and Subjectivity*

Laban’s explorations are significant for his merging of research and theoretical work with physical practice (Bradley 95; J. Foster 19). Scholars have noted Laban’s belief that this research-based approach to creating dance facilitated a more “objective view” (Bradley 20) of dance than what he had observed of the field, allowing creators “to be critical about form, shape, intention, etc.” (Bradley 20). Laban saw that dancers<sup>31</sup> at that time primarily created work as soloists, making it challenging to approach their work from an outside perspective, and he felt that his theories could provide a means to do so. Much of the “objectivity” Laban strove for reflected his identification of the established position of music<sup>32</sup> as an ephemeral, non-visual art form that had managed a form of legitimacy through documentation and codification, allowing it to be preserved and to exist beyond its initial production and live performance (Bradley 21). Thus, many of Laban’s ideas surrounding the “legitimizing” of dance place it in relation to music, including his development of the notation system known as Labanotation and his creation of movement “scales,” through both of which Laban intended to elevate dance to the same level of public reception and respect as he perceived in music.

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<sup>31</sup> Modern dancers, presumably, as this is the area of dance with which he is most closely associated—a reminder of Laban’s own positionality.

<sup>32</sup> Again, within his own Western European context.

The concept of objectivity plays a significant role in the development of LMA, and the related term “universal” continues to be used by scholars when espousing the merits and potential of the system. This focus on objectivity and the systematic nature of LMA as a framework for understanding movement appear to be at odds with the somatic practices that are so strongly linked to Laban’s work, which value subjectivity, context, and situated bodily experience as a form of knowledge. In fact, most LMA scholars—and Laban himself—refer to both of these contrasting qualities of objectivity and subjectivity when discussing LMA, though not necessarily hand in hand. I believe that this tension and interplay between objective and subjective can be identified in the structure of the system itself, which consists of a highly specific, codified framework of terminology that is then inevitably applied subjectively as different observers notice or choose to focus on different elements. Further, the understanding of the concepts’ meanings can be quite subjective and often varies depending on personal experience, embodied understanding, and case-by-case application. According to Bradley, Laban’s “proposed objective framework . . . allowed everyone to interpret movement individually” (Bradley 20). That this “objective framework” apparently was intended to serve the purpose of subjective interpretation suggests that perhaps, rather than being contradictory, Laban’s paradoxical valuing of both objectivity and subjectivity is in fact another example of his understanding that polarities contain and support one another.

Adding another layer, I believe that this apparent contradiction also reflects the multi-step process of applying LMA, introduced as part of my methodology, wherein LMA is used to observe and describe movement, but the interpretation of meaning in these observations generally relies on another theoretical framework. A number of scholars<sup>33</sup> speak to this

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<sup>33</sup> See Bishko 1991, 2007, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c; Brennan 1999; Daly 1988; Frosch 1999; Sklar 1991, 1994, 2000, 2001.

supportive role of LMA, describing it as an “open framework” designed for observation (Bishko, “Empathic Experience” 49) that supports a variety of fields of inquiry and allows the user to determine what they believe to be significant in their findings. It “present[s] one set of options from which many variations are possible” (Bishko, “Animation Principles” 193). Discussions of LMA’s applications tend to revolve around the word “meaning” to articulate the second part of this process, wherein observations are considered in terms of a given context or theoretical framework to interpret what information may be contained in the movement. Daly states that “movement possesses and communicates its own meanings” (Daly 44) and that the subjective task of “yield[ing] meaning” is key in actualizing LMA’s potential as an “objective observational tool” (Daly 47). Bradley highlights that LMA does not interpret movement “as signs or symbols of particular meaning” but instead “sees movement patterns as personally and/or culturally significant” (Bradley 65). Thus, scholars who speak to both LMA’s universality and its contextuality refer to the strengths of this methodological process—the broad applicability of LMA as an observation tool to any number of movement styles and contexts, and the ability for observations to be interpreted in any number of ways through any number of theoretical frameworks.

Laban speaks to the factor of personal interpretation in *The Mastery of Movement* (1950), stating that when one assigns a value or meaning to observed movement (such as “greedy” or “sensuous,” to use Laban’s examples), “one does not define merely what one has actually seen . . . The impression of greed or sensuousness is the spectator’s personal interpretation” (Laban, *Mastery of Movement* 1). He goes on to explain that observing the same action in a different context (or out of context) will likely lead to a different impression. The observer may benefit from questioning, particularly in the case of a staged performance, *why* the movement is



executed how it is, and what it is meant to reveal—perhaps it indicates some aspect of the character’s personality, or it may be indicative of what they are feeling or thinking in the particular situation. Among the elements that a character’s movement may reveal, Laban lists “state of mind,” “attitude in a particular situation,” “momentary mood and reaction,” “constant features of personality,” and “environment” (*Mastery of Movement* 2).

Laban’s distinction between movement reflecting recurring personality traits versus irregular events and reactions has been particularly relevant to my own analysis, as I question which aspects are most important to focus on in a character’s movement for the purposes of my specific research goals. Material to the diachronic nature of my analysis, Laban also addresses the impact of cultural, historical, and situational contexts, speaking specifically in terms of acting: “similar personalities exhibiting almost the same general movement characteristics . . . would adapt their behaviour to the atmosphere of an epoch, or a locality” (Laban, *Mastery of Movement* 2). He also identifies the ability to “gain information about the states of mind or traits of character cherished and desired within the particular community” (*Mastery of Movement* 15) through observation of that community’s or culture’s dances. I have translated this principle onto my own observation of Disney films and the capacity of the characters’ movement to convey information about the cultural and historical values surrounding them.

Laban taught classes, shared his ideas freely, and took on many pupils and mentees, among them modern dance pioneers Mary Wigman and Kurt Jooss. His work was carried on after his death as his students and colleagues continued to expand and organize his theories into the LMA system, and it is now taught in university dance departments, LMA training/certification programs, and the British education system (Eddy 10; J. Foster 94). Though Laban’s theories are founded in dance, they have found application in a range of fields, including

workplace productivity (Davies 2001; Laban 1947; C. Moore 2005), personality profiling and nonverbal communication (Davies 2001; Lamb 2012; C. Moore 1988), developmental patterning and somatic therapy (Bainbridge Cohen 1993, 2018; Bartenieff and Lewis 1980; Hackney 1998; Hartley 1995; Kestenberg 1967; Kestenberg Amighi et al. 2018), actor training (Adrian 2010; Bloom 2017; Ewan and Sagovsky 2018; E. Hooks 2000; Newlove 1993; Newlove and Dalby 2004), and more recent applications in movement simulation, including computer animation, virtual reality, motion capture, and human robotics (Bishko 1991, 2007, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c; Byun and Badler 2002; Masuda et al. 2009; Rett and Dias 2010; Wakayama et al. 2010). I introduce only a small number of these topics in this literature review, including workplace productivity (explored in relation to LMA's application to questions about gender and movement) and animation, as well as a more dance-centred discussion of LMA's applications in cultural studies and ethnography.

### ***Jung and Gender***

Spurred by his interest in the connection between body and mind, Laban included psychology among the diverse range of fields through which he approached movement. He was particularly interested in Jung's work on symbolism, archetype, and the concept of individuation (Bradley 9-11; J. Foster 51), which explores the integration of the conscious and unconscious. Though Jung's theories face some criticism in contemporary psychology, they had a significant influence on Laban's work, including the role of movement in personality integration and the link between Jung's concept of shadow and Laban's shadow movements (J. Foster 24, 52).<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Jung's concept of shadow refers to the hidden, unconscious, repressed personality deep within the psyche. Similarly, Laban describes "shadow movements" as unconscious movements which can be quite revealing, "tiny muscular movements such as the raising of the brow, the jerking of the hand or the tapping of the foot, which have

Further, this Jungian influence creates a link between Laban's work and the fairy-tale narrative structure and archetypes discussed earlier in this literature review.

Laban's connection with Jung also serves as an entry point into the discussion of LMA and gender. In her 2009 article, "Anima and Animus Embodied: Jungian Gender and Laban Movement Analysis," CMA and Jungian scholar Janet Kaylo theorizes a connection between Jung's binary, gender-based archetypes of anima and animus and the polarity-based framework of Laban's movement theories. Jung's anima and animus represent patterns or characteristics of the "opposite" gender that exist within the psyche, with anima housing "feminine" qualities within the male psyche, and animus "masculine" ones within the female. Although they rely on culturally situated gender stereotypes, their binary nature aligns with LMA's dichotomous structure, particularly in Laban's understanding that each movement quality or element contains its opposite, just as anima and animus function as the individual's opposite contained within the psyche.<sup>35</sup> Kaylo offers several points of entry into Jung's anima/animus theory that allow for a less essentialist understanding of gender than Jung appears to propagate, primarily by reinforcing the role of social and cultural conditioning in producing gendered movement and highlighting the role of Jung's own cultural situatedness in his understanding of masculine and feminine.

Contemporary applications of LMA to gender, race, and other markers of difference tend to follow this social constructionist approach to the body, suggesting that observable distinctions

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none other than expressive value. They are usually done unconsciously and often accompany movements of purposeful action like a shadow" (Laban, *Mastery of Movement* 11).

<sup>35</sup> Jung's conception of anima and animus is built around a binary understanding of gender that does not necessarily consider individuals who identify as transgender, non-binary, genderfluid, or another gender identity. Though a detailed discussion of sociocultural understandings of gender is beyond the scope of my research, Kaylo goes on to offer a different approach to struggles to reconcile Jung's binary theory with contemporary understandings of gender: "Rather than removing Jung's anima and animus qualities from the possibilities for men and women, why not simply remove men and women from the definition of them?" (Kaylo 184), allowing for an understanding of these dichotomous qualities and their presence in the human psyche that does not necessitate a binary understanding of gender.

in movement tendencies that are attributed to factors such as gender or race develop largely out of cultural or societal influence. Kaylo goes on to state that although Laban “referred to some movement as ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’” (Kaylo 173), LMA’s foundation upon the concept of interdependent polarities in fact facilitates all movement to be available to all genders (173).

Though many post-Jungian explorations of anima and animus move away from the body, Kaylo argues that the body is a central aspect of gender coding (Kaylo 174). She states that “our bodies reveal some of the deepest layers of social conditioning” through their patterns of movement (Kaylo 180), demonstrating the importance of somatic approaches and movement observation not only in psychology, but in areas such as cultural studies as well.

### ***Gender and Industry***

Kaylo’s approach to the link between LMA and Jung’s anima and animus draws heavily from the work of Warren Lamb, Laban’s student and colleague. Lamb’s gender-based movement observations developed out of his work with Laban in industrial movement analysis, an area which used LMA to observe movement in factories and provide solutions for greater efficiency in workers. Laban began exploring this application of his work in Manchester in 1945 (Preston-Dunlop 235). Laban the idealistic artist may have seen “the Art of Movement as an end in itself” (J. Foster 39); however, the man who had to make a living in a new country during and after World War II saw a wider range of goals and applications for his work, chief among them its utility in capitalist production. Many workplaces in the 1940s had invested in Time and Motion Study, an approach to industrial efficiency that aimed to increase productivity by identifying the smallest number of movements a worker could make in order to accomplish a given task and advising all workers to adopt the same sequence of actions (Davies 38). Laban’s work in this

field, detailed by CMA Eden Davies in her 2001 book *Beyond Dance: Laban's Legacy of Movement Analysis*, took almost the opposite approach, as he observed that each factory worker had their own unique movement patterns and that these functional patterns reflected overarching movement preferences in other areas of their lives as well. He therefore considered the individual preferences of each worker, identifying patterns that allowed for less physical strain and greater enjoyment through more “fluid” movements (Davies 38-39) and achieving efficiency by mitigating fatigue and injury—working smarter rather than working faster.

Though Laban himself does not write extensively about gender, Davies states that Laban observed in his factory work in 1943 that male and female workers were equally capable of doing the same work and even using the same qualities of movement, but that they went about these movements in different ways (Davies 145). In *Effort* (Laban and Lawrence 1947), the text in which he details the findings of this industrial work, Laban does not offer such a clear conclusion to his observations. Rather, he identifies two examples in the fields of agriculture and forestry—stacking small wooden staves and drilling holes in logs—wherein he observed differences in Flow and Space Effort<sup>36</sup> between male and female workers completing these two tasks (Laban and Lawrence 77). He concludes that while all workers are capable of completing all jobs, the requirements of each task (as conducted in the specific example provided) suggest that the tendency toward Free Flow in the female workers made them more suited to one (stacking staves), while the tendency toward Bound Flow and Direct Space in the male workers made them more suited toward the other (drilling holes) (Laban and Lawrence 77-78). Laban does not theorize as to why these gendered differences in Flow and Space Effort exist in this

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<sup>36</sup> Flow Effort refers to “the muscular tension used to let the movement flow (Free Flow) or to restrain it (Bound Flow)” (Fernandes 145); Space Effort refers to attention or focus in space when moving, becoming either Direct through focusing on a single point, or Indirect through a diffuse focus on multiple points.

industrial case study (biological, cultural, contextual, individual, etc.), nor does he reflect on the possibility of his own subjectivity in connecting these observations to gender.

After Laban's death in 1958, Lamb continued this industrial work and carried it into a range of professional settings, providing action profiling (later renamed "movement pattern analysis") for businesses in areas such as management, hiring, and teambuilding (Davies 72). It was from this work that Lamb made a number of gender-based movement observations, which he saw repeated over the course of decades of observation and thousands of movement profiles. While his conclusions are quite extensive, following the highly detailed nature of movement pattern analysis, the key theme is, again, Flow Effort. Lamb observed that men and women combine Effort Flow with other Effort Factors (Space, Weight, and Time) in opposing ways—in short, men combine Free Flow with Indirect Space, Light Weight, and Sustained Time (all Indulging elements),<sup>37</sup> while women combine Free Flow with Direct Space, Strong Weight, and Quick Time (the latter three of which are Fighting elements) (Davies 147). Conversely, men combine Bound Flow with the affirmed Fighting elements of Direct Space, Strong Weight, and Quick Time, while women combine Bound Flow with the disaffirmed Indulging elements of Indirect Space, Light Weight, and Sustained Time (Davies 147). In short, men's Flow is affirmed with their other Effort elements, while women's is disaffirmed.<sup>38</sup> Davies links these combinations with their effectiveness in carrying out stereotypically gendered activities, such as a mother preparing her children for school in the morning, suggesting that the "male" way of combining Flow with other Efforts would be less conducive to this task than the "female" (Davies 147). She

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<sup>37</sup> Indulging elements "share a characteristic property of rarifying or spreading out, going along with, indulging" (Dell 34). In contrast, Fighting elements "share a kind of condensing or fighting character" in terms of their respective Factors (Dell 35). For example, Free Flow can be seen as "going along with or indulging in the flow of movement" (Dell 34), while Bound Flow can be seen as "fighting the flow of movement" (Dell 35).

<sup>38</sup> Davies notes that the same pattern manifests in Shape Flow and Shaping qualities, but I have condensed this discussion for the sake of time. For more information, see Davies 147-64.

also identifies gendered differences in presenting oneself as vulnerable versus protected or relaxed versus cautious (149), and the different combinations of elements involved when being assertive and how that assertiveness is then interpreted by others (155).<sup>39</sup>

Davies appears to make sense of Laban and Lamb's gender-based observations through a social constructionist lens, stating that "there is no physical reason why the sexes should not use the polarities in exactly the same way" (Davies 153). Social constructionism follows Foucault's understanding of the body as discursive, viewing the body as a social text shaped by society (H. Thomas 48), as opposed to naturalist approaches that view differences as biologically determined (H. Thomas 12). Constructionist approaches to the body were taken up in feminist scholarship in the 1970s in the form of research on socialized gender differences in movement and nonverbal behaviour (Daly 43), and have continued in the work of a number of feminist theorists, including Judith Butler, who is known for theorizing the performative and constructed nature of gender (Butler 1990). Butler's approach to the "illusion" of gender identity has been criticized by scholars such as feminist theorist Susan Bordo, who argues that Butler's work erases the body's materiality and "situatedness in time and space" (Bordo 290), and political philosopher Peter Dingeser, who states that Butler's purely performative notion of gender is as extreme as an essentialist one (Dingeser 656).

Helen Thomas suggests that the social constructionist approach to the body sustains the mind-body dualism historically endemic to Western thought (H. Thomas 13). As discussed above, Laban explored this dualism in his work, and the integration of mind and body has become a major theme in LMA and related work, as well as in somatic practices and

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<sup>39</sup> Of note, studies to observe "sex role differences" have been conducted using LMA (see Davis et al. 1980), finding, in support of Lamb's observations, "the most prominent variables for each sex to be openness for females and dominance for males" (Brennan 296).

methodologies more generally. Deidre Sklar, a key scholar in somatic methodologies and mind-body integration in academic research, also addresses the distinction between sociopolitical (i.e. social constructionist) and kinesthetic explorations of the body (“Reprise” 70). She identifies sociopolitical perspectives as theorizing how bodies perform various identities, citing the work of dance scholars such as Susan Foster and Jane Desmond, whereas kinesthetic perspectives consider movement as both a carrier of meaning and its own way of knowing (“Reprise” 70). While focusing on the kinesthetic approach, Sklar creates space for both of these paradigms to inform approaches to the body and movement.

Applying these understandings to the example of Laban’s gendered observations in industrial work, it would perhaps be just as limiting to attribute his observations purely to social constructions of gender as it would be to ground them in an essentialist understanding of gendered bodies. Both extremes perpetuate the separation of mind and body, with the former seeming to erase the role of the body in its own formation, while the latter does not account for the mind. Just as Laban believes that the body and the mind can be integrated in understanding movement, Sklar suggests that these two perspectives can be integrated to support a more complete understanding of movement and the body, navigating both within one’s sensorium and in a sociopolitical context. In terms of my own research, these differing approaches are further complicated by the animated medium. Social constructionism is an obvious foundation for considering what cultural ideologies of gender are encoded and decoded through the animated movement of the characters I examine, but is there a place for a kinesthetic approach to the body when considering bodies that are, literally, constructed?



### *Cultural Studies and Ethnography*

A number of scholars have approached the relationship between dance studies and cultural studies (Blanco Borelli 2014; Desmond 1993, 1997; Koritz 1996; Morris 2009; H. Thomas 2003), exploring the value that the dual focus on movement and the body in dance studies can bring to cultural studies, and the shared interdisciplinary nature of these two fields in incorporating a range of theoretical frameworks and methodologies (Morris 84). However, LMA is rarely a topic in these conversations. Dance scholar Jane Desmond, in her defense of dance as a means of bringing movement and bodily discourse to the fore in cultural studies, briefly cites LMA as a potential “special tool” for investigating the role of dance in conveying and enacting social identity (“Embodying Difference” 57), but other scholars tend to refer to the field of dance studies more generally. Despite this disregard for LMA’s potential uses within cultural studies, it has gained considerable attention in the field of ethnography (Bartenieff et al. 1984; Daly 1988; Dils and Crosby 2001; Hanna 1979, 1988; Jablonko and Kagan 1988; Ness 1992; Sklar 1991, 1994, 2000).

With this attention, however, LMA has also received a fair share of criticism as an ethnocentric methodology. Laban’s ideas purport to address “universal” elements underlying movement and have the capacity to be applied to a range of contexts, and biographies mention his exposure to non-Western movement and philosophical traditions (Bradley 2; Eddy 7). However, it should be noted that he comes from a distinctly white, European background, and his work is most strongly associated with a Eurocentric modern dance tradition (Desmond, “Embodying Difference” 59). This positionality has been the subject of debate over LMA’s value in ethnographic work, most notably in relation to ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax’s infamous Choreometrics project of the 1960s, which compared a wide sampling of folk-dance forms with

functional movement across a number of societies.<sup>40</sup> While Lomax's project is generally considered to be a flawed approach to movement observation, I would suggest that his application of LMA, along with the vague, outdated, and sometimes essentialist perspectives that are at times present in Laban's and Bartenieff's writing, not be conflated with the potential of the system itself. Speaking to this ability to separate the system from its more ill-advised applications, dance ethnographer and CMA Joan D. Frosch has observed of Lomax's work that, while "the tidy categories reducing the dancer to a relatively neat object of study may have seemed an attractive systematic approach to some at the time" (Frosch 256), the Choreometrics project is highly reductionist and neglects to consider the subjectivity of LMA as a system. However, she goes on to note that LMA can be a useful tool in ethnographic and cultural studies, "when tied to a contextual approach" (Frosch 274).

Still, a number of scholars prefer to avoid LMA and focus on Labanotation, a system of movement notation developed by Laban and strongly linked to LMA. Frosch observes the particular utility of Labanotation in note-taking methods in dance ethnography fieldwork, citing anthropologists Brenda Farnell and Drid Williams in their enthusiasm for Labanotation as an ethnographic tool, despite the system's complexity (Frosch 266). Frosch also considers a more critical view in dance ethnographer Margaret Drewal's argument that Labanotation's Western context makes it primarily suitable for Western dance forms and insufficient for other cultural contexts, such as African dance styles (Frosch 266), though other scholars have used it to study non-Western forms (Bartenieff et al. 1984; Kaeppler 1967). While multiple systems of movement analysis and notation exist, dance scholar and CMA Mary Alice Brennan identifies Labanotation

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<sup>40</sup> Lomax's Choreometrics project has generated consistent criticism in the decades since its production in 1968. A number of anthropologists and dance ethnographers have spoken against the project (Daly 1988; B. Farnell 2011; Frosch 1999; Keali'inohomoku 1974; Williams 1974, 2007) for its ethnocentric approach to drawing connections between various cultures' performative or expressive dance movements and their functional, productive ones.

as the most widely used method in English-language dance research, due to its capacity for a highly detailed level of description and observation of movement (Brennan 287). She cites as a strength of Labanotation its inclusion of flow and other qualities of movement in action, rather than observing only a “series of positions” (Beck qtd. in Brennan 287).

LMA itself has also been incorporated in ethnographic methodologies by a number of scholars, including dance anthropologist Judith Lynne Hanna, who follows the model of LMA’s structure to create a framework for analysis in her 1979 Ubakala ethnography, *To Dance is Human: A Theory of Nonverbal Communication* (84-85, 264),<sup>41</sup> and dance ethnographer Sally Ann Ness, who incorporates elements of LMA in *Body, Movement, and Culture: Kinesthetic and Visual Symbolism in a Philippine Community*, her 1992 study of *sinulog* dances in the Philippines. Like Lomax, Ness observes shared movement qualities between *sinulog* dances and everyday Cebuana movements such as walking. However, Ness approaches these similarities with an awareness of her own subjectivity and outsider status (Ness 238). She expresses a desire to avoid a reductionist understanding of the movement patterns she observes by privileging the perspectives of her Cebuana informants (Ness 54), acknowledging the capacity for a wide range of individual movement patterns among the residents of Cebu City (56), and considering the interplay of historical and cultural influences on the movement and her own experience of it (219).

A number of dance and LMA scholars have noted the importance of recognizing the role of context when conducting movement analysis (Adshead 1988; Bishko 2014b; Brennan 1999; Daly 1988; Frosch 1999; Sklar 1991, 2000). Following dance scholar Janet Adshead, Brennan

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<sup>41</sup> Hanna’s *Dance, Sex and Gender: Signs of Identity, Dominance, Defiance, and Desire* (1988) also appears to use LMA concepts, though they are not identified as such, with elements of Space and Effort listed among her “coding variables for gender patterns in dance” (Hanna, *Dance, Sex and Gender* 253-55).

suggests that movement analysis is most effective when first applied toward observation and description, then integrated with other theoretical frameworks to interpret the observations within “the larger focus of the study” (Brennan 284).<sup>42</sup> Brennan further argues that the ability of movement analysis, LMA or otherwise, to articulate details and subtleties of movement in words does not equate to the act of assigning meaning or value to the movement—rather, context and subjective interpretation contribute to making meaning out of these observations. Sklar also acknowledges the value of combining hermeneutic and somatic methodologies (“Bodylore” 18), and dance scholar Ann Daly asserts, like Brennan, that movement analysis most effectively contributes to meaning-making when it engages with other methodologies and theories as a means of navigating the “many layers of context” in movement and behaviour (Daly 44, 48). Daly further addresses the role of the observer as “active meaning-maker” (Daly 45) and the subjective nature of this task, reminding that, “as with any interpretive methodology, meaning is ultimately mediated by the observer and by the purpose of the study” (Daly 47) and highlighting, like Brennan, the analyst’s duty to distinguish between observation and interpretation in this role (Daly 47).

Through the approaches and concerns raised in this and the previous section regarding movement observation in terms of both gender and culture, it appears that a diffuse, open-minded understanding of the plethora of influences—including cultural influences, individual preferences and tendencies, and environmental or situational factors—on an individual’s movement is paramount in conducting movement observation, as is an awareness of the subjectivity and positionality of the observer. Further, non-dance movement observation presents unique considerations as compared to dance observation, given its greater likelihood to involve

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<sup>42</sup> My own analytical approach follows this basic structure, as detailed in the methodology section in the Introduction.

non-intentional movement qualities and patterns and the risks involved in making generalizations that may foster essentialist readings. The applications of LMA discussed in this section have brought these concerns into my own work. Though I do not work with specific populations or even real people, my research revolves around the understanding of multiple potential influences on an individual's movement and movement patterns among multiple bodies. Turning now to the work of Leslie Bishko, I will explore how the investigative capabilities of LMA can be applied to animation, bringing together the two main themes of my research and this literature review: Disney animation and movement analysis.

### **LMA and Animation**

“Actors work in the present moment, and animators . . . the *illusion* of a present moment.”  
-Ed Hooks, *Acting for Animators* (2)

As stated in the Introduction, my research is heavily influenced by CMA and animation scholar Leslie Bishko. Unique in animation studies for her background as a Certified Movement Analyst, Bishko is a key figure in bringing together animation and LMA, approaching animation through her foundation in bodily movement and depth of LMA knowledge and experience. Bishko lays a foundation for the growing use of LMA in various forms of animation and virtual reality, including human-form robots, human-robot communication, virtual reality, and motion capture (Badler et al. 1999; Bouchard and Badler 2007; Byun and Badler 2002; Durupinar et al. 2017; Hachimura et al. 2005; Heloir et al. 2010; Masuda and Kato 2010; Masuda et al. 2009; Rett and Dias 2010). She demonstrates LMA's utility in computer animation (1991), its connection to cartoon animation and Disney's *Animation Principles* (2007), and its potential as a tool to develop character personality (in Furniss 2008) as well as empathy and believability in

animation and virtual reality, focusing on video games (2014a, 2014b, 2014c). In this section of the literature review I articulate what Bishko contributes to the intersecting fields of LMA and animation, both of which are grounded in an impulse to understand movement. I then demonstrate how my application of LMA toward animated movement as a means of cultural critique intersects with, expands on, and deviates from her work.

In each of her articles, Bishko introduces LMA's movement vocabulary to an animation-centred audience and demonstrates how various terms and concepts correspond to Animation Principles, in order to offer an expanded understanding of the movement the Principles aim to create. She explores how LMA can reveal the intentionality and capacity for communication in animated movement, which she perceives to be lacking in the Animation Principles ("Animation Principles" 179). Applying the LMA theme of Function-Expression (which relates "functional aspects of the body structures to their expressive abilities" [Fernandes 272]) to cartoon animation, Bishko states that she "view[s] the Principles of Animation as serving mostly the Functional aspects of moving, with LMA serving the integration of Function with Expression" (Bishko, "Uses and Abuses" 30). Bishko's demonstration of LMA's utility therefore revolves around the goal of creating character authenticity, which she defines in terms of "congruence"—between a character's design and expression, their inner intent and outer action, and their movement style and intended personality (Bishko, "Empathic Experience" 52).

In her 1991 article, "Relationships between Laban Movement Analysis and Computer Animation," Bishko applies the LMA concepts of Effort, Shape, and Phrasing<sup>43</sup> to the computer animation process, exploring how emotions and reactions are manufactured through the

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<sup>43</sup> Phrasing is an aspect of Effort that considers the various ways in which Effort elements combine in sequence to carry out an action or connected series of actions. Phrases consist of three stages: Preparation, Exertion, and Recuperation.

movement qualities of an animated form. There is no cultural analysis here; rather, her work is an exploration of LMA's practical applications in the computer animation process to create more nuanced movement, and thus, characterization. Bishko likens animation to dance as a medium that can be more deeply explored and understood through the "awareness of the elements of movement" that LMA can provide ("Relationships" 9), and she considers how this deepened understanding can allow animators to create more nuanced expression in animated movement, a recurring theme throughout her later writing as well. Bishko argues that the "animation process separates the animator from the kinesthetic movement impulses that are the source of her expressive drives" ("Relationships" 1). She poses this separation as a problem for which LMA offers a solution: by providing a language to articulate nuanced movement qualities, LMA bridges the separation between the mental impulse of the animator and the resulting movement of the animation, a uniquely literal body-mind separation. LMA thus unites the animator kinesthetically with their animation's "expressive movement impulses" through a more facile understanding of movement ("Relationships" 7).

In her 2007 article, "The Uses and Abuses of Cartoon Style in Animation," Bishko investigates the connection between LMA and traditional cartoon-style animation (the latter identified by Bishko as hand-drawn and driven by the Animation Principles). She identifies how a thorough understanding of both can allow for more expressive movement and cohesive characterization in computer animation. Bishko states three objectives for this article: to note the limitations of cartoon style, to show how LMA can be used to understand the role of cartoon style in animation, and, like her 1991 article (to be repeated in 2014 as well), to introduce LMA terminology as a tool for animation production and discussion. Though this article heavily features hand-drawn animation, Bishko in fact uses this focus to highlight how LMA can ease the

transition to computer animation, which had been gaining popularity from the late 1990s and early 2000s, and to help in applying hand-drawn methods effectively, which she identifies as a weak point in vector-based computer animation. She addresses the tendency for animators to apply the Animation Principles used in cartoon style in a rote way that often results in incomplete or inauthentic characterization—the “abuse” Bishko refers to in her title—due to insufficient understanding of the expressive role of movement. In her 1991 article, Bishko proposes LMA as a solution to this problem, facilitating more fully realized character movement and providing a more complete framework for movement that can be applied to the growing world of animation, particularly in areas such as video games and CGI sequences in live-action movies, both of which constantly strive toward ever more realistic movement qualities.

Bishko continues her exploration of LMA as a tool for computer animation in 2014 with a three-part series of essays, focusing on the role of movement in creating user empathy with computer-animated video game characters. Bishko asserts that realistic movement is integral to fostering empathy and immersion in virtual worlds such as video games (Bishko, “Empathic Experience” 47), stating that empathy is “rooted in” embodiment and the ability to relate to others through movement, and arises out of understanding others as “minded creatures” (“Empathic Experience” 47). The link Bishko draws between these two elements recalls the significance of the mind-body connection in Laban’s work, as well as its link to the LMA theme of Inner-Outer, which refers to the “dynamic relation between the individual’s inner universe (Body; feelings, images, experiences, etc.) and the outer (Space; environment, other people, objects, social/political happenings, etc.)” (Fernandes 270).

Bishko’s discussion of the physical component of empathy recalls Deidre Sklar’s “kinesthetic empathy,” an approach to movement observation that embraces “‘feeling with’ as



well as visually observing” (Sklar, “On Dance Ethnography” 8). Sklar describes kinesthetic empathy as “the capacity to participate with another’s movement or another’s sensory experience of movement” (Sklar, “Bodylore” 15), a goal in video game development that Bishko addresses through LMA’s potential to facilitate more realistic, “authentic” character movement. Bishko defines “authenticity” through two interrelated sets of concepts: the LMA theme of Function-Expression, and the distinction between behavioural and intentional movement (“Empathic Experience” 48). Bishko defines Function-Expression in terms of the distinction and interplay between biomechanical, physics-based movement and movement grounded in motivation, inner intention, and self-expression (“Empathic Experience” 41). She likewise describes behavioural and intentional movement in terms of movements based in action, reflexes, etc. (behavioural) versus those that serve to communicate emotion (intentional), drawing a clear parallel with the Function-Expression theme. While in her discussion of video games Bishko focuses on the importance of incorporating intentional movement to foster empathy, she returns to the Function-Expression interplay throughout her writing, and how this interplay is fundamental in creating character movement and building animated stories (“Empathic Experience” 51).

Bishko presents LMA as a nuanced theory of movement that provides a scaffolding for clarifying and integrating Function-Expression in animated movement. She proposes that LMA can help create authentic, believable characters that cultivate empathy in viewers. She further suggests LMA as a means of providing consistent terminology for communication among animators, positioning the process in which multiple animators work on various aspects of one character or sequence as “fragmenting” the flow and spontaneity of movement (“Empathy in Virtual Worlds” 227). Through explaining LMA terminology, relating it to animation concepts, and providing examples by analyzing film clips, Bishko demonstrates that LMA is highly

effective in identifying and creating authenticity and empathy in animated characters (“Empathy in Virtual Worlds” 225-26).

My initial interest in Bishko’s work stemmed from her ability to draw parallels between animation concepts and LMA terminology, and her exploration of the importance of Function-Expression in creating believable characters draws a clear line to Disney’s realistic animation style. I have applied her understanding of the Function-Expression theme to the films and characters in my study, considering the interplay of “biomechanical body function” and “inner expressive drive” (Bishko “Uses and Abuses” 30), which has supported my process of interpreting significance and meaning in particular movements. However, my research also deviates from and possibly even contradicts Bishko’s assertions that animators need LMA in order to unite function and expression and convey inner intention in their characters, given the depth and breadth of meaning I have identified through my case studies. While I do not believe that my research fully refutes Bishko’s stated need for further LMA integration, it does perhaps complicate it, which I will explore in the Conclusion.

Though Bishko is singular in her approach to integrating LMA with the animation process, actor and instructor Ed Hooks has also acknowledged its value for animators in his book *Acting for Animators* (2000). As the title suggests, Hooks’s application of LMA focuses on basic actor training for animators—where Bishko addresses the technical aspects of animation production, Hooks engages with LMA in the pre-animation stage of bodily understanding. Hooks and Bishko are often in close conversation with each other, frequently citing or referring to one another in their writing (Bishko, “Empathic Experience” 51-52; E. Hooks 75). Like Bishko, Hooks introduces a small selection of LMA concepts, providing examples of how animators can apply them to both thinking about and practicing movement (E. Hooks 75). He also, like Bishko,

emphasizes the connection between inner impulses and outer manifestations, stating that “from the animator’s perspective, movement is the visible outer result of the character’s inner impulses” (E. Hooks 74), and echoing Bishko’s assessment that emotion is integral in making animation “authentic” (Bishko, “Empathic Experience” 51; E. Hooks 1).

As mentioned above, a number of scholars have turned to LMA as a means of exploring various forms of animated or virtual movement. Rather than approaching this application of LMA from a perspective grounded in movement and the body as I have done, or focusing on how and why LMA can engage with such material as Bishko does, these studies are often based in technological fields and incorporate specific aspects of LMA (such as the eight Effort elements) into their methodology in a systematic and data-driven way (see cited examples at the beginning of this section). Such applications of LMA demonstrate its diverse range of possibilities, but Bishko advises against using LMA in this manner. She recognizes LMA’s “accessible structure” as its primary draw for providing “computational solutions to movement problems” (“Empathy in Virtual Worlds” 231), but also suggests that understanding LMA as only a systematic way of “mapping” movement through Effort and Shape/Space is a gross “misinterpretation” of what it offers (“Empathy in Virtual Worlds” 231). Bishko cites insufficient LMA training and lack of knowledge as key issues leading to this misinterpretation of LMA as “quantifiable,” echoing LMA scholars in dance ethnography in her assertion that LMA offers the greatest insight when applied contextually and subjectively, in conjunction with methodologies that value its qualitative aspects (“Empathy in Virtual Worlds” 231).<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Though Bishko asserts that one “strength of the LMA system is that it avoids mapping movement parameters to specific movements or interpretations” (Bishko, “Animation Principles” 193), she identifies the commonly referenced Effort Action Drive (various combinations of Space, Weight, and Time Factors that are “necessary in everyday actions without the involvement of emotion” [Fernandes 176]) as an “anomaly” in that it does link qualities with specific actions, with names for various Effort combinations including Flick, Dab, Punch, Wring, etc. Bishko states that Action Drive is among “the most widely known, yet most misunderstood, aspects of LMA”

Bishko's caution regarding quantitative versus qualitative understandings and applications of LMA echoes the objective/subjective, universal/contextual discussion earlier in this chapter, introducing another binary that LMA awkwardly straddles. While Bishko stresses the subjective and relational nature of LMA, she also identifies it as a distillation of elements that make up "all movement patterns" ("Animation Principles" 178) and refers to LMA's ability to articulate "universal truths about movement" ("Empathy in Virtual Worlds" 234), suggesting that she does see LMA as objective in some ways. An example of this view can be found in her labeling of LMA as "style-neutral" ("Uses and Abuses" 24), which, she argues, allows it to support "authentic communication" ("Uses and Abuses" 30), a term Bishko uses to refer to LMA's capacity to support more integrated Function-Expression in cartoon-style animation ("Uses and Abuses" 30). Bishko's only definition or qualification of "style-neutrality" appears to be through LMA's contrast to Animation Principles, which "can potentially impose a specific style of animated movement, [while] LMA is style-neutral and therefore excels at articulating components of style" (Bishko, "Uses and Abuses" 24).

I believe that Bishko's intention in using the phrase "style-neutral" is to distinguish LMA from particular movement "styles" such as classical ballet or contemporary dance, which are built from various consistently used movement qualities that create a signature aesthetic or movement vocabulary. In contrast, LMA is used to identify the nuances of those qualities and tease out what makes a movement in one "style" different from the same basic movement in another. However, defining it with as loaded a term as "neutral" (or "universal," or "objective") ignores LMA's own context and biases, in particular its origins situated within the developing world of modern dance in Europe, not to mention the biases inherent in the observer. LMA (and

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(Bishko, "Animation Principles" 193), offering one reason why LMA often gets mistakenly applied as a highly quantifiable and systematic way of approaching movement.

Laban) recognizes that different people might move differently for a multitude of different reasons, but it still uses the same unadjusted framework and parameters to observe those differences. I believe that engaging with only one framework or language allows for more ease of comparison across differences, but it also forces different contexts (dance styles, cultural approaches to movement, etc.) into the same way of seeing, describing, and discussing movement.

Bishko's work brings together the fields of LMA and animation, and has been foundational in my own research since my initial interest in the topic. While Bishko provides a point of departure for my research, however, my own path of inquiry differs from hers, expanding in the direction of cultural analysis and discussion rather than practical application. Where Bishko's goal is to address how LMA can support animators in conveying character, intent, etc. through movement, I use LMA in almost the reverse way, considering the finished product and investigating how the characters' intent, expression, etc. are conveyed in their animated movement. Thus, though direct citations of Bishko may be sparse in my actual analysis, her work is a constant undercurrent throughout my entire dissertation, informing my understanding of how LMA can be applied to animation. Bishko's work paralleling LMA and Animation Principles and demonstrating LMA's applicability to a two-dimensional medium provides me with tools to more easily observe and describe animated movements with LMA language and apply that observation to interpreting meaning—to identify cultural encoding in characters' movements and to demonstrate LMA as an effective tool in such an investigation.

I use LMA to consider how the characters in this study “symbolise the body at a given moment in time” (H. Thomas 22). Rather than manifesting consistently across time and culture, bodily expression is temporal and shifting. Therefore, observing diachronic patterns in Disney's

villainesses can reveal cultural ideologies of women and evil and how they shift over time. LMA's application in my study serves to identify patterns in how Disney's (primarily male) animators imagine, perceive, and reproduce views of "evil" women, thus culturally situating the films I have chosen to discuss. Just as Bradley observes that "every little movement does not have a meaning of its own, but every little movement means something to the mover, and therefore resonates (or does not resonate) for the audience of the mover" (Bradley 65), so does "every little movement" mean something to the animator. Further, Bradley notes that though audience members "impose personal and cultural perspectives and beliefs onto the observation," actors—and, continuing to translate the role of the actor to that of the animator, animators—also carry their own perspectives and positionalities into their work: "no performer, no matter how much training he/she has had, is completely neutral either" (Bradley 65). Attending to how animated movement is made meaningful, both by viewers and by potential influences on the animators, I have brought LMA as an analytical methodology into conversation with scholarship from the fields of dance studies, fairy-tale analysis, and Disney and animation studies. In this way, I use LMA as a tool for critical reflection of the culturally inscribed meanings present in Disney films and how movement in particular transmits those meanings, an area of inquiry lacking in scholarship.

## **Summary and Conclusion**

Bishko identifies "the link between how people move and what their movement communicates to others" ("Uses and Abuses" 27) as missing from most applications of Disney's *Animation Principles*, and argues that LMA excels in clarifying this link. Deidre Sklar suggests that "movement embodies cultural knowledge" ("Bodylore" 11) and "exists at the point where

the body as source of personal and immediate knowledge meets the body as medium of cultural expression” (“Bodylore” 14). Where movement and the body have a tendency to be forgotten or glossed over in fields outside of dance, such as cultural studies, my approach highlights their capacity for carrying meaning, intertwining mental knowledge and corporeal knowledge (Sklar, “Bodylore” 12) in an exploration of bodies that are not actually corporeal.

My research brings together two worlds—Disney's cartoon-style animation and Laban's theories of the moving body—and their attendant ways of understanding movement. Both Walt Disney and Laban examined the foundational elements, patterns, and inner impulses in movement; pioneered new approaches to movement as a means of understanding and making meaning; and explored the possibilities inherent in the connection between body and mind. As contemporaries, over the course of the early and mid-twentieth century, Laban and Walt Disney both developed theories and principles that are still widely used today. Both built their own clear, codified languages around movement that would facilitate, for their users, precision and an understanding of a given movement's underlying factors. However, unlike the *Animation Principles*, which developed from observation into a prescriptive set of rules, LMA remains descriptive, identifying what is present in movement and not instructing or assigning meaning (Bishko, “Uses and Abuses” 30), making it an effective methodology for cultural analysis.

Many scholars have considered Disney animation as an object of cultural analysis and source of cultural encoding. Though some of these analyses consider the meanings immanent in characters' bodies or physical appearance (Bell 1995; Do Rozario 2004), they do not engage in close readings of characters' movement. An approach grounded in dance studies and movement analysis offers a unique perspective and supports a deep focus on the capacity of movement to carry cultural meanings in Disney animation. I have thus also introduced the foundational

concepts of Laban's theories of movement, and explored scholarship surrounding LMA-based approaches to gender and applications of LMA in cultural studies and ethnography. I have brought the two disparate subjects of Disney and LMA together through the work of Leslie Bishko, who uses LMA as a tool in animation production, and explored the gap between the two fields that my research fills, and I will continue to demonstrate LMA's efficacy as a means of cultural analysis of animated movement throughout this dissertation. The interdisciplinary nature of my literature review supports my research through the bricolage of perspectives it offers to the process of interpreting meaning in movement. It further supports my methodological approach by combining the work of Bishko in linking LMA and cartoon animation with my own hypotheses drawn from fairy-tale analysis and cultural criticism of Disney animation.

The interdisciplinary nature of my research positions it to fill several gaps and opportunities for further exploration in the literature, including applying LMA to animation for the purposes of cultural analysis, as I have explored through my introduction of Bishko's work, and, more specifically, considering the meanings of gender portrayal in Disney animation through a close reading of movement via LMA. My research fills these gaps by bringing these fields together, introducing LMA as a methodology for cultural analysis, specifically of animated bodies and how gender is constructed on and portrayed through them. The literature and conclusions of this section indicate that I can indeed use LMA to conduct a cultural analysis on these films and characters. Considering their movement as the medium in which cultural meanings are encoded, LMA provides a means of clarifying and identifying patterns—both the patterns in individual characters' movement and those extant between films and/or characters. In the following chapter, I will focus on the key elements that set the stage for my investigation of cultural meanings: gender and transformation.



## Chapter Two:

### Theorizing Gender and Transformation in Disney Villainesses

“Woman is not born; she is made.”

-Andrea Dworkin, *Pornography: Men Possessing Women* (128)

The purpose of this chapter is to expand on the topic of female representation in Disney, as introduced in the previous chapter, and to address several themes that arise throughout the analysis chapters to follow. These themes include female agency and morality; the *femme fatale* and her connection with female archetypes; and feminist scholarship on youth, beauty, and desirability. After introducing literature on these subjects and exploring their intersections, I turn to the topic of transformation, both as it relates to the *femme fatale* and in its role as a uniting element in animation and fairy tales.

Although I do not engage deeply with social constructionism as a theoretical framework, it seems to be a natural entry point for discussing the construction of female bodies in animation, as stated in the literature review. Disney and other Hollywood animation studios historically employed—and, to a lesser degree, continue to employ—mostly male animators.<sup>45</sup> These animators build female characters to given specifications in terms of appearance and behaviour, including movement, to fit into particular roles, whether innocent maidens or wicked mothers and crones. These qualities are taken from existing images or social constructions of women, and also serve to further perpetuate those images, going on to contribute to future constructions of women, both real and fictional. While Disney animators often rely on actual moving bodies (commonly referred to as live-action reference models) to achieve realistic movement, those bodies are affected not only by their own cultural participation, but also by performing roles

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<sup>45</sup> For a deeper discussion of the historical role of women in Disney and other animation studios, see Bell 1995; Johnson 2017.

based on gendered archetypes and/or stock characters (princess, witch, etc.) or moving within a certain tradition, such as the ballet influence seen in many early Disney characters (Do Rozario 46). When translated to animated images, these elements are further exaggerated by the animators' minds and hands, filtered through their own cultural situatedness, in a progression linking gender construction in Disney to Baudrillard's hyperreality<sup>46</sup> as discussed in the previous chapter. Animators are able to design physical features of characters' bodies, including appearance and movement habits, to support the social constructs they reflect, blurring "biology" and social imaginaries and creating particular understandings of what women are by building animated bodies to suit specific roles.

As stated in the literature review, extreme constructionist approaches to gender, such as Judith Butler's, run the risk of being as limiting as extreme essentialist ones, neglecting "the materiality and historicity of the body, its situatedness in time and space" (Bordo 15). It would be remiss to ignore constructionism in terms of the role of the animator, but a purely constructionist approach seems equally remiss given the foundation in the body that my research (and dance studies) has, and my reference to scholars such as Sklar, Bordo, and of course Laban, who all value the materiality of the body. Bordo, who argues against extreme social constructionism, still addresses the impact of social pressures and images of femininity on women and how they contribute to creating specific ideals and understandings of what it is to "be" female. Likewise, LMA, though situated heavily in the materiality of the body, acknowledges the role of social context in influencing movement.

Ultimately, I privilege Hall's theory of cultural encoding over social constructionism, aligning my research with Bordo's cultural studies-based perspective of media as a transmitter of

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<sup>46</sup> For more general discussions linking Baudrillard's hyperreality and Butler's gender constructionism, see Grace 2000; Sichler 2010.

gendered social codes. I do not approach Disney in terms of them constructing ideas of what women are, but rather view them as one piece in the cultural puzzle, absorbing, transmitting, and reinforcing ideologies and messages about women present in the society in which Disney exists. This perspective is reflected in my understanding of how Disney incorporates fairy-tale archetypes, the Hollywood *femme fatale*, ballet aesthetics, and the other influences I discuss throughout this research. Rather than exploring the development of these ideologies or the construction of gender roles around them, I focus on how Disney engages with them.

### **Heroines and Villainesses**

Before exploring the villainess in greater depth, it is useful to consider the princess as a foundation for discussing Disney's representations of femininity. Bell and Do Rozario both speak to the role of popular culture and contemporaneous images of femininity in the construction of Disney princesses and heroines, which highlights the reciprocal nature of these images as both absorbing and perpetuating cultural imaginaries of femininity. Bell identifies the influence of popular female icons on the youthful beauty embodied by these characters, citing silent film *ingenues* such as Janet Gaynor for Snow White, and observes similarities to Grace Kelly for Cinderella, the newly popular Barbie doll for *Sleeping Beauty*'s Aurora, and Farrah Fawcett for *The Little Mermaid*'s Ariel (Bell 109-10).

Do Rozario also notes these influences, observing that 1937's Snow White is the "princess of early Hollywood . . . a 1920s/'30s starlet with a flapper's haircut, rosebud mouth, and high-pitched warble" (Do Rozario 38). However, she focuses primarily on how Disney princesses reflect broader social ideologies of the films' production periods, noting that, in conjunction with her Hollywood starlet appearance, Snow White "matures in the Depression and

is happy to pitch in with the working-class dwarves [sic.] in times of high unemployment and poverty” (Do Rozario 38). Moving forward to 1959, *Sleeping Beauty*’s Princess Aurora is “a prototype Baby Boomer [who] wanders barefoot in the woods” and, “representing an idealized American teen,” is more upset to learn that she cannot make her date with the boy she just met than she is excited to find out that she is a princess (Do Rozario 38).<sup>47</sup> Regarding the princesses of the eighties and nineties, Do Rozario observes that where “Walt’s princesses scrubbed and waited with boundless cheerful energy . . . Team Disney’s princesses undertake no chores, neglect their obligations, and run wild” (57), linking these changes with shifting roles and representations of women.

Though not the focus of their analyses, Bell and Do Rozario both consider movement influences on Disney’s princess characters, focusing especially on ballet as an influence in the classic, Walt-era princesses. Bell identifies the influence of live-action reference models Marjorie Champion (Snow White) and Helene Stanley (Aurora) on their characters’ movements through their own backgrounds in dance (Bell 110-11). She argues that the classical ballet influence on movement and carriage signifies “markers of class” (110) in these films, with the ballerina serving as another image of femininity layered onto the Disney princess. Though Bell identifies this balletic “royal bearing” (111) as a means of setting the princess apart from other characters,<sup>48</sup> I believe that the ballet influence often extends to these other characters. Ballet aesthetics play a significant role in the construction of villainesses such as the Evil Queen in *Snow White* and

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<sup>47</sup> Aurora is not the only character in *Sleeping Beauty* to reflect shifting ideologies of the time period. Do Rozario observes that “the three good fairies give up their magic wands for housework” (Do Rozario 38), echoing the post-World War II shift of women out of the workplace and into the kitchen. Prince Phillip demonstrates his modern sensibilities when he chides his father for “living in the past” (*Sleeping Beauty*) when he does not approve of Phillip marrying someone below his class, and the evil Maleficent is characterized by “the outdated glamour of the ’40s” (Do Rozario 38).

<sup>48</sup> Bell cites the blatantly opposing carriage in Cinderella’s stepsisters, whose “strides are always heel first, bent knee exaggerations of incorrect ballet postures and movements” (Bell 112), causing them to read as comic drag, “animated commoners” (112).

Maleficent in *Sleeping Beauty*, as I explore in the following chapter. In contrast, Do Rozario observes the Team Disney-era princesses of her study—Ariel, Jasmine, and Pocahontas—to shift toward “more ‘democratic’ and popular forms of dance and movement” (Do Rozario 46) in the eighties and nineties, making them more athletic and focused on “heroism, egalitarianism and autonomy” (47).<sup>49</sup>

Many scholars (Bordo 1993; Cixous 1975; Dijkstra 1986, 1996; Irigaray 1977; Mulvey 1975) have identified a gendered division in the Cartesian duality between mind and body, with men associated with the mind, intellect, and spirit, and women with the body, which is typically subordinated or viewed negatively (Bordo 14). Recalling from the previous chapter that the heroine’s body often creates narrative obstacles because of her female status, one might expect this othered, problematized body to be a source of struggle against male villains in fairy-tale and Disney narratives, representing the male-female, mind-body duality. However, the body-related struggles of many heroines often arise when the antagonist is female, frequently out of envy or greed over some physical difference between the two women, as seen in *Snow White*, *Tangled*, and even *The Little Mermaid* to an extent. This motivation gives the villainess’s body equal importance to the story, further solidifying the female/body connection, but not placing it in opposition to male/mind. The male-female, mind-body duality exists in other forms in Disney films, such as *The Sword in the Stone*’s contrast between the wild, childlike Madam Mim, who constantly comments on her body and appearance, gleefully pronouncing herself “hideous” and demonstrating her magical prowess by transforming herself into a beautiful young woman, and

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<sup>49</sup> Bell further identifies the influence of burlesque in *The Little Mermaid* and observes that Ariel’s action model, Sherri Stoner, breaks away from the ballerina/dancer influence of the Walt era, with a more athletic build and movement style (Bell 113-14).

her male counterpart Merlin, presented as a wise, benevolent intellectual who prioritizes education above all else.<sup>50</sup>

A number of scholars explore the significance of archetypal female characters' bodies. Jungian analyst Sibylle Birkhäuser-Oeri states that archetypal figures in fairy tales are often extreme in appearance, "awful ugly witches with red eyes and enormous noses . . . or ethereally beautiful fairies, like goddesses" (Birkhäuser-Oeri 13). Harrington identifies this convention in Disney animation, resulting in highly polarized representations of good and evil in Disney characters (Harrington 76); in this way, their bodies—and, as I argue, their movements—tell the viewer how to decipher their character. Though many scholars argue that the appearance of archetypal characters is significant in Disney, attitudes differ regarding whether female villains convey their evil status through extreme ugliness or beauty. Wasko observes that "Disney heroines are *always* beautiful, shapely, and often sexually attractive, while female villains are typically ugly and either extremely thin (Cruella De Vil from *One Hundred and One Dalmatians*) or grossly fat (Ursula from *The Little Mermaid*), thus perpetuating norms of physical beauty prevalent in mainstream American culture" (Wasko 116). Bell asserts the opposite, as she identifies the standard Disney villainess with the *femme fatale* of silent and classic Hollywood film eras and the threat or danger of female beauty. Bell identifies Disney's "evil women" as "beautiful witches, queens, and stepmothers" (Bell 115) displaying elements of the silent film diva, including movement features such as exaggerated hip and arm movements (Bell 115). Though I have found earlier villainesses such as *Snow White*'s Evil Queen and *Sleeping Beauty*'s Maleficent to limit this exaggeration to the arms—possibly due to the overriding ballet influence

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<sup>50</sup> Ann Daly observes the significance of this duality in movement analysis as well, noting the importance of gender in movement analysis, "not only because movement style and interaction patterns are fundamental ingredients in the cultural construction of gender, but also because movement itself has traditionally been consigned to the realm of the feminine, set in opposition to male mastery over language" (Daly 43).

of the era's films resulting in immobilizing the hips—later characters such as Ursula, Mother Gothel, and even Yzma more fully demonstrate this physical aspect of diva characterization as identified by Bell.<sup>51</sup>

Interestingly, of these latter three, Ursula and Yzma appear as caricatures or parodies of the *femme fatale* rather than true representations, mired as they are in such aesthetically unappealing characteristics as obesity and old age. This position as both conventionally unattractive (“extremely thin” or “grossly fat” as stated by Wasko [116]) and influenced by *femme fatale* and film diva imagery might reconcile Wasko's and Bell's opposing views on whether the Disney villainess is attractive or not. The shifts toward parody in these villainesses complicate attempts to identify patterns in appearance across all Disney villainesses and incorporate diva and *femme fatale* imagery in a comedic, mocking way. I explore these varying representations of the *femme fatale* in Chapter Four as part of my theory of the shifting roles or “types” of Disney villainesses, away from pure, serious threat and toward more comical or complex figures.

Bell states that Disney's *femmes fatales* are coded to “inscribe middle age as a time of treachery, consumption, and danger in the feminine life cycle” (116), but also power and agency, representing the “age of Hollywood that had Bette Davis, Joan Crawford and Mae West directly challenging patriarchal order with heightened femininity” (Bell 43). Where young heroines are “beautiful victims” (Bell 120), “the wicked women harbor depths of power that . . . bespeak a cultural trepidation for unchecked femininity” (Bell 121). Thus, Bell identifies a link in Disney between “good” women as not only young, but passive, and “bad” women as not only older, but

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<sup>51</sup> Bell, writing in 1995, focuses her study on *Snow White's* Evil Queen, *Cinderella's* Lady Tremaine, *Sleeping Beauty's* Maleficent, and *The Little Mermaid's* Ursula. Due to a combination of later release dates and differing delimitations, our selections of villainesses do not completely overlap.

having agency. In addition to the dichotomy of male associated with mind and female with body, feminist scholars such as Susan Bordo (*Unbearable Weight* 1993) also identify a binary of male as active and female as passive. Bordo argues that this duality is “culturally sedimented” and among the most informative to Western gender ideologies, and maps onto male/female mind-body dualism, with the spirit as active (male) and the body as passive (female) (Bordo 5, 11-13). Bordo explores how “these dualities . . . mediate a good deal of our cultural reality” (16), addressing lasting issues for the female body, including beauty, aging, and motherhood.

Even in films that revolve around a female protagonist, the Disney heroine historically plays a relatively passive role. Interestingly, though the villainess occupies a specific archetypal position and can thus be seen as an archetypal object or obstacle in the hero’s or heroine’s journey, she often has more agency and capacity to exist as active subject compared to the Disney heroine, especially in earlier films such as 1937’s *Snow White* and 1959’s *Sleeping Beauty*. The Evil Queen instigates the plot of *Snow White* by ordering the Huntsman to kill Snow White and later goes out to get the job done herself after he fails. In contrast, Snow White is only able to react by running away, hiding in the woods under the protection of several men and eventually being saved by a prince’s kiss. Maleficent casts a curse on Aurora in *Sleeping Beauty*, again instigating the plot of the film, and Aurora is taken away and hidden in the woods (this time under the protection of female fairies, rather than male dwarfs), then eventually made to return to the castle and her position as princess. Both these heroines even spend a portion of their films asleep while the villainess is defeated by male characters.

The Disney Renaissance era (the decade from 1989 to 1999 during which Disney animation experienced a resurgence of popularity) sees some shifts in this pattern, but *The Little Mermaid*’s Ariel still must go to Ursula in order to stop passively watching and pining after the



human Prince Eric and get what she needs (a human body) to “actively” pursue him.<sup>52</sup> Ursula shows agency herself in sending her eel lackeys out to bring Ariel to her (reminiscent of the Evil Queen’s Huntsman in *Snow White*), and then turning herself into a human woman to actively thwart Ariel’s plan of making Prince Eric fall in love with her. Ariel’s passivity is further emphasized through the loss of her voice, taken by Ursula in an apparent metaphor for taking her agency. During the film’s climax, Prince Eric and even Ariel’s father, King Triton, take active roles in defeating Ursula and rescuing Ariel from her. *Tangled* in 2010 shows a greater shift toward heroine agency. Though the heroine Rapunzel is kidnapped by villainess Mother Gothel (Gothel as subject, Rapunzel as object), and Rapunzel does not actually attempt to leave her tower until the male lead appears and helps her, she does exert her own desires in leaving the tower to pursue a specific goal (going to see the floating lanterns she observes from her tower window), and in many of the choices made during her journey. Further, she stands up to Gothel after being convinced to return to the tower and plays a somewhat active part in Gothel’s defeat, though it is still mostly instigated by the male lead cutting off Rapunzel’s hair and thus destroying the magic that kept Gothel alive.

As active female characters whose narrative functions revolve around their physical bodies, the villainesses I examine disrupt male-active, female-passive binaries, but ultimately help to perpetuate them as they are defeated and/or punished for their transgressions (often by men). Feminist scholar Hélène Cixous states that “either woman is passive or she does not exist” (Cixous “Sorties” 64), offering a possible explanation for the status of so many of Disney’s powerful, active female characters as villains. Particularly in early Disney animated features, non-passive women or women in a position of power (especially social/political power) are often

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<sup>52</sup> This task consists of getting *him* to kiss *her*—it is never suggested that Ariel simply take the initiative and kiss Eric first.

either deceased (such as Snow White's or Ariel's queen mother), or largely removed from the narrative (such as Aurora's or Rapunzel's queen mother). When powerful women are present in the narrative, they are villains—othered, negative, to be destroyed. Given the common thread in feminist scholarship of problematizing a perceived male-active, female-passive binary, this opens up space to suggest the possibility that Disney's female villains occupy a feminist position.

On the other hand, it is significant that the bad female characters, those who must be defeated, are the ones who demonstrate this agency, while the good female characters remain (at least relative to the villains) passive. While subverting the ability to control and project cultural ideals upon women, the Disney villainess simultaneously demonstrates those very values: for all that she operates outside of the active/passive gender binary, she is clearly presented as bad, deviant, and certainly not something to be desired nor aspired to. Though an oppositional or negotiated reading of Disney films might allow for villainesses to be feminist figures, demonstrating agency and an ability to operate outside the bounds of a patriarchal society, a dominant reading shows these traits to be signifiers of deviance and undesirability. Active, powerful villainesses disrupt this binary but ultimately help perpetuate it, as they are always defeated and/or punished for their deviance.

Considering the active/passive, male/female binary in terms of movement, Kaylo argues that “polarities in movement quality [operate] as expressions of power” in terms of gender (Kaylo 173). Particular movement preferences correlate with qualities that Laban identified as either Indulging (often culturally linked with femininity) or Fighting (linked with masculinity), with masculine/Fighting qualities generally given higher value in Western patriarchal societies (Kaylo 180-82).<sup>53</sup> Though LMA does not prescribe meaning, certain movement qualities carry

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<sup>53</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapter, Kaylo is careful to refer to these generalizations as “culturally inscribed,” recognizing the role of environment and cultural situatedness in forming ideologies of gender. Observing these

more potential for threat or danger—for example, Strong Weight Effort, due to its greater capacity for force or pressure, is more likely able to inflict harm than Light. Likewise, Quick Time Effort<sup>54</sup> (another Fighting quality, like Strong Weight) could carry a similar threat by leaving less reaction or defense time for the other party. Conversely, even the Indulging quality of Free Flow, which might suggest ease and adaptability as compared to Bound Flow, may be read culturally as someone being easy to influence or control. Thus, Fighting qualities are often more likely to suggest the possibility of danger or the mover’s ability to overpower or take control, making Indulging qualities appear more vulnerable. Warren Lamb further observes vulnerable versus protected movement combinations in *Shaping*, identifying more “vulnerable” movement combinations<sup>55</sup> associated with women and more “protected” combinations with men (Kaylo 179). The villainesses in this study demonstrate a wide range of movement qualities in forming their own preferences and habits. Most of them demonstrate extreme shifts in Effort (albeit in different ways), often between Indulging and Fighting qualities in various combinations. Disney’s princesses, particularly in earlier films, exhibit far fewer extreme shifts or even Fighting qualities in general. This contrast suggests that perhaps while Disney heroines embody passive, feminine positions in the male/female dichotomy, the villainesses’ representations of female agency and binary transgression are present in their movement as well.<sup>56</sup>

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characteristics does not suggest that all men move with Fighting qualities and all women with Indulging ones, but rather suggests movement as one of many factors in social “gender-related conditioning” (Kaylo 180).

<sup>54</sup> Time Effort describes “variation in movement velocity, becoming gradually faster [Quick] or slower [Sustained]” (Fernandes 157). Time Effort is not about how many minutes a task takes, but about the change in accelerating or decelerating movement.

<sup>55</sup> Such as Growing in Shape Flow with convexity/openness (see glossary).

<sup>56</sup> It is important to note that, while Kaylo’s and Lamb’s theories of culturally linked gendered movement tendencies may inform my analysis, I am making my own observations and not necessarily working to confirm or challenge Lamb’s work. Further, while these concepts may support the capacity for the Disney villainess to break common gender binaries regarding agency, my focus on diachronic comparison between female characters precludes a deeper discussion of male versus female movement.

### **Terrible Mother, *Femme Fatale***

Elizabeth Bell theorizes Disney's female representation as a "somatic triumvirate" (Bell 108), wherein female bodies are coded in Disney films to link certain ages with certain moral alignments. While both younger and older women are good, Bell identifies the intermediary, middle-aged vamp as the very image of "female wickedness" (Bell 108). This middle stage maps onto the fairy-tale archetype of the mother, and many middle-aged Disney villainesses are stellar examples of a particular subset of this archetype, the Terrible Mother. While some fill a more metaphorical maternal position, such as Maleficent as an evil analog to Aurora's fairy godmothers in *Sleeping Beauty* or Yzma as Kuzco's royal advisor in *The Emperor's New Groove*, others, such as *Snow White's* Evil Queen and *Tangled's* Mother Gothel, occupy the mother or stepmother role more literally. Unlike the good mother who gives life, the Terrible Mother takes life away from her own children, making her "the worst of villainesses," according to folklore scholar Valerie Frankel (269). Frankel states that the cruel tendencies of the Terrible Mother are often a response to the patriarchal world, "in which women are most valued for youth, beauty, and fertility" (Frankel 269)—and youth and beauty are driving forces behind the Queen's plot to murder Snow White and Gothel's goal of keeping Rapunzel hidden away under her control. Folk scholars Martin Hallett and Barbara Karasek examine the common theme of inter-generational conflict in fairy tales that often surrounds the Terrible Mother archetype, particularly of an older woman in fear of being "superseded and made irrelevant" by a younger one (Hallett and Karasek 58). Tatar points to this theme in the "Snow White" tale in particular as a story that "maps a case study of maternal jealousy in its most pathological form" (Tatar 83). The Queen fills the role of the "powerful older woman . . . all the more sinister because her villainy is often insidious and

psychological in nature; she will readily resort to trickery and deceit to gain her ends” (Hallett and Karasek 58).

The connection between youth, beauty, desirability, and gender performance is a frequent subject of feminist theory. Third-wave feminist theorists Naomi Wolf and Susan Bordo both link age to beauty and beauty to (heteronormative, male gaze-driven) desirability. Investigating how the body relates to culture, the impact of media images on the female body, and how consumer culture contributes to the formation of gendered bodies, Naomi Wolf’s *The Beauty Myth* (1990) is a foundational text in the fields of body studies and feminist theory. Approaching the “ideology of beauty” and its role in controlling women (Wolf 11), Wolf argues that society’s beauty myth is more prescriptive of behaviour than appearance, and that the competition it engenders serves to divide women, particularly between young and old (14). This competition has become a trope in media, and is at the heart of many Disney films, whether played out in the relationships between Snow White and the Evil Queen in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in 1937 or Rapunzel and Mother Gothel in *Tangled* in 2010—or resolved and subverted in more recent films such as 2012’s *Brave* (Andrews and Chapman) or 2016’s *Moana*, as I discuss in the Conclusion.

Furthering Wolf’s approach to the impact of media on the female body, Bordo’s foundation in cultural studies addresses the role of film, television, and other media in transmitting cultural codes, supporting a reading of female Disney characters, both heroines and villainesses, as simultaneously both contributors to and products of social constructions of femininity. She observes the fascination in contemporary media with the “plasticity and deconstructive possibilities of the body” (Bordo 39), connecting fantasy stories in which bodies magically become younger or older to phenomena ranging from plastic surgery and gender

reassignment to reproductive technologies (39). The relevance of Wolf's and Bordo's theories on the impact of media consumption to my research is twofold. Socioculturally, these films participate in perpetuating such standards of beauty, particularly in the alignment of morality with physical attractiveness and normativity. Diegetically, villainesses are often (but not always) shown as the women who succumb to the "beauty myth," wanting to be young or beautiful but trying too hard to achieve it, while the heroines are young and beautiful without trying, ignorant of and impervious to the beauty myth, yet having succeeded at it. Disney shows what girls and women should look like—or at least want to look like—but also shows that one should not force it or appear desperate, and that if you are good and virtuous it will come naturally.

As stated above, not all villainesses succumb to this socially impressed need to perform femininity in a certain way. While some villainesses such as the Evil Queen and Mother Gothel actively desire youth and beauty, others demonstrate the opposite end of the spectrum and actively shun these things, even revelling in their existence outside of such social prescriptions. *The Sword in the Stone's* Madam Mim proudly touts her "hideous" appearance and carries no signifiers of the *femme fatale* or Hollywood diva, characterized more as an "aging spoiled brat" (Johnston and F. Thomas, *The Disney Villain* 136). *The Little Mermaid's* Ursula, while displaying certain aspects of the *femme fatale* according to Bell (115) and often behaving in a melodramatic way (befitting divas from *Sunset Boulevard's* Norma Desmond to the drag queen Divine [Sells 182]), shows no shame that her obese figure does not fit female beauty ideals of thinness and athleticism of the film's 1980s production era, even bemoaning the fact that she is "wasting away" in her banished state. Though these seemingly enlightened attitudes allow room for feminist readings of such characters and in some ways disrupt beauty myths and male-female binaries, they ultimately help perpetuate them, just as the characters' agency does. Not only are

these villainesses (like all others) defeated by the end of their films, punished for their deviant behaviour and positions, but they also still serve to highlight the importance of the female body, not only in the visual of not following codes of feminine presentation, but in their own comments about their appearance. Whether ugly or attractive, these deviant bodies serve as a means for the viewer to decipher their deviant character.

In her 1991 text, *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*, film scholar Mary Ann Doane characterizes the *femme fatale* as the “antithesis of maternal” (Doane 2), which is fitting not only for stepmother roles such as *Snow White*’s Evil Queen, but for the majority of the Disney villainesses who follow in her footsteps. Perhaps part of what solidifies these characters’ self-serving, devious natures is that in spite of this non-maternal characterization—or in order to highlight it as the Terrible Mother—they often fill a maternal role of some kind, whether stepmother to the titular heroine as in *Snow White* or something less overt.

The Terrible Mother is often characterized by a dual nature (Frankel 279), and Frankel links her with the crone archetype of the Destroyer, such as in the folk story of Baba Yaga, a witch who sometimes appears as two women: one young and one old (Frankel 284). Many Disney villainesses fit this two-fold characterization, but perhaps none so literally as the double identity of the Evil Queen/Witch in *Snow White*. The archetype of the elderly crone represented by the Witch is just as feared as the *femme fatale*-inspired stepmother of the Evil Queen, but in a different way. As the Queen she is upright and beautiful, but also dark and intimidating. Changing physical appearance as her archetypal role changes, rather than threatening in her beauty, the Witch is feared as a “repulsive creature . . . associated with great age, entropy, death, and even doomsday” (Frankel 288). While the Queen in *Snow White* represents primarily the Terrible Mother, her alter ego, the Witch, encompasses multiple crone archetypes. As the

Destroyer, she is “a personification of evil that eventually consumes itself . . . by the obsession that drags [her] to ruin” (Frankel 273), an apt description of her eventual demise. She is also the apple-selling Wisewoman, offering “prophecy and wish, blessing and curse” (291) to Snow White. Even aspects of the Trickster can be found in the Dionysian freedom her transformation facilitates—in the words of author Ursula K. Le Guin, “there are things the Old Woman can do, say, and think which the Woman cannot do, say, or think” (Le Guin 4). The ability of the Witch to do things other women cannot recalls the increased freedom, power, and agency seen in these female villains as discussed earlier in this chapter, made more apparent by her shift away from the desirable qualities of youth and beauty with her transformation. Her movements also reflect this shift and its attendant freedoms, as I will explore further in later chapters (particularly Chapter Five), as she demonstrates greater freedom in Shaping and more consistently dynamic shifts in Effort after her transformation into the Witch.

Though these female archetypes of mother and crone are significant contributors to the Disney villainess image, Bell and Do Rozario focus more on the *femme fatale*, “female wickedness . . . rendered as middle-aged beauty at its peak of sexuality and authority” (Bell 108). The *femme fatale* is defined not only by her beauty and sexual desirability, but by how she weaponizes these traits against men. Doane identifies the *femme fatale*’s “aura of domination and manipulation” (Doane 127), stating that she “never really is what she seems to be” (Doane 1). Doane further notes that while the *femme fatale* has become primarily an icon of early Hollywood film, her origins align more closely with nineteenth-century literature and art, “a clear indication of the extent of the fears and anxieties prompted by shifts in the undertaking of sexual difference in the late nineteenth century” (Doane 1-2). English literature scholar Bram Dijkstra further explores this link to nineteenth-century social concerns, examining how cultural



views of women are built, particularly in terms of media and the images of female deviance versus morality. In his complementary texts, *Idols of Perversity* (1986) and *Evil Sisters* (1996), Dijkstra examines nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ideologies about sex, race and class, investigating social meanings in artwork, literature, and film from a phenomenological perspective. Dijkstra identifies a wariness toward the female body which has long persisted in many cultures and reached a head in Western society with early 1900s evolutionary theory, developing into the belief that women were thought to lure and seduce men with the material, physical, and sexual, enticing them away from their quest for the spiritual and intellectual (Dijkstra, *Evil Sisters* 4).

Dijkstra situates his exploration in terms of the male-female binary, investigating how it is employed and bolstered in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scientific movements such as Social Darwinism, how it relates to contemporaneous issues of racial prejudice, and how these and other discourses are reflected in various works of art (*Idols of Perversity*) and film (*Evil Sisters*). All of these threads are underpinned by the dichotomy of women as either mothers or whores. Dijkstra's two texts engage in a conversation about historical construction of female sexuality as evil, demonstrating how ideologies perpetuated by fields such as biology, psychology, and sociology influence both high art (painting, literature) and low (film), trickling down to pervade all levels of society, even after the original scientific theories have been forgotten. While the content discussed in *Idols of Perversity* predates Disney animation, in *Evil Sisters*, Dijkstra turns to Hollywood film of the early and mid-twentieth century, exploring tropes and images such as the vamp and the *femme fatale*. Dijkstra identifies a pattern of female representation wherein lustful, bloodthirsty (and sperm-thirsty) women represent a low evolutionary position, whereas more "evolved" women are, while still inferior to men, at least

capable of being socialized.<sup>57</sup> The uncivilized nature of these superior women manifests conversely in weakness, stupidity, and complacency instead of the *femme fatale*'s nymphomania and "voracious appetite" (Dijkstra 262), which are usually accompanied by self-reliance and (sexual) assertiveness. This comparison echoes Bell's assessment of the contrast between Disney heroines and villainesses as "beautiful victims" versus "active wickedness" (Bell 120), again linking female agency to deviance.

Dijkstra discounts the idea that these female images are built on Jungian universal archetypes, focusing instead on the ideologies specific to the culture and history in which they are situated. In considering this and other approaches to exploring the female image in art and media, I believe that my work investigates how Jungian archetypes intersect with cultural ideologies or are used as a canvas on which to express them, following Bell's approach of viewing Disney's female characters as "pentimentos" made up of layers of female images and influences.

Though many of the examples in Dijkstra, Doane, and other texts about the *femme fatale* centre on young women, Bell identifies the *femme fatale* with middle age in Disney. Bell argues that "the caricature and melodramatics of the *femme fatale* are iconic and congruous cinematic codes that inscribe middle age as a time of treachery, consumption, and danger in the feminine life cycle" (Bell 116). Though Bell addresses the aspects of beauty and sexuality central to the *femme fatale*, this quote perhaps equivocates that it is more the attitude—the "caricature and melodramatics"—that makes these characters *femmes fatales*. Indeed, with the exception of *The Sword in the Stone*'s Madam Mim, all of the case studies in my research fit this aspect of Bell's

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<sup>57</sup> Dijkstra links this discussion of gender to one of race, a significant component of Social Darwinism. He observes that the more "appropriately" dimorphized gender dichotomies represent more civilized, intelligent (i.e. white) racial groups (Dijkstra 134-36).

description—even Yzma of *The Emperor's New Groove*, presented as the most aged (and arguably least sexually desirable), behaves more like a caricatured diva or *femme fatale* than a crone. As I explore in Chapter Four, I posit that a significant part of what makes Yzma more comical than threatening as a villainess is that she is an extreme caricature, an older female character trying to fit into this young, desirable archetype.

Returning to her “somatic triumvirate” founded in the female life cycle, Bell theorizes a separation between the mother and crone stages rather than an overlap, arguing that after the polarized goodness of the young woman and evil of the middle-aged one, the older Disney woman returns to the side of good to support and nurture the young heroine. She suggests that “Disney artists fill a relatively empty cultural category with their depictions of feminine nurturing and sacrifice in their good fairies, godmothers, and servants in the fairy-tale films” (Bell 118). Bell’s approach maps these older characters onto what Campbell refers to as the “protective crone and fairy godmother” (Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* 71-72), rather than the Destroyer subset of the crone.

Bell further distinguishes these good older women from the evil middle-aged ones by their appearance, observing that they are “consistently drawn in contrast to the *femme fatale*” (Bell 118) in terms of body shape—where villainesses have “shapely and mature curves of wickedness,” these kindly sages are “pear-shaped or apple-shaped” (Bell 118), soft instead of sharp, plain instead of glamorous. Where the middle-aged villainesses are at the “peak of sexuality and authority” (Bell 119), these women are postmenopausal and asexual, thus nonthreatening—and often somewhat incompetent or bumbling, though they may have magical powers of their own. Bell identifies this silly incompetence as “the comedic value of the bodies of old women” (Bell 119), and I posit that this element of comedy further distances them from

appearing too powerful or threatening. Though I have identified older female characters as villains in my study, I believe there is merit to Bell's observations as, with the exception of the Evil Queen's transformation into the Witch, the villainesses in my study who are most clearly identified as older—Mim and Yzma—both fill more comical roles in their respective films than other, middle-aged villainesses.<sup>58</sup>

I believe that Bell's theory linking female age to narrative role, and particularly her identification of the supportive role of older female characters, is representative of feminist cultural theorist Luce Irigaray's theory of female value (Irigaray 1977). Irigaray argues that society is built upon the exchange of women as commodities, and that this exchange occurs only between male subjects (Irigaray 170, 192). Women, as the objects of this exchange, fall into categories based on their use or exchange value (176): virgins, who are purely exchange value; mothers, who provide only use value; and prostitutes, who possess both use and exchange value (185-6). I believe that the Disney heroine/maiden stage of Bell's life cycle maps neatly onto Irigaray's "virgin" exchange value category, while the middle-aged villainess demonstrates a lack of value, and thus a position as deviant, for neglecting to appropriately fill the role of "mother" and provide its attendant use value.<sup>59</sup> She does not care or nurture, she has produced no children of her own (yet lacks the virgin's exchange value), and she is too old to have any potential value in bearing future children. I believe that philosopher Walter Benjamin's concept of cultural value, which replaces use value as the object loses "immediate cultural relevance" (Mulvey in Rose 30-31), provides a fourth category for the crone or older, post-menopausal

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<sup>58</sup> I explore this pattern in greater detail in Chapter Four.

<sup>59</sup> The "prostitute" category is generally not found in Disney films due to their "family-friendly" nature, though a handful of *femme fatale*-esque heroines and secondary characters such as Esmeralda from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Trousdale and Wise 1996) and Meg from *Hercules* (Clements and Musker 1997) could potentially fill the Disney version of this role.

woman. Alternatively, Bell's suggestion that the crone's use value is in nurturing the maiden suggests the possibility for these older female characters to occupy the mother category in Irigaray's model where the Terrible Mother has neglected it, despite filling a different archetypal position.

The life-cycle trajectory mapped by Bell identifies a return to goodness as female characters reach the later stages of life, occupying different value positions. However, other scholars have observed a link between old age and villainy in Disney, suggesting that older characters, and particularly older female characters, tend to be portrayed negatively or in villainous roles more often than positive ones (Do Rozario 2004; Robinson et al. 2007). Do Rozario assumes a distinct split between young as good and old as evil, noting the use of age-based imagery when Snow White escapes the Huntsman's attempt to murder her: "She becomes trapped in a dark, grasping wood of her own imagined fear, branches that look like wrinkled hands snagging her dress and cape, only to collapse at last in a clearing revealed as green and spring-like, filled with young animals. Her flight illustrates threat as dark and old and safety as bright and young" (Do Rozario 39). Do Rozario further states that "the Queen's ultimate crime is performed in the form of an old hag," tempting Snow White with a poisoned apple as "an old woman signifying mortality" rather than the serpent in the Garden of Eden that the scene evokes (Do Rozario 40).

Bell presents a number of examples to support her theory of female old age linked with goodness, perhaps the most relevant to my own research being the good fairies in *Sleeping Beauty* (Bell 118-20). However, my own case studies represent a sample of both middle-aged and older villainesses. I have found that a significant number of older female characters tend to occupy the villainess role, and that these roles tend to be larger and more narratively significant

than the more nurturing good roles. Ultimately, I see female old age used in both good and bad positions in Disney. I find Bell's argument about the female life cycle interesting, as I initially perceived a very static split between Disney's representations of good young women and evil older women that links age and morality, with middle-aged and older women all falling on the same side of that split, when in fact many older female characters occupy positive roles as well. Further, the audience does not typically witness good characters growing older, nor do they see bad characters when they were younger, such that these characters always exist only at one given stage, and likewise at the one moral position that is associated with it. However, Bell's presentation of these three female roles as a "life cycle" creates a sense of continuity, progression, and completion, allowing for each Disney woman to contain the multitudes of each of these stages and roles, even if the audience does not see them.

### **Transformation**

Mary Anne Doane states that the *femme fatale* "never really is what she seems to be. She harbors a threat which is not entirely legible, predictable, or manageable . . . transforming the threat into a secret, something which must be aggressively revealed, unmasked, discovered" (Doane 1). Doane links the *femme fatale* to secrecy, hidden nature, and deception through the image of transformation. Film scholars Helen Hanson and Catherine O'Rawe (2010) also observe that the "entrenched cultural stereotype" of the *femme fatale* is that of a woman "never quite fully known . . . always beyond definition," with a "sense of mystery, of a concealed identity always just beyond the visible surface" (Hanson and O'Rawe 1). Dijkstra further explores this connection between images of evil women and transformation or concealed identity, identifying the common device of women transforming into creatures such as snakes

and spiders in early Hollywood (*Evil Sisters* 273-74). As I will explore in Chapter Five, I have observed that the transformations in this study tend to divide these two common elements of the *femme fatale* into separate categories—that is, villainesses who transform themselves into another human form often do so as a means of disguise or deception, while those who transform into an animal form have some other purpose.

The narrative device of transformation has a history in the genres of both animation and fairy tales, in addition to its associations with the *femme fatale*. Folklorist and anthropologist Francisco Vaz da Silva, focusing on the “thematic concerns” of fairy-tale transformations such as werewolves (Da Silva 5), explores how fairy-tale imagery allows people to project symbolic themes onto daily life. Da Silva considers how the transformation’s symbolism combines with the ideologies of the story’s cultural context as a way of understanding meaning. Film history scholar Kristian Moen identifies transformation as a key tool in translating fairy tales to film (Moen xiv), observing that “the depiction of visual transformation and the entwinement of fantasy with modernity” are “key elements of the relationship between film and fairy tales” (Moen 213). He observes that fairy tales were a regular source of content for early animation, which “often entwined narratives and images of fantasy with the visual fluidity afforded by animation” (Moen 176).

This “visual fluidity” and the ability to step outside the bounds of physics are unique and captivating qualities of animation (Klein, *7 Minutes* 5; Leslie 20), with metamorphosis playing a significant role in both. Norman Klein identifies the tradition of metamorphosis in early cartoons as stemming from the work of animation pioneers Georges Méliès and Emile Cohl and their “trick films” (Klein, *7 Minutes* 64), which usually consisted of a male magician performing a vanishing act or some other magic trick on a female subject (Fischer 30). Klein further links

metamorphosis to the graphic narrative format of early cartoon animation, taking advantage of the simple lines making up an animated form and lending to the surrealism and physics-bending qualities of the genre. Klein identifies a shift in how metamorphosis is used starting in 1928, from this “linear transformation” to “multimorphic gags”—still defying the laws of physics, but designed more around serving dramatic narrative than graphic narrative (Klein, *7 Minutes* 66). Noting the significance of metamorphosis in animation as a medium, he observes that “full animation,” such as that done at the Disney studios, often loses sight of the “possibilities of metamorphosis” by prioritizing a realistic style (Klein, *7 Minutes* 67). In an essay in media theorist and cultural critic Vivian Sobchack’s *Meta-Morphing: Visual Transformation and the Culture of Quick-Change* (2000), which explores humanity’s history with metamorphosis, Klein further considers Disney’s shift away from metamorphosis as the company parted ways with other animation studios and moved toward a realistic style, noting Disney’s increasing adherence to the mechanical laws that they were gradually developing into the *Animation Principles* (Klein, “Animation and Animorphs” 25).<sup>60</sup>

While Disney has incorporated a handful of more surreal transformation sequences in some feature films, such as the “Pink Elephants” sequence in *Dumbo* (Sharpsteen et al. 1941) or even the Genie’s introduction in *Aladdin*, these scenes are given a narrative reason for stretching the bounds of reality, whether a dream or hallucination as in *Dumbo*, or magic in *Aladdin*.<sup>61</sup> In fact, magic becomes the primary narrative impetus for the transformations explored in this study, bringing physical metamorphosis from a graphic-based, linear transformation into a narrative-

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<sup>60</sup> Principles such as Squash and Stretch in particular prescribe that a character can be distorted as long as their inner volume (or the impression of it) remains consistent, and further, that the character should not morph into something else entirely (Klein, “Animation and Animorphs” 25).

<sup>61</sup> Talking animals and anthropomorphism seem to exist outside the parameters of what needs to be explained by magic or some other device in Disney films, and examples of both abound throughout Disney’s body of work.



based element of fairy-tale fantasy and providing an exception to the previously stated rule against a character fully morphing into another form. These transformations follow realist dramatic narrative, rather than supporting anarchic graphic narrative, justified within the “reality” of Disney film by the presence of magic. Barrier describes this intertwining of reality and magic as Disney’s goal “to make the fantastic seem utterly simple and natural” (Barrier 225), stating that “when animated cartoons are at their best . . . fantasy and fact do not merely coexist: they reinforce each other continuously” (Barrier 4). By bringing magic into an otherwise realistic world, Disney encourages its audiences to imagine the possibility of its existence. Thus, Disney feature films, which have aimed to maintain verisimilitude since the debut of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in 1937, contain plenty of fantastical elements, including fairies, talking animals, and magical transformations. The relative adherence of Disney films to the laws of physics compared to many other cartoons makes the exceptions all the more magical for their position within “more physically believable animated world[s]” (Bishko, “Uses and Abuses” 26). Disney capitalizes on the fantastic: How wondrous is it when Cinderella’s rags are magically changed into a beautiful ball gown or a common pumpkin becomes a carriage in *Cinderella*? How delightful to see an entire civilization of merfolk deep below the sea in *The Little Mermaid*?

Film and media scholar Sean Griffin observes that Disney put a “unique mark” on the tradition of metamorphosis and transformation in animation through the development of character animation (Griffin 57), which Klein notes evolved from multimorphic gags such as making objects move like people (Klein, *7 Minutes* 52). In my research, character animation relates to my general observations about character movement, but it is also significant in terms of transformation, connecting character elements to a body’s form and movement. LMA’s clarification of movement qualities and patterns specifically in transformations further

illuminates the role of character animation, allowing a deeper understanding of what elements of movement are truly foundational to the character, and in my study, to their characterization as villainess. I explore these aspects of transformation in greater detail in Chapter Five, further connecting the role of character animation through transformation to cultural ideologies of women and evil encoded in Disney villainesses.

## **Chapter Three:**

### **Taxonomy A: Time Period**

#### **Taxonomies Introduction**

Recalling the methodology discussed in the Introduction, I have organized the remaining chapters based on three different approaches to identifying movement patterns across the six villainesses of my study: by film production/release period (Chapter Three), role or “type” of villainess (Chapter Four), and transformation type (Chapter Five). These three approaches surfaced as I synthesized my movement observations and found that multiple patterns emerged, depending on which lens or aspect of LMA I prioritized. I chose to explore these approaches by forming three taxonomies that allowed me to compare movement patterns and their connections to patterns of female representation linked to cultural imaginaries. As these three approaches took shape through my close readings of the films, I was unsure how to refer to these subcategories. I encountered the concept of taxonomies, a common tool in many academic and scientific fields to discuss ways of categorizing data. While the term “taxonomy” refers primarily to a systematic scheme of classification in scientific contexts, I employ it somewhat loosely, using “taxonomies” to represent the various groupings I repeatedly observed as I continued to analyze different constellations of movement patterns.

Each of the three taxonomies I have formed in my analysis is grounded in an overarching theme, under which I have identified patterns of similarity and difference between groups of characters. In Taxonomy A, “time period,” I create a timeline of primary Modes of Intent that shift and evolve over the decades of Disney animation represented in my case studies. Taxonomy B, “villain type,” explores how a villain’s role within a film connects to specific movement

tendencies.<sup>62</sup> Taxonomy C, “transformation type,” identifies different relationships between pre- and post-transformation movement patterns, based on whether characters transform from human to animal form, human to human form, or other.

Many aspects of these three taxonomies—movement observations and otherwise—are deeply intertwined, further necessitating them as an organizational method and a means to make sense of the crystallizing patterns and influences present in these characters and their movements. For example, the subcategories within the villain-type taxonomy are influenced by the time-period taxonomy. The distinction between these two different ways of approaching observed patterns serves to clarify each category’s impact on a character’s movement and representation, in addition to highlighting their overlapping influences. The overlapping nature of these three taxonomies reflects the initial research goals of this project; as I began making observations focused on the transformation-related aspects of each character’s movement, I noticed other patterns and connections between various groupings of characters and felt that these patterns were significant. Thus, the structure of the following three chapters reflects this process, with the time-period and villain-type taxonomies of Chapters Three and Four building to the observations in the transformation taxonomy in Chapter Five.

Ultimately, these taxonomies are subjective, based on the patterns I observed and deemed most significant. They demonstrate that LMA can uncover multiple patterns and ways of understanding them that focus on different elements, identify different patterns, and make different meanings. Rather than unequivocally determining the “right” or “wrong” answers or even the correct approach, LMA provides tools to help identify and understand what is happening, what audiences or observers see, and what may be underlying these observations.

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<sup>62</sup> This taxonomy is the most subjective in its organization, which I will discuss further in Chapter Four.

A handful of LMA terms appear frequently throughout the following three chapters that bear introduction. Less frequently used terms will be defined as they appear, and all LMA terminology can be found in the glossary in Appendix A. One of these terms is Modes of Intent, which I briefly introduced in the Introduction. “Modes of Intent” refers to the four categories of Body, Effort, Shape, and Space (BESS) used to group and organize qualities of movement for observation and description. Though these four categories integrate with each other and are always present in all movement (Fernandes 85), identifying which Mode’s elements appear to be most significant or crystallized in someone’s movement can provide a useful place to begin analysis. I refer to characters’ primary Modes of Intent frequently in Taxonomy A and recall those patterns in sections of Taxonomy C. Another term is “Body Attitude,” defined by Bishko as “the habitual relationship of the torso and pelvis which forms the default posture that all movement arises from and returns to” (Bishko, “Animation Principles” 201). LMA identifies four Body Attitudes: Wall (flat and wide in the Vertical Plane), Ball (rounded forward or backward), Pin (narrow in the Vertical Dimension), and Screw (twisted in a spiral) (Fernandes 191).<sup>63</sup> Bradley cites Body Attitude preference as a common “baseline” in character performance as well as dance styles (Bradley 75), and I often begin my analysis by identifying a character’s Body Attitude as a point of departure for further movement observations.

Another term that arises throughout my analysis is “movement signature,” which refers to the patterns of movement that emerge in an individual after “observing a wide sample of motion over time” (Bishko 2014b 200). According to Bishko, “a Movement Signature is a character profile in movement terms. It describes the essence of how one communicates, and of the individual’s way of being” (Bishko, “Animation Principles” 202). Movement signature is made

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<sup>63</sup> Fernandes identifies a fifth Body Attitude, Pyramid, with a wide base and narrowing at the top, but this form is less widely recognized.

up of a character's "default movement patterns" (Bishko, "Animation Principles" 202) as well as their reactions to particular circumstances, environments, events, etc. I also refer to these patterns as movement preferences or tendencies at various points throughout my analysis. As Bradley observes, "there are millions of possible combinations of body, effort, shape and space, but not all movers utilize all four categories equally. It is the patterns that an individual uses expressively and functionally, over and over again, that define individual style" (Bradley 67). This statement is true of three-dimensional bodies, as it is true of two-dimensional bodies.

I have included a chart on the following page (see table 1) listing each case study film,<sup>64</sup> character, and elements relevant to the three taxonomies, including year of theatrical release, pre- and post-transformation forms, role/type of villain, and primary Modes of Intent. This categorization is the baseline for my analysis in the following chapters.

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<sup>64</sup> While I introduce basic plot points as necessary throughout the following chapters, full summaries of each film and its source material can be found in Appendix B.

Table 1

## Case Studies

Film Title and Year of Theatrical Release	Character Name	Pre-Transformation Body	Post-Transformation Body	Primary BESS Modes	Role/Type
<i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i> (1937)	Evil Queen/Witch	Human (middle-aged)	Human (older)	Space, Effort (pre); Shape (post)	Serious
<i>Sleeping Beauty</i> (1959)	Maleficent	Fairy (humanoid, middle-aged)	Dragon	Space, Effort	Serious
<i>The Sword in the Stone</i> (1963)	Madam Mim	Human (older)	Various (animal and young adult human)	Effort, Body	Comical
<i>The Little Mermaid</i> (1989)	Ursula/Vanessa	Cecaelian (human/octopus hybrid, middle-aged)	Human (young adult)	Shape, Body (pre); Effort (post)	Combination
<i>The Emperor's New Groove</i> (2000)	Yzma	Human (older)	Kitten	Shape, Effort	Comical
<i>Tangled</i> (2010)	Mother Gothel	Human (older)	Human (middle-aged)	Shape, Effort	Combination

**Introduction to Taxonomy A: Time Period**

In this taxonomy, I consider the villains of my case studies chronologically, dividing them into three groups based on the decade in which their respective films were released: 1930s-1950s (*Snow White*, *Sleeping Beauty*), 1960s-1980s (*The Sword in the Stone*, *The Little Mermaid*), and 2000s-2010s (*The Emperor's New Groove*, *Tangled*).<sup>65</sup> Due to this study's diachronic nature, focusing on the Disney villainess across a range of time periods, this taxonomy is an obvious starting point for my analysis. Observing commonalities between characters in each of these three groupings, I explore how Disney represents evil women based on age, considering the role of the mother and crone female archetypes, in conjunction with

<sup>65</sup> The 1990s are absent from these groupings simply because no films meeting this study's criteria were released during that decade.

contemporaneous female images such as the *femme fatale*, in forming the image of the Disney villainess. I have found that the incorporation of these archetypes has shifted over time as Disney shifts their representations of female evil, in response to cultural ideologies related to the female body during each of these respective time periods. This chapter also serves to introduce my six case studies and create a foundation for the following two taxonomies, in particular setting up the villain-type taxonomy in Chapter Four.

Official Disney publications (B. Thomas 1992), academic scholars (Davis 2006; Do Rozario 2004; Pallant 2011), and fans<sup>66</sup> have all articulated various “eras” in Disney animation, usually encompassing some iteration of early (1920s-1950s), middle (1950s or 1960s-1980s), Renaissance (late 1980s-1990s), and modern (2000s-present), with further subdivisions when a greater level of detail is desired. I have been somewhat generous with my own groupings for this study, as the delimitations of my research have resulted in a relatively small sample size of films spanning nearly the entire history of Disney feature animation. I have divided the six films into the following time periods: early to mid-twentieth century (1930s-1950s), mid- to late twentieth century (1960s-1980s), and twenty-first century (2000s-2010s). Due to this breadth, I have chosen to refer to these groupings as “time periods” rather than “eras,” as some films I have placed in the same category may not share a commonly recognized Disney “era.” For example, *The Little Mermaid*, generally recognized as the herald of the “Disney Renaissance” in 1989, is seldom if ever considered to be in the same “era” as 1963’s *The Sword in the Stone*, yet I have grouped them together as part of the middle time period in my study. Though twenty-six years exist between their releases—the longest amount of time between any two consecutive films in this study—I have observed many similar patterns between their respective villainesses, Madam

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<sup>66</sup> A simple online search for “Eras of Disney animation” yields numerous results with varying degrees of detail.



Mim and Ursula, that can be linked to shifting ideologies of these decades. Echoing the relationship between these two films, 2000's *The Emperor's New Groove* exists in a small lull for Disney animation following the great success of the nineties, while 2010's *Tangled* marks the beginning of the studio's second reentry into huge popularity,<sup>67</sup> yet several commonalities exist between their villainesses, Yzma and Mother Gothel. Even *Snow White* in 1937 and *Sleeping Beauty* in 1959 sit twenty-two years apart; however, these films are much more frequently placed in the same era. Perhaps timelines often group them together because both were created under the leadership of Walt Disney himself, or perhaps because contemporary audiences' greater distance from these films makes the gap between the 1930s and 1950s seem smaller in comparison to that between more recent decades.

Ultimately, eras can be a useful way to categorize Disney films if they are applied and understood with a certain amount of flexibility. The last years of one era inevitably bleed into the first years of the next, and a film's production process may span multiple eras. Additionally, many of the patterns and commonalities I observe in this section come not only out of conventions within the Disney studio over a given animation period, but also from broader socio-cultural trends and values—many of which may not fall neatly within prescribed Disney eras. In this chapter I explore some of these trends, connecting them to the movement observations outlined below.

I have observed that the patterns reflected in this taxonomy revolve around which primary Modes of Intent—Body, Effort, Shape, and Space—underlie characters' movement signatures. A preference for a particular Mode of Intent does not necessarily indicate a preference for particular movements, as the same basic movement can be done with an emphasis on

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<sup>67</sup> With films such as *Brave* (2012) and *Frozen* (Buck and Lee 2013) soon to follow.

different Modes. For example, I can lift my arm above my head with an emphasis on Space Mode, where my intention is on where exactly the arm is in space as I move and when it lands. I might emphasize Shape, with intention more in the process of lifting my arm, whether with more gestural Directional Movement<sup>68</sup> or engaging my whole body in the convexity and concavity of Shaping<sup>69</sup> as I lift it. I can also focus on Effort, and whether I lift my arm with Quick or Sustained Time Effort, Light or Strong Weight Effort, etc. Finally, I might focus on an element of Body Mode, such as Initiation (am I lifting from the elbow? the wrist?) or Sequencing (am I lifting it all at once, or moving through the joints in a certain order?). I may be able to identify aspects of all of these elements in the movement, as all of these Modes together underlie the capacity for variety in movement, but likely one or perhaps two Modes of Intent will be more prominent. Rather than viewing a character as “being in” a Mode, looking at them *through* a particular Mode offers flexibility and the capacity to uncover a great deal.

It is important to note that a character’s preference for a certain Mode does not suggest that they do not engage with aspects of other Modes, only that a significant amount of their movement signature is underpinned by aspects of one Mode (or two) in particular. Further, when considering an individual’s primary Mode or Modes of Intent, the preference for a certain Mode can be an intentional choice or an unconscious aspect of someone’s movement signature. My exploration in this chapter acknowledges the presence of both of these possibilities simultaneously at different levels. I consider Modes of Intent as part of the characters’ movement signatures, but am aware that their movements are developed with intention by animators, creating an extra level in considering what their ways of moving are *meant* to convey, rather than

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<sup>68</sup> Directional Movement: straight (Spoke-like) or curved (Arc-like) linear movement, often gestural, bridging between self and objects, people, or environment.

<sup>69</sup> Shaping: three-dimensional movement that facilitates interacting with and adapting to others and environment.

simply what they *do* convey. This understanding of the presence of multiple Modes of Intent is apparent when considering the role of Effort in the characters of this case study, and animated characters more generally. Bishko observes that Effort, which links to the “how” of movement and is a straightforward way of creating dynamic changes in animated movement, translates most closely to the Animation Principles (Bishko, “Relationships” 4), giving it a place of importance in animated movement. While I consider patterns and differences in Effort throughout the next two taxonomies, what I find interesting in this taxonomy are the patterns through which other Modes are also prioritized, and the fact that those patterns follow a chronological trajectory from Space in the earliest time period to Body in the next to Shape in the last.<sup>70</sup> In addition to this pattern, I found that how and to what extent Effort elements combine with these other primary Modes also differs chronologically. Because of its presence throughout, I have chosen not to focus extensively on Effort as a primary Mode of Intent in the following subsections, instead focusing on the chronological shifts from Space to Body to Shape in order to observe where the preference for these Modes differs over different time periods and what meanings might be contained in those shifts.

With the focus on Modes of Intent in this taxonomy, I consider the chronology of these films in terms of relevant contemporaneous influences and meanings. In the first category, I observe the influence of ballet on the aesthetics and movement of the earliest Disney villainesses and how this influence combines with both fairy-tale archetypes and the prominence of the *femme fatale* image in Hollywood at the time. I also consider the influence of technical animation elements, including style, technology, and live-action reference models. In the second category, I explore how both the *femme fatale* trope and the now-established image of the Disney

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<sup>70</sup> This trajectory can be seen in the chart at the beginning of this chapter.

villainess are subverted, combining female archetypes and *femme fatale* imagery in different ways. I also consider a cultural shift in what constitutes a “threatening” female body, shifting from the *femme fatale*’s sexuality of the early twentieth century to the growing obesity health crisis and its interplay with female desirability in the mid- and late twentieth century. In the third category, I explore how the Disney villainess image is further deconstructed through characters that are self-referential amalgams of past Disney villainesses. I consider the role of animation technique and technology in the shifting focus on Shape Mode, as well as an emerging concern over the female body centred on the prevention of aging in an era with ever-increasing access to cosmetic surgery, botox, and other appearance-altering tools. I conclude the chapter by considering the implications of the trajectory traced over these three time periods, and how these chronological patterns underpin the subsequent taxonomy, villain type.

## 1930s-1950s

### Evil Queen (1937) Maleficent (1959)

The earliest villainesses of this study, the Evil Queen in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) and Maleficent in *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), draw influence from fairy-tale archetypes, ballet movement and aesthetics, and the *femme fatale* icon of Hollywood’s “Golden Age.” Grounding my analysis in the characters’ movement, I explore the interplay of these influences, situating both ballet and *femme fatale* influences within the female character archetypes present in the films’ fairy-tale source material.

Recalling the female archetypes of maiden, mother, and crone, I begin with an exploration of the presence of these three archetypes in each film. The maiden archetype is

apparent in the protagonists of both of this category's films, *Snow White* and *Aurora*. In *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, the mother and crone archetypes are then both taken up by the villainess, the Evil Queen, who is also Snow White's stepmother, filling the mother archetype after Snow White's actual mother dies. The Evil Queen is vain and grows envious when her magic mirror declares Snow White to be more beautiful than herself, compelling her to order the Huntsman to do away with the young girl. When she learns that Snow White still lives, she disguises herself as an old peddler woman and sets off to murder her stepdaughter. Though in the Grimm brothers' fairy tale this transformation is identified as only a donned disguise, in the Disney version it is a complete physical transformation facilitated by magic, and this new form/alter ego is commonly referred to as "the Witch" in literature and other discussion outside of the film itself. Regardless of these altered details, in both film and fairy tale the Queen shifts from mother archetype to crone with this transformation, pretending to be the Wisewoman but in fact filling the roles of Trickster and Destroyer as she tricks Snow White into consuming a poisoned apple (among other things, in the original tale). Snow White is rescued from death by a handsome prince, and the Queen is punished: falling to her death (still in the form of the Witch) in the Disney film, and forced to dance to her death in a pair of red-hot slippers in the fairy tale.

While several versions of the "Sleeping Beauty" tale exist, the one recorded by Charles Perrault is generally cited as the source for the 1959 Disney film (Solomon, *Once Upon a Dream* 27). In Perrault's tale, upon the birth of their daughter, a king and queen ask seven fairies of the land to be the young princess's godmothers. They attend her christening in order to bestow gifts upon her, but when the last, elderly fairy is slighted, she curses the child to prick her finger on a spindle and die. A younger fairy is able to alter the curse so that the princess merely falls into a hundred-year sleep, after which a prince awakens her. In Perrault's version, the evil fairy, set

apart from the others by her age, represents the crone; however, the Disney version reverses the ages of the fairies, making the good fairies (reduced from seven to three) older and more grandmotherly,<sup>71</sup> while the evil fairy, named Maleficent in the film, presents as a middle-aged *femme fatale*-inspired figure. After Maleficent casts her curse, the three good fairies hide the princess, named Aurora (following the 1890 Tchaikovsky-Petipa ballet), in the woods until her sixteenth birthday, when the curse is set to take place. Despite their efforts, Aurora still manages to prick her finger on a spindle and fall into a deep sleep. When the prince attempts to rescue her, Maleficent transforms into a towering, fire-breathing dragon to thwart him, but is ultimately defeated. The ending of the Disney film more closely resembles the version recorded by the Brothers Grimm than Perrault's, wherein the princess is awoken with a kiss and the prince and princess marry and live happily ever after.

Unlike *Snow White*, which allows for the presence of both the *femme fatale* by way of the Terrible Mother archetype in the Evil Queen and the crone archetype through her transformation into the Witch, *Sleeping Beauty* has only one archetypal role for its villainess to fill, originally in the form of Perrault's evil fairy as crone. I posit that Maleficent's shift from older to middle-aged in the Disney version stems from the influence of Hollywood's *femme fatale* icon, instigating a departure from both the original fairy tale and the ballet version of the story that influences the Disney film (Aloff 30; Jackson, *Conversations* 70). Debuting in 1890, the Tchaikovsky-Petipa ballet *The Sleeping Beauty* further crystallizes Perrault's crone archetype in its version of the evil fairy, Carabosse, who appears as an old hag. Interestingly, the role of Carabosse was originated by a male dancer, Italian ballet master Enrico Cecchetti (Scholl 173). The role is often still performed in drag, a convention that further distances Carabosse from the ideals portrayed in the

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<sup>71</sup> Interestingly, it is still the youngest of these fairies who alters the curse to save the princess's life.

young, beautiful, feminine Princess Aurora and presents an interesting additional layer of connection between the story's villainess and the male-active, female-passive binary discussed in Chapter Two.

Despite its fantastical, fairy-tale material, dance scholar Sally Banes suggests that the plot, setting, and movement conventions of the ballet *The Sleeping Beauty* very much represent the values and perspectives of the late 1800s in which it was produced (Banes 42). According to dance historian Tim Scholl, "the unifying quality of all the nineteenth-century ballets' undesireables is age, and often infirmity" (Scholl 51), making it an ideal site to physicalize the villainous role of the crone archetype present in Perrault's fairy tale. Where the good fairies in the ballet version of *The Sleeping Beauty* are young and beautiful, the evil Carabosse is often portrayed as the opposite, described by ballet historian Margaret Fleming-Markarian as "aged and wisened into a crippled old hag" (Fleming-Markarian 135), often walking with the difficulty of age, with a "dragging gait and bent figure" (Beaumont 461) in contrast to the graceful dancing of not only the good fairies but the youthful Princess Aurora as well. Carabosse's appearance and movement both set her apart as the only character in the ballet to have truly succumbed to age, emphasizing the link between female youth and goodness that is present in literary versions of the tale, a link prominent in the ballet tradition as well.

No longer old and bent like Carabosse or Perrault's nameless evil fairy, Disney's Maleficent is tall, thin, and upright, with elegant movements and a stately comportment that are more reminiscent of Aurora's queen mother than Carabosse. Her movement and appearance also serve to connect her visually to *Snow White's* Evil Queen rather than her alter ego the Witch, further establishing a link between the Disney villainess and the *femme fatale*. Musical theatre scholar Thomas S. Hischak observes that the Queen is "the first great Disney villainess yet,

contrary to tradition, the evil female is beautiful, not ugly” (Hischak 123).<sup>72</sup> Hischak goes on to note that “the animators had to make the Queen technically attractive yet appear cold and haughty enough so that her beauty was not becoming” (Hischak 123). These contrasting and even contradictory impressions regarding ugliness and villainy hint at the burgeoning influence of the *femme fatale* archetype in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, bringing beauty and sexuality to the forefront of female villainy. The “Snow White” fairy tale in particular serves this shift well, as even in the original tale the character of the queen disrupts the association of evil archetypes with ugliness to an extent, since she is indeed beautiful, despite being vain and wicked. Further, the Evil Queen’s dual appearances and archetypal presentations, which are a key plot point, provide a built-in opportunity to incorporate the *femme fatale* image when translating the story to film, and Disney does not need to alter the character significantly to do so.

*Snow White* presents the female trifecta (Bell’s “somatic triumvirate”) of maiden, mother, and crone through the heroine, Snow White; the villainess, the Evil Queen; and her also-evil counterpart, the Witch—through her transformation, the Evil Queen manages to encompass both of these later life stages, as well as the images of female evil attendant to each: crone and *femme fatale*. This duality indicates a transitional period in the 1930s where both female old age and sexuality are seen as threatening. Disney’s version of *Sleeping Beauty*, conversely, follows Bell’s theory of relegating old age to benign support with the comical, post-menopausal three fairy godmothers, allowing the middle-aged *femme fatale* to stand alone in the evil role. Disney reverses the age difference between good and evil fairies in *Sleeping Beauty* from ballet to animation, demonstrating the shift in perceptions of female evil between the 1890s and 1950s.

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<sup>72</sup> Presumably, by “tradition” Hischak refers to the convention linking archetypes and appearance (Birkhäuser-Oeri 13) discussed in Chapter Two.



Notably, after this point in Disney history, even when an older woman does appear as a villain in a subsequent Disney film, she tends to function comically rather than striking terror in audiences, such as Madam Mim in *The Sword in the Stone* and Yzma in *The Emperor's New Groove*, further enforcing these associations (as I explore in Chapter Four). The *femme fatale* has taken over as the prime archetype of female evil, and the older female roles move into a more funny, benign, or even incompetent position. In contrast to this later trend, *Snow White's* Witch presents a Carabosse-esque evil, a malignant and threatening “crippled old hag” (Fleming-Markarian 135) with a “dragging gait and bent figure” (Beaumont 461), allowing the film to embrace both the ballet convention of old, ugly evil and the Hollywood convention of the *femme fatale*.

While the Evil Queen and Maleficent may represent the *femme fatale* in terms of appearance and imagery, I identify the influence of ballet much more strongly in their movement, particularly in their verticality and preference for Space Mode.<sup>73</sup> Dance scholar and CLMA<sup>74</sup> Cadence Whittier alludes to the prevalence of Space Mode particularly in ballet pedagogy, observing that dancers are often taught with a focus on Space, reflecting the “sculptural” nature of ballet movement “pass[ing] in and out of still shapes” (Whittier 127), with a focus on the external image of the shape itself and its placement in space (Space Mode) as a common entry point into ballet (Whittier 128). Whittier argues that the ballet training process tends to focus on movement qualities that support Function over Expression (Whittier 126), again through a focus on Space Mode, with elements of Effort coming in only at more advanced levels in order to facilitate more Expression (126). These Modes also reflect the Evil Queen and Maleficent's

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<sup>73</sup> Space Mode focuses on the geometry or architecture of space, including directions, pathways, levels, and Kinesphere.

<sup>74</sup> Certified Laban Movement Analyst, a certification similar to the previously introduced CMA and CMA-SP.

position in terms of the LMA theme of Inner-Outer, with both Space and Effort Modes tending toward Outer intention.

The “sculptural” nature of ballet observed by Whittier manifests in both the Evil Queen and Maleficent, who often seem to move between a series of poses, regularly forming intimidating silhouettes by raising their arms to High Diagonals. This focus on gestural movements and placement in Space lends to a performative feeling in their movement, further linking both characters to a ballet aesthetic. Both the Evil Queen and Maleficent tend to “stand and deliver,” not moving about much in the general space<sup>75</sup> around them. However, they both use the full range of their Kinespheres (the physical space around the body, defined by how far one can reach without shifting weight), showing a preference for Far and Mid Reach<sup>76</sup> arm gestures—all elements of Space Mode. They also tend to trace Peripheral Pathways<sup>77</sup> with these arm gestures, resulting in broad, sweeping movements—even when crossing her arms, for example, the Queen’s intention appears to be in the pathway and position of her arms in Space, rather than another factor, such as Shaping.

The preference for Far Reach arm gestures also evokes the long, clean lines of the ballet aesthetic, further emphasized by the Evil Queen and Maleficent’s similar Body Attitudes. Both characters demonstrate a preference for the Vertical Plane and/or Dimension through Wall and Pin Body Attitudes, the latter of which is a common feature of ballet posture, emphasizing the vertical line through Lengthening and Narrowing.<sup>78</sup> Both characters further emphasize their

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<sup>75</sup> In contrast to Kinespheric space, which refers to the “three-dimensional physical space around the body, reachable upon extending oneself without the need to shift one’s weight” (Fernandes 199).

<sup>76</sup> Reach Space refers to the distance from the centre of one’s body at which an action takes place, with Far Reach extending to the farthest reaches of one’s Kinesphere, Mid Reach taking place at a medium distance from the centre of the body, and Near Reach remaining close to one’s body.

<sup>77</sup> Peripheral Pathways travel along the edge of the Kinesphere or Form, distanced from the centre of the body.

<sup>78</sup> Lengthening and Narrowing are qualities of Shape Flow, the Mode of Shape Change that addresses the relationship of the body to itself, generally through subtle shifts or adjustments of inner volumes toward or away

verticality, particularly in moments of stronger emotion, through Ascending Shaping<sup>79</sup> and exaggerated Shape Flow Lengthening. Maleficent in particular gives an immediate impression of this verticality, with details of her appearance, including elongated neck, face, and fingers, echoing and exaggerating her Pin Body Attitude. Her costuming serves to exaggerate this image further, with a headpiece adding to her height and a long staff in hand to emphasize the vertical line. Just as this verticality contributes to the long lines of these characters, so do the lines created by their use of Far Reach contribute to their verticality through the use of the upper portions of their Kinespheres with High Diagonal arm gestures. The Evil Queen and Maleficent are both characterized by these broad, sweeping arm gestures, reminiscent of the pantomime of ballet villains such as Carabosse, perhaps indicating the influence of another ballet convention: the history of ballet antagonists to perform more in pantomime, whereas a ballet heroine such as Aurora traditionally spends more time on stage dancing (Beaumont 481). Dance historian Tim Scholl observes of *The Sleeping Beauty*'s villainess that "Carabosse can no longer dance and expresses herself in pantomime gestures" (Scholl 125), and in these early Disney films, though they are not hindered by old age, the villainesses tend to be relatively stationary beyond their dramatic, pantomime-esque gesticulations, while their princess counterparts move and even dance as they interact with their surroundings.

Despite the influence of ballet aesthetics and movement, these films do not merely translate ballet ideals or conventions onto the animated screen, but subvert and modernize fairy-tale and ballet imagery within the context of their production years through the contemporaneous influence of the Hollywood *femme fatale*. Disney plays with the maiden-mother-crone trifecta,

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from centre. Shape Flow Lengthening is a Growing adjustment in the Vertical Dimension, and Narrowing is a Shrinking adjustment in the Horizontal Dimension.

<sup>79</sup> Ascending refers to Shaping in the Vertical Plane with an upward emphasis.

and the mother and crone archetypes in particular, by layering these influences, reflecting contemporaneous female imaginaries and concerns in the villainesses of this time period. Considering this merging of fairy-tale, ballet, and Hollywood imagery, *Snow White*'s Evil Queen provides a unique bridge between all of these conventions, as a split between the beautiful, *femme fatale*-inspired Queen as Terrible Mother, and the older, ugly Witch, reminiscent of *The Sleeping Beauty*'s Carabosse, as crone.

Also of note, the Evil Queen and Maleficent demonstrate perhaps the most direct similarities of any two characters in this study, reflecting the consistency of the villainess image and influence in this period.<sup>80</sup> Maleficent strongly resembles the Evil Queen in many ways, often not only echoing but even exaggerating several of the Queen's movement elements, notably her stillness,<sup>81</sup> minute hand and head gestures and expressive facial features (particularly the eyebrows), use of Far Reach Diagonals, and aspects of Effort including sudden shifts accompanying bursts of temper (I will explore this last similarity in greater depth in Chapter Four). The Evil Queen, as the original Disney villainess, serves as a template moving forward in Disney animation, and these early villainesses have become emblematic of what a Disney villainess *is*.<sup>82</sup> They serve as a foundation for future generations of villains and villainesses, creating their own iconic image or trope, much like the image of the *femme fatale* served for their

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<sup>80</sup> This consistency is particularly apparent in the three "princess" films of this period, *Snow White*, *Cinderella*, and *Sleeping Beauty*. Other films, such as *Alice in Wonderland*, do not adhere as strictly to this pattern.

<sup>81</sup> During the animation process for *Sleeping Beauty*, it became important to match the characters to the squareness and vertical style of animator Eyvind Earle's backgrounds, making it difficult for Maleficent to use space dynamically (B. Thomas 105). Marc Davis, chief animator for Maleficent, struggled to convey the villainess's dramatic flair, incorporating powerful shapes and color rather than broad action (F. Thomas and Johnston, *The Illusion of Life* 177). These challenges became part of Maleficent's movement signature, as Davis developed a controlled, reserved character "with a veneer of quiet charm where a curled lip meant more than . . . excited mannerisms" (Johnston and F. Thomas, *The Disney Villain* 120). Her largest actions tended to occur only in her "impressive entrances and exits" (Johnston and F. Thomas, *The Disney Villain* 120) and in extreme moments reserved for shock value.

<sup>82</sup> And, to an extent, Disney villains regardless of gender.

own creation. The next two categories in this chapter explore how Disney plays with the “Disney villainess” image established by this era in the following ones.

### 1960s-1980s

#### **Madam Mim (1963) Ursula (1989)**

Released after the success of *One Hundred and One Dalmatians* in 1961, 1963’s *The Sword in the Stone* has gone down in Disney history for not really going down in Disney history. The film’s popular reception was mediocre, it has garnered fewer theatrical re-releases than other animated Disney features, and even Walt Disney and his team were largely uninterested in the project (Gossedge 115, 120). The loosely connected, episodic structure originates from the source material, author T. H. White’s 1938 novel, *The Sword in the Stone*, about the childhood of the legendary King Arthur. In stark contrast to *The Sword in the Stone*, 1989’s *The Little Mermaid* brought Disney out of their decades-long slump and back to the top of the animation field, ushering in an era known popularly as the Disney Renaissance, during which the company experienced a resurgence of popularity in their animated productions, which had dwindled significantly since the 1950s.

The villainesses in this second category, *The Sword in the Stone*’s Madam Mim and *The Little Mermaid*’s Ursula, demonstrate a shift from the previous period in how evil women are represented in Disney film. Both films complicate the role of the source material (novel for *The Sword in the Stone* and fairy tale for *The Little Mermaid*) by playing with not only the archetypal roles filled by their respective villainess characters, but also their appearances and physicality. The influence of ballet appears to have peaked with *Sleeping Beauty* in 1959, taking with it the

prominence of Space Mode seen in the previous section's films. Additionally, rather than the now waning *femme fatale* image and her threatening sexuality, I identify physical health and obesity as the threats that are carried out on these villainesses' bodies, reflecting the rise of obesity in the latter half of the twentieth century in the United States. Villains and other characters also begin to show more personality and interiority, with their movement likewise conveying more inner intent in their actions and reactions. This change too can be seen in the shift away from Space Mode, which aligns primarily with Outer intention rather than Inner and Function over Expression, and into other Modes. Mim demonstrates a preference for Effort and Ursula for Shape, but what these two characters share is the underlying presence of certain aspects of Body Mode<sup>83</sup> in their movement tendencies, which is the movement focus of this section.

Set during King Arthur's childhood, White's *The Sword in the Stone* consists of a series of loosely connected adventures surrounding the future king's education under the wizard Merlin,<sup>84</sup> and is the first of four novels (a fifth was published posthumously) based on the legendary monarch. In the 1963 Disney film, while the basic premise of a young Arthur (nicknamed Wart, and so called throughout this chapter) receiving Merlin's unorthodox tutelage is taken from White's novel, as well as some of the individual adventures that form Merlin's lessons, the details of the film have little in common with its source material. It is during one of these adventure-lessons that Wart comes upon the aged, fat, self-professed "hideous" witch Madam Mim, who decides to destroy Wart because of his goodness and his connection to Merlin, Mim's nemesis. However, Mim is foiled when Merlin comes to Wart's rescue and defeats her in

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<sup>83</sup> Body Mode focuses on body parts and connections, major body actions, Initiation and Sequencing of body parts in movement, and developmental movement patterns.

<sup>84</sup> Many character names vary slightly between White's novel and the Disney film: Merlin is spelled "Merlyn" by White, Madam Mim is "Madame Mim," and Wart (Arthur's nickname) is "the Wart." For consistency and ease of reading, I will use the Disney versions throughout.

a Wizards' Duel, during which the two magicians attempt to outdo each other by transforming themselves into a series of increasingly outrageous creatures.

This ten-minute scene is the extent of Mim's presence in the film, and is based on the one chapter in White's novel in which Madam Mim appears. Though the basic premise of Merlin saving Wart from Mim by engaging in a Wizards' Duel remains, the details have been altered from the original chapter. The most significant change lies in Mim's characterization and appearance: while the Mim of White's novel is described as "a strikingly beautiful woman of about thirty" (White 67), Disney has created a "fat, vain, and menopausal" (Fries 74) hag, demonstrating a shift to the crone archetype after the *femme fatale*-inspired mother archetypes of *Snow White*'s Evil Queen and *Sleeping Beauty*'s Maleficent. Mim "delights in her villainy" (Hischak 221) and is largely a silly character, despite her malevolent goals of destroying both Wart and Merlin. She acts like a deranged child (Johnston and F. Thomas, *The Disney Villain* 136), where in the book she is presented as competent and educated. Not only has her physical appearance shifted drastically from that of her predecessors, so has her demeanour.

It is likely that Disney's interpretation of Mim's character is influenced by the multiple extant versions of White's text—when White's original novel was reprinted as part of an edited tetralogy in 1958, in combination with the other books in his series, Madam Mim's chapter was removed at the behest of White's American publishers (Fries 73). This version left the book's other magical female mischief-maker, Morgan Le Fay, in the text, but altered her character significantly—although Morgan is described in the original 1938 edition of *The Sword in the Stone*, much like Mim, as "a very beautiful lady" (White, *The Sword in the Stone* 163), she is "fat, dowdy, [and] middle-aged" (White, *The Once and Future King* 111) in the edited 1958

version—much closer to the Disney interpretation of Mim than White’s original description of either sorceress.<sup>85</sup>

Though reasons for this change in the new edition are unknown, shifting ideologies between the 1930s and 1950s would appear to be responsible. Perhaps, in marketing White’s books toward youth, the sexuality of a *femme fatale* type was deemed inappropriate, or perhaps it simply reflects the waning presence of the *femme fatale* in the public imagination.<sup>86</sup> Either way, with Mim, the Disney villainess sheds the *femme fatale* image and returns to the crone. Recalling Bell’s theory of benign old age, Mim’s short, squat body and childlike demeanour allow her to present a relatively unthreatening image, compared to *Snow White*’s Evil Queen and *Sleeping Beauty*’s Maleficent.<sup>87</sup> Mim’s rotund shape may also be linked to the rise of obesity in American culture, the shift toward an overweight villainess reflecting growing social concerns over weight and health in mid-century United States as food became more accessible and physical activity less incorporated in daily life, and obesity began to shift from a primarily aesthetic concern to an increasingly public health crisis (Eknoyan 2006).

The overweight villainess is further developed in 1989’s *The Little Mermaid* through the sea witch Ursula, a morbidly obese human-octopus hybrid. Based on the fairy tale “The Little Mermaid,” written by Hans Christian Andersen in 1837, the film tells the story of a mermaid princess named Ariel who grows enamoured with the handsome—and human—Prince Eric. She turns to Ursula for help in finding a way to be with her prince, who uses magic to turn Ariel into

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<sup>85</sup> Arthurian scholar Maureen Fries surmises that Disney ultimately selected Mim’s scene for animation rather than Morgan’s because it would be more dynamic to animate (Fries 73-4), even though so little remains of her original character. According to Fries, Disney’s Mim is in fact “even more ludicrously a stereotype” of a woman past her prime than the 1958 novel’s Morgan (Fries 74).

<sup>86</sup> Do Rozario links the Hollywood diva and *femme fatale* with the thirties and forties, suggesting that even by the time of *Sleeping Beauty* in 1959, Maleficent’s associations with such images were already growing dated (Do Rozario 38).

<sup>87</sup> I will explore the impact of this representational shift on Mim’s function as less threatening and more comical in the following chapter.



a human in exchange for her voice. Ursula further stipulates that if Ariel is unable to make Prince Eric kiss her within three days, she will own Ariel's soul forever. Ursula endeavours to ensure Ariel's failure by transforming herself into a beautiful girl named Vanessa, using Ariel's voice to trick Eric into marrying her instead. She ultimately fails and is killed by Eric and Ariel, who live happily ever after.

In Andersen's original story, the sea witch does not receive much physical description. She is described as having a "spongy chest" (Hallett and Karasek 229), which may have influenced Disney's ultimate design for Ursula with her soft, fatty features, and she cackles and grins, a habit shared with Disney's Ursula, whose toothy smile often seems bigger than her face. Interestingly, some of Andersen's descriptions of the sea witch's home appear to have found their way into Disney's interpretation of the character. Fat, ugly eels play outside, and the "half animal and half plant" (Tatar 318) polyps surrounding the witch's house are described as constantly in motion, much like Ursula's tentacles. Further connecting habitat to inhabitant, women's studies scholar Laura Sells examines the design of Ursula's domain in the Disney film, describing the "womb-like caves" Ariel swims through as she enters Ursula's lair, citing "what Cixous calls 'the dark continent' of the feminine body" in reference to the uncolonized, outside world Ursula inhabits (Sells 184).

The "linkage with biological corruption and grotesque sensuality" (Tatar 303) of Andersen's sea witch is clear in Disney's Ursula, a monstrous hybrid "embedded in gynophobic imagery . . . a revolting, grotesque image of the smothering maternal figure" (Sells 181). Her excess of voluptuous curves, suggestions that Ariel use her "body language" to attract Prince Eric, and the "female imagery of sea shells and cave openings" (Sells 178), juxtaposed with the phallic architecture of the castle and merfolk society from which she has been cast out, all create

a “grotesque sensuality” that is still veiled enough to be Disney appropriate. Sells, who argues that Ursula “represents the monstrosity of feminine power” (Sells 184), contrasts Ursula’s female symbolism with the phallic tools of the men she antagonizes: the trident belonging to Ariel’s father, King Triton, which Ursula covets for its power and eventually steals and uses to make her body swell to a massive, towering size; and Prince Eric’s ship, with a long spear on the bow which penetrates Ursula’s engorged flesh and kills her (Sells 185). Sells suggests that the gynocentric imagery surrounding Ursula serves to extend the dichotomy of male as good and female as bad beyond the genders of the characters themselves. In both *Snow White* and *Sleeping Beauty*, the villain is female, and the rescuer is male; however, in *The Little Mermaid* (and even *The Sword in the Stone* to a lesser extent), not only do these gender roles of female villain and male rescuer hold true, but there also exists an additional differentiation between soft and round femaleness associated with villainy, and hardness and rigidity with good, observable in the muscular hardbodies of King Triton and Prince Eric in *The Little Mermaid*, as well as in the straight lines and narrow, erect form of Merlin in *The Sword in the Stone*.

Sells’s reading of Ursula as deeply grounded in the evil of female sexuality recalls the sexualized threat of the *femme fatale*, and Bell notes that Ursula’s octopus tentacles “physically manifest the enveloping, consumptive sexuality of the deadly woman” (Bell 117). The *femme fatale* and former Disney villainesses built in her image may serve as a template or point of departure for Ursula, but Ursula presents a mockery of the *femme fatale*, fat and campy and past her prime, modeled in part after *Sunset Boulevard*’s washed-up diva, Norma Desmond (Bell 116). Do Rozario further suggests that starting in the 1980s with *The Little Mermaid*, “the princess herself absorbed some of the exuberance of the *femme fatale*” (Do Rozario 44), leaving the villainess, Ursula, as a “grotesque parody,” more camp diva than *femme fatale* herself (45).

Notably, Mim and Ursula are the only two overweight villainesses in this study, and the presentation of Ursula's extreme obesity differs significantly from that of Mim's plump figure. Mim's stick-thin arms and legs protrude cartoonishly from her round body, and her figure is covered by a modest dress that hides all details of her size, save a small double chin and an ample bosom. In contrast, Ursula's excess weight is inescapable, seen in her bulging arms and stomach, massive buttocks and double chin, and overflowing bosom, all prominently on display in the skin-tight, strapless, open-back bodice that rises seemingly organically from her black tentacles. Unlike Mim, Ursula's figure still maintains a link to the *femme fatale*, despite its size. Mim and Ursula have similar body shapes, with a full bosom giving way to a larger, rounded stomach. However, Ursula displays, if not a cinched waist, then at least clearly defined bust and hips. Her skin-tight "clothing" reveals every detail of her form, emphasizing her "exaggerated movements of the hips and arms" (Doane 125). Conversely, Mim's form is covered in a loose dress that distinguishes her bust from the rest of her torso primarily by its two-tone construction, the skirt billowing out into a tent-like circle and revealing a peek of puffy, white bloomers that further conceal her figure. Her brief transformation into a beautiful young woman emphasizes this shape by contrasting it, with a bust extending past the width of her shoulders and a waist cinched to the size of her neck.

The distinction between Mim and Ursula (and between young and old Mim) recalls Bell's description of the benign older woman's soft, round body, in contrast to the *femme fatale*'s "shapely and mature curves of wickedness" (Bell 118). This contrast appears in many of this study's villainesses and highlights the hourglass figure as another trapping of the *femme fatale* trope. The Evil Queen's body in *Snow White* morphs from a visibly defined waist to a shapeless, obscured form; Mother Gothel in *Tangled* undergoes a similar change, though the few clear

images of her aged body suggest that it is more obscured than shapeless. Even *The Emperor's New Groove's* Yzma, despite her gaunt, aged form, wears a fitted gown displaying her slim waist and clearly defined hips and breasts. Ursula signifies the *femme fatale* in her shapeliness, but presents a caricature of the trope due to her size.

As observed by children's literature scholar Roberta Trites, the placement of Ursula's morbidly obese form as a villain is no surprise (Trites 150), given both the rising spike in obesity at the time of the film's production (Ogden and Carroll 3) and the burgeoning fitness craze of the eighties, from the rise of fitness gurus such as Richard Simmons and Jane Fonda to pop singer Olivia Newton-John's 1981 hit single "Physical" and glamourized exercise scenes in films such as *Flashdance* (Lyne 1983), as well as the popularity of spandex, legwarmers, and other workout-inspired clothing in 1980s fashion. While Ursula is ultimately a threatening villain, her conventionally unattractive body plays ironically in her hyper-sensual performance during "Poor Unfortunate Souls," and the ridiculousness of her obese figure sauntering about on sexual display suggests that her physical appearance is often played more for laughs than fear—until the film's climax, when Ursula transforms from the lithe, beautiful Vanessa back into her original form, with rolls of fat bursting forth as if to swallow innocent bystanders whole, demonstrating a more fearsome side to her morbid obesity.

Interestingly, neither Mim nor Ursula express displeasure with their size or physical appearance. Mim is adamant that she is hideous but seems to revel in it, and Ursula luxuriates so much in the use of her extreme corpulence that she appears quite comfortable with her large size, even bemoaning the fact that she is "wasting away" in her exile from merfolk society. There is perhaps power in this refusal to be cowed by female beauty standards, making them both threatening and deviant; however, both Mim and Ursula transform at some point into their own

versions of young, slim, attractive women—the only villainesses in this study to transform themselves (albeit temporarily) into young women in order to appeal to or trick the male hero. These transformations suggest that they are aware that their bodies do not fit into largely accepted beauty standards, even if they are not upset by it, but also serve to remind the audience of what a woman “should” look like to be attractive, and that these women represent the complete opposite. In Ursula’s case, her physical deviance is further highlighted by Ariel’s contrasting athleticism, identified by Do Rozario as a common trait in princess characters throughout the Disney Renaissance era (Do Rozario 47).

As mentioned earlier, the influence of specific dance forms on Disney characters is less apparent after *Sleeping Beauty*. Untethered from a particular movement aesthetic, Mim and Ursula’s prominent Modes of Intent speak more to their specific characterization than a broader movement influence—while the Evil Queen and Maleficent’s preference for Space Mode relates to their characterizations in terms of aspects such as poise and control, it is most strongly linked to both films’ more general ballet influence. This middle time period demonstrates a complicated shift in preferred Mode, with something of a split between the two characters in the category. Both the preceding and subsequent periods show a shared preference for two primary Modes (or one primary and one secondary) among its two members—a primary focus on Space Mode with Effort for the Evil Queen and Maleficent in the previous time period, and a preference for Shape with Effort for Yzma and Gothel in the next. While Mim and Ursula share Body as one prevalent underlying Mode, Mim follows her predecessors with a greater preference for Effort and less Shaping support, and Ursula aligns more with Yzma and Gothel in her greater incorporation of Shaping. This rift shows another, larger chronological shift in villainess movement preferences, from Effort, linked in LMA with the question of the “how” of one’s movement, to Shape, linked

with the “why.” Considering this framing of Effort and Shape, this shift suggests, in addition to the continuous refining of animation technique and evolving technologies, a deeper examination of the underlying motivations and mechanisms behind character movement over time.

Because of this split between Mim and Ursula, I considered forming only two groups for this taxonomy, pre-Disney Renaissance villainesses and Renaissance/post-Renaissance ones, and dividing Mim and Ursula accordingly. However, the patterns I observed did not fit with such an organization—the characters’ other primary Modes and tendencies are simply too different for such groupings to make sense, particularly in incorporating Mim into a group with Maleficent and the Evil Queen. Further, though Mim and Ursula are more connected by bodily influences such as obesity than by Modes of Intent, the role of Body Mode in their movement signatures merits consideration, both individually and as they connect chronologically—what does this shift into Body Mode suggest about Disney animation during these decades? Is there a link between preferred Mode and the shifting representation of body type? Or is it simply indicative of further developing nuance in character animation?

In Mim’s case, Body Mode supports her characterization as childish, demonstrating her lack of awareness or concern for her environment, and in the fact that many of her movements are simply basic body actions such as jumping, spinning, etc., with no intention regarding qualities of Effort, Shape, or Space. Many of Mim’s movement sequences reflect her “aging spoiled brat” characterization (Johnston and F. Thomas, *The Disney Villain* 136), ranging from tantrums to giddy excitement. This childish nature is supported by her tendency to operate primarily in Body and Effort Modes, with little care given to her use of Space. Mim’s use of Effort and Shape are not fully integrated, resulting in a spilling out of extreme Effort qualities that are not adequately supported or organized by Shaping. As such, her use of Effort is less

communicative and more self-centred, further demonstrating her childlike mindset. Her “contrast of wild actions and restraint, with unexpected outbursts accenting her overall timing” (F. Thomas and Johnston, *The Illusion of Life* 180) manifests in her Effort Phrasing, with moments of high energy Exertion bookended by brief calm. These moments of Exertion in particular feature frequent gestural movements of her extremities (primarily hands and forearms) that cycle through Near, Mid, and Far Reach Space, although her extreme mania tends to favor the latter, as when waving her arms about wildly. Thus, while she may prefer Body and Effort Modes, a wide range of elements help build a movement signature that contributes to her erratic characterization.

Mim’s proclivity for frequent shifts also manifests in Body Mode, seen in her body organization.<sup>88</sup> Mim regularly shifts between different body organizations, including Homologous (Upper-Lower)<sup>89</sup> when jumping up and down as if throwing a tantrum, Homolateral (Body Half)<sup>90</sup> when hopping from one foot to the other, and even Navel Radiation,<sup>91</sup> one of the earliest developmental movement patterns, seen when Mim flails her limbs during some of her outbursts. These shifts in organizational patterns are used expressively, where they often link to Mim’s outbursts or tantrums. Ursula also demonstrates multiple body organization patterns, most significantly Navel Radiation in her lower half, Homologous in the clear divide between human upper and octopus lower, and Contralateral,<sup>92</sup> which serves at times to unite her upper and lower

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<sup>88</sup> Body organization refers to several full-body ways of moving that are grounded in infant (and evolutionary) Developmental Movement Patterns. These patterns build on each other in a sequence toward increasingly complex forms and movement possibilities as infants learn to locomote.

<sup>89</sup> Homologous movement differentiates the upper and lower body, often with one stabilizing while the other mobilizes, like a frog jumping (Fernandes 95).

<sup>90</sup> Homolateral movement differentiates the right and left sides of the body, vertically divided along the spinal column (Fernandes 96), like a lizard crawling.

<sup>91</sup> In Navel Radiation, the limbs move and organize themselves in relation to the core or navel, like a starfish.

<sup>92</sup> Contralateral movement is the final stage in Developmental Patterning, connecting upper to lower on opposite sides of the body, such as in walking with the right arm and left leg moving forward at the same time and vice versa.

halves in distinctly human movement. She also displays very clear Yield-Push and Reach-Pull movement patterns, another aspect of infant developmental patterning.<sup>93</sup>

Though Ursula's human upper body and octopus lower body function as a cohesive whole at times through the above elements, they often demonstrate different movement qualities, such as different Modes of Shape Change. While her tentacles tend (with occasional exception) to shift and rearrange in relation to themselves, indicative of Shape Flow,<sup>94</sup> her upper half changes Shape primarily in relation to her external environment, as in three-dimensional Shaping. These Shape changes, particularly Ascending and Descending,<sup>95</sup> tend to be more exaggerated than those of previously discussed villainesses, and can integrate either her entire body or only her upper body.

Mim and Ursula also exhibit similar approaches to Kinespheric versus general space, as both move all over the space they inhabit, but do not demonstrate Spatial Intent. These patterns fully reverse those of the previous time period—although both the Evil Queen and Maleficent frequently move their arms into Far Reach Space in their Kinespheres, they both remain relatively stationary, preferring for the most part to stand and give dramatic speeches and orders while gesticulating than to move about in the space around them. Conversely, Mim and Ursula fully engage with the environmental space around them in all three dimensions, bouncing around in gravity-defying patterns in Mim's case, and taking advantage of the underwater setting in Ursula's. They too engage with Far Reach Space in their Kinespheres, but when gesturing with

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<sup>93</sup> The Yield-Push, Reach-Pull cycle establishes how we access space, starting with Yielding into and Pushing against gravity, and progressing to Reaching and Pulling out into space/environment.

<sup>94</sup> In some schools of thought, this shifting is aligned not with Shape Flow but with the Tension Flow Attribute of Flow Adjustment (Kestenberg Amighi et al. 80). Tension Flow refers to the "changing levels of muscle tension" (Kestenberg Amighi et al. 14) in infants that eventually develop into crystallized Efforts, further linking Ursula to infant/child development. Flow Adjustment underlies Indirect Space Effort, an appropriate connection to the almost multi-focused nature of Ursula's constantly moving tentacles.

<sup>95</sup> Descending refers to Shaping in the Vertical Plane with a downward emphasis.



arms, legs, or tentacles, Mim and Ursula do so in Body, Effort, or Shape Mode, with little to no attention given to a limb's position in Space. While I have suggested earlier in this chapter that the Evil Queen and Maleficent's preferences for Space Mode are linked to ballet influence, this shift toward a greater use of general space in the following time period may also be influenced by the practicalities of animation. It uses fewer cels to animate a character whose body does not move, and with the adoption of Xerox technology in 1961 with *One Hundred and One Dalmatians* (used experimentally in select scenes in *Sleeping Beauty* as well), it became much more efficient and less labour-intensive to produce more cels. Further, the shift away from Space as a primary Mode of Intent suggests a progression away from a focus on Outer and Function, both associated with Space Mode, and moving gradually toward attention to aspects of Inner intention and Expression in animated characters, observed further with the increasing use of Shape Mode in the next time period.

## **2000s-2010s**

### **Yzma (2000) Mother Gothel (2010)**

The villainesses of this category, *The Emperor's New Groove's* Yzma and *Tangled's* Mother Gothel, further exemplify the shifting approaches to evil female representation observed in the previous period, continuing to reflect social concerns about the female body. Yzma and Gothel both continue the tradition of the caricatured *femme fatale* seen in Ursula, presented as washed-up, outdated former divas, each in their own ways. Rather than obesity as seen in Mim and Ursula, I identify the unifying element in these early twenty-first-century villainesses to be related once again to age. The undesirable element in Yzma and Gothel seems to be less old age

itself and more the desire to step outside of the social limitations and stigmas of it, through seeking either youth or power. This aversion not just to aging but to failing to “age gracefully” coincides with the increasing availability of and shifting attitudes toward cosmetic surgery, injectable fillers, and other artificial means of delaying or reversing signs of aging (Heyes and Jones 1-2). Interestingly, these villainesses’ struggles to accept their age or position coincide with the aging of the “baby boomer” and “silent” generations, those who grew up with the classic Disney films and their images of young, good princesses and older, evil villainesses.

Following the Disney Renaissance of 1989-1999, which owed much of its success to the musical theatre format devised by songwriters Howard Ashman and Alan Menken (Sells 183), *The Emperor’s New Groove* (2000) represents a somewhat unexplored genre for Disney animation: the non-musical comedy. The film is set in an unspecified South American kingdom in an unspecified distant past, and tells the story of the young, selfish Emperor Kuzco. Kuzco’s aged advisor, Yzma, longs to seize the emperor’s power for herself, and when Kuzco callously fires her, she plots to poison him. Her plans go awry, however, when her selected poison turns Kuzco into a llama rather than killing him. Yzma spends the rest of the film searching for the llama-emperor, with many comical near-misses. She eventually confronts Kuzco back in her lair at the palace, where he has come in search of an antidote that will return him to human form. In the ensuing struggle, Kuzco is transformed into a variety of creatures by Yzma’s wide selection of magic potions (a sequence reminiscent of the wizards’ duel in *The Sword in the Stone*), until finally Yzma herself is accidentally turned into a small, fluffy kitten, and Kuzco returns to human form, less selfish and ready to live happily ever after.

Despite what its title may suggest, *The Emperor’s New Groove* is not based on Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Emperor’s New Clothes” (1837), except perhaps in that both stories

feature an emperor whose overgrown ego lands him in trouble. In its original incarnation, the film's narrative loosely followed the premise of "The Prince and the Pauper" by Mark Twain (1881), with the young emperor swapping places with a peasant who resembles him, but as the film evolved, this framework faded into the story as it now exists (Silverman 305). In this original storyline, which focused less on comedy and followed the musical "dramedy" format of the previous decade, Yzma's character was motivated by a desire for youth and beauty, even singing a song about her old age, faded beauty, and lack of desirability to men (*The Sweatbox*). Though writers replaced this plotline of "older female villain desires youth and beauty" with a more gender-neutral one of "villain desires power" upon the film's overhaul, Yzma's body and status as an older woman are regularly mocked as comedic elements in the film, from her exaggeratedly sagging breasts to a scene in which Kuzco and his companion Pacha gasp in horror at the sight of Yzma raising her skirt hem to reveal her upper leg.

The original Yzma, according to animator Andreas Deja, was "old and vain . . . She is old and wrinkly and she wants to be young again . . . [The] idea is very current; you see people in Beverly Hills like that" (*The Sweatbox*)—further connecting Yzma to the aging baby boomer/silent generation populations of the late nineties.<sup>96</sup> Though her goals changed as the film developed, Yzma's "old and vain" nature remain central aspects of her character. Deja further describes her as "a little campy, a little over the top" (*The Sweatbox*), recalling *The Little Mermaid*'s Ursula and her melodramatic twist on the *femme fatale*. Director Mark Dindal and producer Randy Fullmer cite past Disney films *Sleeping Beauty* and *One Hundred and One Dalmatians* as references in the creation of *The Emperor's New Groove*, and Yzma displays elements of both Maleficent and *One Hundred and One Dalmatian*'s villainess, Cruella De Vil,

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<sup>96</sup> Perhaps more so members of the "silent generation," as boomers would be in their mid-thirties to mid-fifties, closer to middle age than old age, at the time of *The Emperor's New Groove*'s release.

from her erratic temper and angular physique, resembling Cruella, to her desire to present herself, like Maleficent, as cool, composed, and intimidating. Yzma also evokes Maleficent's image through her affinity with the colour purple—used, according to Dindal and Fullmer, due to its associations not only with “classic villain” colour schemes but also with “madness” (Dindal and Fullmer 2005), further emphasizing Yzma's erratic nature.

Where Yzma resembles past villainesses in her appearance and demeanour, *Tangled's* Mother Gothel recalls their character motivations and relationships. Released in 2010, *Tangled* is based on the “Rapunzel” fairy tale recorded by the Brothers Grimm in 1812 (Tatar 105). Where the Grimms tell a tale of a husband and wife who steal from the garden of a powerful old witch and promise her their unborn child in return, the Disney version turns the couple into a king and queen who seek a magical flower from the forest to save the pregnant queen's life. The elderly Mother Gothel had previously been the only one to use this flower, which returned her youth (or middle-agedness) through its magic. When Gothel finds that the queen's baby has absorbed the flower's magic in her hair, she kidnaps the child—Rapunzel—and raises her as her own daughter in a tower deep in the woods. After many years, the teenaged Rapunzel leaves the tower against Gothel's orders, with the help of a male visitor, Flynn Rider. Gothel, slowly reverting to her true age without access to Rapunzel's magic hair, pursues Rapunzel and eventually returns with her to the tower. Rapunzel discovers that she was kidnapped by Gothel as an infant, and Flynn cuts Rapunzel's hair, destroying its magic. With the magic gone, Gothel ages rapidly, falling out of the tower window in her distress as her body disintegrates to nothing.

While Yzma echoes Maleficent in appearance and imagery, Gothel recalls *Snow White's* Evil Queen in terms of her motivations and relationship with the film's princess character. Both Gothel and the Evil Queen “are obsessed with physical appearance and are willing to lie and kill

to preserve their beauty" (Hischak 151), displacing a beautiful young princess from her home and royal birthright in their respective quests. However, unlike the Evil Queen, Hischak notes that "Gothel can rarely reveal her sinister nature, spending much of the film playing the loving mother in front of Rapunzel" (Hischak 151). Gothel's idea of a "loving" mother does little to hide her selfish nature from the audience, however, as her interactions with Rapunzel are steeped in manipulation, gaslighting, and passive-aggressive comments. In a scene early in the film, Gothel stands the teenaged Rapunzel in front of a mirror and says, "I see a strong, confident, beautiful young lady. Oh look, you're here too!"—destabilizing and subordinating Rapunzel by "jokingly" revealing that she was in fact referring to herself. This moment calls back to the Evil Queen's magic mirror and her desire to be reassured that she is more beautiful than her young stepdaughter, Snow White. The mirror appears as a motif throughout *Tangled*, and Gothel's final act is to stare in horror at herself in the jagged remains of the shattered mirror, before falling to her death.

Interestingly, while the solution to the Evil Queen's problem is to eliminate Snow White, Gothel's solution requires Rapunzel not only to live but to stay with her forever. In fact, Gothel in many ways is a reversal (or, fittingly, mirror image) of the Evil Queen—like the Queen, she seeks youth and beauty (more so youth in Gothel's case, versus beauty in the Queen's), but the two villainesses go about accomplishing their goals in almost opposite ways. The Evil Queen aims to become the most beautiful in the land by altering her environment rather than herself, getting rid of Snow White for being deemed fairer than she. Gothel opts to change herself—rather than competing against other women for the position of "fairest," Gothel simply wishes to stay young forever, requiring a solution directly related to her own body. The Evil Queen begins as a middle-aged *femme fatale*, transforming from Terrible Mother to crone, while Gothel's true

form is that of an old (possibly centuries-old) crone, and she uses magic to keep herself perpetually transformed as a middle-aged *femme fatale*, taking on the role of Terrible Mother in her captivity of Rapunzel. I will explore the connection between these transformations further in Chapter Five, as they serve as counterpoints to each other and bookends to this study, as the earliest and latest characters under consideration.

Given Yzma's link to Maleficent and Gothel's to the Evil Queen, these later villains almost seem to actually *be* these same characters from the first era, now aged and past their "prime," scrabbling to hold on to the glory years. Where the Evil Queen and Maleficent both fall squarely into the middle stage of Bell's female life cycle, Yzma and Gothel (in her untransformed state) are clearly much older, perhaps even the ages that these earlier villainesses would be in the 2000s and 2010s if they were truly alive. Yzma's appearance paints her as a "washed-up," outdated version of Maleficent, with her extravagant wardrobe and dramatic behaviour. Gothel does not immediately appear to be the Evil Queen "sixty years later" based on appearance alone, but rather resembles the Evil Queen's mature beauty as she is. Instead, it is the nature of Gothel's transformation that indicates that she is clinging to the past, as it makes clear that Gothel is not only using magic to artificially make herself look younger, but that her true age might in fact be so high that she should no longer be alive, let alone looking like a middle-aged *femme fatale*. As I will explore further in the transformation chapter, rather than a complete change in physical form, Gothel's transformations are more like "touch-ups," akin to getting her roots done at the hair salon or going in for a round of botox injections. Writing in 1993, Susan Bordo observes the fascination in contemporary media with the "plasticity and deconstructive possibilities of the body" (Bordo 39), connecting fantasy stories in which bodies magically become younger or older to phenomena ranging from plastic surgery and gender reassignment to reproductive

technologies (Bordo 39). This magical solution already appears in *The Little Mermaid*'s Ursula in 1989, as she transforms into the young, thin, beautiful Vanessa, and only grows more extreme by 2010's *Mother Gothel*, with the growing field of cosmetic surgery and shifting attitudes and discussion surrounding the practice (Heyes and Jones 2009).

Gothel's artificiality is seen in her behaviour and movement too, with clear shifts in Effort and Shape patterns when she loses her temper with Rapunzel or drops her passive-aggressive façade. Her use of Time Effort varies regularly between Quick and Sustained, but her shifts into Strong Weight, Direct Space, and/or Bound Flow usually signify a palpable change in mood and/or a slip of her false persona. Yzma also demonstrates a tendency to present different personas in different situations, reflected in changes in movement tendencies, particularly in Effort and Shape. In Emperor Kuzco's presence (early in the film, before it is exposed that she is trying to kill him), Yzma simpers with a nervous energy reflected in her Quick, Light Effort and Enclosing and Advancing Shaping,<sup>97</sup> appearing as if she is both humble and eager to please. When interacting with peasants and inferiors, she acts aloof, with Light, Sustained movements and Ascending Shaping that suggests her higher status—or at least her self-importance. When alone or with her henchman, Kronk, she is transparent with her emotions, which are often conveyed through extreme Quick, Strong Effort and frequent Shape and Space changes.

Yzma and Gothel both merge Effort and Shaping to create dynamic expressivity, and Shape in particular is used to express exaggerated reactions to external stimuli and events. In Yzma, these exaggerated reactions lend to her cartoonish presentation and manifest particularly in Phrasing moments of Preparation, contributing to Yzma's highly exaggerated, emotional reactions to obstacles. Preparation aligns with the Animation Principle of Anticipation, which is

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<sup>97</sup> Enclosing: Shaping in the Horizontal Plane with an inward emphasis; Advancing: Shaping in the Sagittal Plane with a forward emphasis.

employed to signify intent (Bishko, “Uses and Abuses” 32) by “preceding each major action with a specific move that anticipates for the audience what is about to happen” (F. Thomas and Johnston, *The Illusion of Life* 51), like winding up to throw a ball. Yzma’s preference for Quick Time Effort often makes these Shape changes appear even more extreme, as does her general tendency to shift between Effort elements suddenly and dramatically. Although she puts little importance on her use of Space, her Shape changes often take her to the edges of her Kinesphere and sometimes beyond, another physics-defying characteristic of cartoon animation (Bishko, “Uses and Abuses” 30). These examples demonstrate how Yzma incorporates Shape and Effort together to create expressive, and often exaggerated, movement.

Gothel also exhibits a preference for Shape Mode. Shaping, again in conjunction with Effort, serves to emphasize Gothel’s melodramatic nature throughout the film, with movements that range from exaggerated to subtle depending on the situation. Gothel frequently shifts between Shaping qualities in all three dimensions: Advancing and Retreating,<sup>98</sup> Ascending and Descending, and Enclosing and Spreading.<sup>99</sup> She tends toward Scattering<sup>100</sup> Shaping qualities (Advancing, Ascending, Spreading), often invading Rapunzel’s Kinesphere and forcing her to Retreat or otherwise Gather in response. Her use of Shaping combined with a preference for Screw Body Attitude call to mind Ursula in *The Little Mermaid*, in terms of her physicality as well as her proclivity for melodrama.

Effort, linked in LMA with the question of the “how” of one’s movement, can be found underlying the earlier characters of this study as well, but the increasing attention to and incorporation of Shape, linked with the “why,” suggests a larger trend: In addition to the

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<sup>98</sup> Retreating: Shaping in the Sagittal Plane with a backward emphasis.

<sup>99</sup> Spreading: Shaping in the Horizontal Plane with an outward emphasis.

<sup>100</sup> Scattering refers to the general Shaping quality of going away from the body, and Gathering to the general Shaping quality of coming toward the body (Dell 56).



continuous refining of animation technique and evolving technologies, I have observed a chronological shift toward a deeper examination of the underlying motivations and mechanisms behind character movement over time, and a bridging of Outer to Inner through changing Modes of Intent. Compared to the prevalence of Space Mode in the earliest villainesses, indicative of Function, the focus on Shape and Effort in these two more recent villainesses suggests that Expression has also become a greater priority. Though Yzma is something of an outlier due to the cartoon-inspired nature of *The Emperor's New Groove* (discussed further in the following chapter), Gothel in particular demonstrates the continuation of this shift toward increased personality and interiority in Disney villainesses. *Tangled* is clearly part of the Disney tradition toward ever more realistic animated movement, and the subtleties of Gothel's movement patterns are easier to identify than other characters such as Yzma, who is intentionally animated in a less realistic cartoon style. This difference in style leads to an interesting comparison between these two films regarding movement patterns—though they are animated very differently, with different intentions, genres, styles, and technologies, the two characters still share an underlying preference for Shape Mode, as well as other patterns observed above, such as the tendency to hide their true natures through movement.

By the production of *The Emperor's New Groove*, Disney had been gradually introducing digital animation into their films for approximately ten years (B. Thomas 130). *The Emperor's New Groove* is still primarily hand drawn, with computer-generated imagery (CGI) mostly used to create props and inanimate objects, where the goal is for these items to blend with the rest of the animated scene and to be unidentifiable as a CGI element (Dindal and Fullmer 2005). This method of incorporating CGI with hand-drawn animation presents a sort of double simulacrum, creating something in a new animated medium to appear “real” in the context of the simulated

reality of the first animated medium. *Tangled*, the first all-CGI Disney fairy-tale film (Kurtti 6), further represents this double simulacrum, as animators attempted to achieve the “classic Disney” look and feel of a hand-drawn film, but in three-dimensional, digital animation (Kurtti 43), appearing “real” in the context of Disney’s tradition of hand-drawn animation. In addition to presenting new technologies to experiment with animation style and character movement, these different methods of incorporating digital animation ironically recall the very “undesirable” element of this time period’s villainesses, simulation: the simulation of a different style of animation through computer technology, the simulation of youth through plastic surgery advancements, and the simulation of a different personality or intention through movement patterns.

## **Conclusion**

The patterns observed in these six case studies bridge not only decades of filmmaking, but also the fairy tales recorded centuries earlier and the contemporary conventions, perspectives, and ideals placed upon them in twentieth- and twenty-first-century iterations. Amy Davis observes that changes to the way fairy tales are represented on screen are indicative of societal changes over time (Davis 12). In this chapter, I have explored diachronic patterns in movement qualities of six Disney villainesses, considering their commonalities and differences, their subtle shifts and major changes, and what their movement represents in terms of “the cultural biases of the societies” in which they are created (Hanlon 140). Dance ethnographer Cynthia Novack observes that the meanings suggested by certain movement qualities also shift over time, such that the same movement style can carry different meanings, or different styles the same meanings (Novack 105-06). I have found that, in addition to observing that characters within the same time

period share at least one preferred Mode, there is a flow of Mode preferences between chronologically sequential characters spanning the three categories in this taxonomy: from Space incorporating Effort (the Evil Queen and Maleficent), to a fuller focus on Effort incorporating Body (Madam Mim), to Body combined with Shape (Ursula), to a fuller focus on Shape once again incorporating Effort (Yzma and Mother Gothel). Considering the way the various Modes connect to the major LMA themes of Inner-Outer and Function-Expression, this trajectory further demonstrates an overall shift from Function (Space and Body) to Expression (Effort and Shape), and within these divisions, one from Outer (Space and Effort) to Inner (Body and Shape).

Through this exploration of the role of Modes of Intent and LMA themes in Disney's shifting representations of female evil, I have observed several patterns and influences. First, while aspects of all Modes of Intent are present throughout, and Effort in particular consistently underlies animated movement, other primary Modes of Intent vary depending on time period, and often suggest links to period-based influences, such as ballet. Second, Disney's adherence to the source material archetype varies, tending to grow less strict over time—rather than simply representing the archetype, they begin to play with it. These adjustments are in part due to the influence of the *femme fatale*. As a popular Hollywood trope during early Disney, the *femme fatale* has had a strong impact on how fairy-tale archetypes are presented in these villainous characters, even past its peak popularity and into more recent films as it is absorbed into the increasingly established image of the Disney villainess. The Disney villainess image becomes almost archetypal itself as it grows more established by later eras, notably starting with the Disney Renaissance era and *The Little Mermaid*, where classic villainesses such as the Evil Queen and Maleficent come to represent an increasingly distant past and have reached something of fairy-tale status of their own. As a result, they become the template on which to build,

experiment, and subvert as new villains and villainesses are created, leading to an increase in self-reference in the final time period of this study with Yzma and Mother Gothel. The tendency for later films to play with the *femme fatale* image echoes the same tendency with female archetypes—as Disney villainesses become their own icon of female evil, they begin to subvert or play with that image more and more, often combining with other cultural influences that focus on contemporaneous social issues related to vilifying the female body: sexuality via the *femme fatale*, obesity, and aging and its artificial prevention. In addition to reflecting these shifting cultural preoccupations, the time periods progress toward and open up more personality or interiority in the characters, as expressed through shifting Modes.

Observing commonalities between characters based on time period has allowed me to establish a foundation for Disney's link between female age and characterization as good versus evil, and the role movement plays in that characterization. I have further considered cultural influences on Disney's portrayal of evil women, and how the application of certain archetypes has shifted over time as Disney shifts their representations of female evil. This exploration sets up the following taxonomy, villain type, which is in many ways linked to this one. While my taxonomic structure serves to demonstrate the multiplicities of meaning found in animated movement, there is also a progression that allows each taxonomy to build on the last. Thus, the various "types" of villains these characters represent are linked in part to issues of shifting attitudes toward women's bodies and what related social anxieties are poured into images of evil women over time.

## Chapter Four:

### Taxonomy B: Villain Type

#### Introduction

Growing out of the patterns discussed in the previous chapter, I observed a shift in how Disney villainesses are presented in terms of their role or “type”—that is, whether they are primarily serious characters who exist to threaten and thwart the protagonists, or if elements of comedy are present and/or prioritized in their characterization. This taxonomy presents a particularly interesting offshoot of the time-period taxonomy, with the differences observed following a loosely chronological trajectory. The earliest villainesses, the Evil Queen and Maleficent, serve a primarily serious function; however, I found the presentation of comedy versus seriousness in the latter four case studies to be more complex, prompting me to consider these characters through the lens of another taxonomy: villain type. I observed three different “types” of villainesses among the characters of this study: serious, as seen in the Evil Queen and Maleficent; comical, observed in Madam Mim and Yzma; and a combination of the two, found in Ursula and Mother Gothel, who frequently behave in an exaggerated, melodramatic way that suggests comedy, yet also display something more serious and genuinely threatening. While all of these characters demonstrate the long-held principles of Disney’s animated features—character animation, complex plot and character motivations, and generally realistic style—they do so in different ways.

This taxonomy is the most subjectively constructed, and is built around my own impressions more than the other two. I have delineated the categories of “serious,” “comical,” and “combination” through my observation of patterns among these six villainesses, and while I explore primary and secondary source material to support my understandings of the level of fear

versus humour certain villains are meant to instill, these categorizations are to an extent shaped by my opinion and response as a viewer.

In this chapter I also observe common patterns in movement between similar villain types. Unlike the previous chapter, in which I focused on varying Modes of Intent over different time periods, this chapter considers common movement qualities across all BESS categories, with a focus on how different Effort elements and shifts convey a character's role as serious, comical, or both. I also observe an evolving relationship between female age and role as comedic versus threatening villainess, recalling the age-based archetypes and evolving approaches to the *femme fatale* image discussed in the previous taxonomy. Though I do not focus on archetypes as much in this chapter as the previous one, the shift in female threat from crone to mother (as *femme fatale*) that I outlined in Chapter Three does underpin the observations of this chapter, where the later two time periods' more crone-presenting villainesses, Madam Mim and Yzma, function more comedically. I have observed the crone to be more of a site for comedy in Disney than the mother or *femme fatale*, as I will discuss throughout this chapter. Generally, when *femme fatale* elements exist in a comical character, they are presented in a mocking way or shown to be out of place on the villainess's undesirable body, as seen in Ursula and Yzma. Further, as stipulated regarding Modes of Intent in the previous chapter, it is important to note that a character's primary role as serious, comical, or combination does not preclude them from having elements of another. For example, though I have categorized Mim and Yzma as primarily comical, they do pose a threat to their protagonists, or else they would not be very effective antagonists. Nonetheless, the majority of their appearances are imbued with something more light, cartoonish, or silly than other villains in this study.

## Serious

### Evil Queen (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*) Maleficent (*Sleeping Beauty*)

The Evil Queen and Maleficent share the same category in this taxonomy as well as the previous one, as both villainesses function in primarily serious roles in their respective films. I believe that this shared characterization is, to an extent, linked to the time period in which the two films were produced, but is not necessarily representative of a strict pattern in films of this time period. Though not all villains of 1930s-1950s Disney films fit the same serious role as the Evil Queen and Maleficent, these two, along with *Cinderella's* Lady Tremaine, demonstrate a formula for the princess-focused fairy-tale films. Later princess films, starting with *The Little Mermaid*, deviate from this structure, as Disney over time expands humorous elements beyond the comic relief or cute sidekick characters and injects more silliness in other characters, including villains.

As mentioned in previous chapters, Disney feature animation grew out of a graphic narrative cartoon tradition. Walt Disney sought to elevate cartoon animation to the level of live-action film (Klein, *7 Minutes* 66), distinguishing it from the comedic traditions of the cartoon short.<sup>101</sup> The characters of this category represent the early work of that shift toward dramatic narrative, with villains existing in clear, discrete categories and playing defined, serious roles, instigating the heroines' struggles and serving, with their defeat, as the resolution of the story. The Evil Queen and Maleficent fill distinct archetypal roles as villains (even if the Hollywood image of the *femme fatale* complicates or adds layers to their mother/crone representations, as discussed in the previous chapter) and function primarily as serious characters. In early

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<sup>101</sup> I will elaborate more on cartoon-style humour in the following section on comedic villainesses.

development for *Snow White*, Walt and his animators struggled to decide whether the Evil Queen's theatricality should be grounded in comedy or drama, and two versions were initially developed: one fat and cartoonish, and one beautiful, dignified, and threatening, as the production team could not reconcile the cartoon-based compulsion for a comedic villain with the feature-length film's need for a serious, sustained threat to the heroine (Barrier 128). Ultimately they recognized that the Queen could not be a comic figure (a role better suited to the dwarfs), but through her transformation into the Witch, she was at least able to become a "grotesque menace" (Barrier 129) while still providing a frightening presence (F. Thomas and Johnston, *The Illusion of Life* 106), fulfilling the "tradition" of the ugly villainess discussed in Chapter Two (Birkhäuser-Oeri 13; Hischak 123).

The contrasts between the Evil Queen and the Witch can be seen as an Apollonian/Dionysian duality, a dialectic between order and disorder introduced by philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1872).<sup>102</sup> The Queen represents Apollonian elements of reason, culture, harmony, and restraint (some more than others), as she formulates a plan to triumph over Snow White, works with others to achieve it, and waits patiently for the Huntsman to play his part. She is described as "resolute and implacable" by Disney historian Karen Merritt ("Still the Fairest of Them All"), and her physical propensity toward stillness and held tension further embody Apollonian tendencies, as do her upright posture and straight limbs, as compared to the curved lines of the Witch, with her rounded back and craggy, bent fingers. The Witch is all Dionysian excess, irrationality, impulsivity, and unbridled passion, departing from her castle to go out and wreak havoc herself. She has completely given in to her desires as she plots her attack on Snow White, abandoning her previous regal dignity and appearing to have entered a state of mental

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<sup>102</sup> Nietzsche's Apollonian/Dionysian dialectic has been linked to Laban's focus on polarities (see J. Foster 43).



chaos as she leaves her dungeon, cackling with abandon and talking to long-dead skeletons in her dark, underground lair before she sets off to find Snow White.

Although she becomes less dignified as the Witch, descriptions such as “unholy terror” (Lucas qtd. in Allan 8) and “grotesque menace” (Barrier 129) suggest that she is still meant to be scary rather than comedic, though perhaps in a different way than the Queen. The words “ugly” and “menacing” surface time and again in descriptions and discussions of the Witch: Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston refer to her as “menacingly ugly” (*The Illusion of Life* 105); Disney scholar Robin Allan describes the Queen as “sinister, mature, [with] plenty of curves,” but identifies the Witch as “ugly and menacing when scheming and mixing her potions” (Allan 55); and folklore scholar Maria Tatar points out the duality of the character being “ugly, sinister, and wicked” as the Witch and “beautiful, proud, and evil” as the Queen (Tatar 80-81). Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston further emphasize that “menacingly ugly” is not a common characteristic found in many later Disney villains (*The Illusion of Life* 105)—often, when villains (or more often, villainesses) are characterized as ugly or unappealing, they are presented as more comical than truly threatening, such as Madam Mim in *The Sword in the Stone* or Yzma in *The Emperor’s New Groove* (discussed in the next section of this chapter). I believe that, in addition to filling *Snow White*’s need for a serious villainess to carry the dramatic narrative (Barrier 128), the Evil Queen/Witch represents the film’s transitional position between characterizing evil through old age as seen in many fairy tales, and the rising prevalence of the early and mid-1900s’ image of the *femme fatale* associating sexuality and certain types of beauty with evil—both of which are conveniently encapsulated within the duality of the Queen/Witch.

Maleficent demonstrates the completion of the switch to *femme fatale*, with *Sleeping Beauty* representing Bell’s female life cycle through a middle-aged villainess and good but

charmingly incompetent older fairies. With the crone character(s) now separate from the middle-aged Terrible Mother, Maleficent draws a different line between middle and old age, furthering the increasing power of the *femme fatale* and the shift of elderly female characters toward non-threatening, comedic roles. Following in the tradition of the “towering, taloned, raven-haired wicked stepmother” (Warner 207), Maleficent likewise presents a serious threat, contrasted not in a chaotic shift in appearance and personality brought about by her own transformation (though her transformation into a dragon could certainly qualify as such), but by the benign, gentle humour of the film’s three good fairies.

Walt Disney shares his philosophy of humour in his films of this era in an article written for *The Phi Delta Kappan* educational journal in 1954, describing the comedy in them as “gentle,” particularly in comparison to the chaotic humour of gag cartoons:

For these longer fables, generally the humor has been more gentle. It deals more with awkwardness, especially the kind which in the antics of young floundering animals becomes "cute" . . . Fable animals, which are never quite animal nor yet quite human—aping people; young persons emulating their elders; clumsiness, forgetfulness, attempts at dignity; physical instability; pretentious immaturity, as compared to the viewer's own smug self-assurance—these things are invariably funny to all audiences, to all races . . . The Dwarfs forcefully giving reluctant Grumpy a bath and Dopey running back for an extra kiss from Snow White—these are examples of what we try to get into every production to get chuckles as well as guffaws. (Disney 327)

This wholesome humour extends to characters besides Dwarfs and forest animals, such as the fairy godmothers in *Sleeping Beauty*. The good fairies’ body shapes set them apart from Maleficent, round and soft, in contrast with Maleficent’s long, sharp lines. Compared to

Maleficent, they also move more expressively—and just more in general—seeming to express their every thought and feeling through gestures big and small. They use all the space around them as they walk or fly about and tend to bounce and flit with Quick, Light, Indirect Effort throughout most of the film. Animator Frank Thomas has said that he modeled this bouncing quality on observations of round old ladies at the supermarket, who “paddle, paddle, paddle on their way” (F. Thomas qtd. in B. Thomas 105), and Bell identifies their silly incompetence as “the comedic value of the bodies of old women” (Bell 119). Interestingly, these qualities of round body and dynamic movement appear in Madam Mim, a more comical villain, four years later in *The Sword in the Stone*, creating a link between her character and the benign, amusing fairy godmothers of *Sleeping Beauty*, and a contrast with the “towering, taloned” (Warner 207), and serious Maleficent.

Returning to the Evil Queen and Maleficent, I have identified several movement preferences that I believe contribute to their shared characterizations as serious, threatening villains. Both characters tend toward stillness and calm, with minimal Shaping<sup>103</sup> coupled with their previously discussed preference for Space Mode. Their clear Spatial Intent suggests high levels of control through carefully placed gestures, supporting an impression of a cold and calculating nature—fittingly, when either character loses their temper, they lose some of this clarity in Space and shift into Effort Mode. They often create imposing silhouettes through their use of High and Far Reach Space when gesturing and dramatically raising their arms, and both tend to move with Light Weight Effort and Direct Space Effort (in contrast to the more Indirect Space Effort seen in the princesses and good fairy godmothers of these films).

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<sup>103</sup> The Evil Queen shifts more into Shape Mode when she transforms into the Witch, which I will explore in greater detail in Chapter Five.

While certain Effort elements tend to be fairly consistent, such as Bound Flow in the torso, tendencies toward other elements serve as a canvas for highlighting dramatic changes in Effort. Both the Evil Queen and Maleficent display occasional, unpredictable eruptions of temper manifesting in extreme Effort shifts (e.g. Light to Strong, Sustained to Quick), supported by more dramatic Shaping and more Far Reach gestures. Establishing a more composed baseline for these characters allows movement shifts to indicate these moments when emotions—primarily rage and frustration—seep through, such as when the Evil Queen learns that Snow White still lives, or Maleficent vents her anger that she cannot find where Aurora has been hidden. Sudden, bombastic shifts create an unpredictability that is employed sparingly, so as to further highlight their usual cold, composed demeanours, making their outbursts all the more volatile. These extreme Effort and Shaping changes contrast the characters’ usual stillness, not only indicating a loss of control on their part, but also serving to destabilize other characters as well as the audience.

Difficulty controlling emotions appears to be a common trait across all Disney villains; however, this struggle manifests in a variety of ways, and can serve to support a variety of characterizations. In these more serious villainesses, the dramatic shifts in temper are demonstrated by similarly dramatic shifts in movement in characters who do not normally move in such ways. In LMA terms, these differences are described as shifts in intensity between “neutral” and “extreme” (Dell 18)<sup>104</sup>—when they make this switch it is bombastic, set against their established characterization, rather than as part of their characterization. Less serious villains, as I will explore in the following section, tend to move with a greater outpouring and wider range of Effort (and/or Shape, Space, etc.) in general—they already tend toward more

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<sup>104</sup> Or, following the work of child development movement profiler Judith Kestenberg, Neutral Flow and Animated Flow (Kestenberg Amighi et al. 76).

extreme intensity, making their "outbursts" more expected and less destabilizing for the audience.

## Comical

### **Madam Mim (*The Sword in the Stone*) Yzma (*The Emperor's New Groove*)**

In contrast to the Evil Queen and Maleficent, Madam Mim and Yzma are presented in a more comical way, from their behaviour, to the nature of their transformations, and even the ways in which they are ultimately defeated. Both Mim and Yzma are identified as crone characters within their respective films (Johnston and F. Thomas, *The Disney Villain* 136; *The Sweatbox*). As explored in the previous section, the *femme fatale* does not often receive comedic treatment in Disney, particularly in the company's earlier films,<sup>105</sup> and, with the exception of *Snow White*, the crone archetype tends to be used more for humour. With Mim, the Disney villainess sheds the *femme fatale* image built up in previous films and returns to the image of the ugly crone, but with an element of silliness added in that reflects Bell's theory of the benign older stage in the female life cycle. Though Mim and Yzma are not kind, supportive older characters, the comedic elements of their villainous roles and of the films themselves remove some of their potential for true scariness. Yzma, with her harsh, gaunt form, physically contrasts Madam Mim; however, the two share much in common. Yzma plays an even more comedic role in her film, and animators layer onto the image of the unattractive crone the idea of the older woman trying to cling to her past as a *femme fatale* to further the ridiculousness and comedy of her aged body. Yzma is presented as unimaginably old (and therefore unattractive), but still

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<sup>105</sup> I explore how the *femme fatale* does come to be used for humour in later films in the following section of this chapter.

adorned in the “careful cosmetics of paint, cowls, jewelry, and ‘clinging black dresses’” (Bell 115) of the *femme fatale*, establishing her character as delusional and not to be taken too seriously.

The types of transformations Mim and Yzma undergo also impact how serious—or not—they appear. Mim’s multiple animal transformations are often humorous, due in part to their anthropomorphism and the retained elements of her original form, such as her hair, eyes, nose, and rotund shape, transferred onto myriad different animals. Conversely, Yzma’s transformation into a small, fluffy kitten is comical for its juxtaposition with her attempt to be a powerful threat as well as her age, subverting audience expectations for the villain to turn into something more threatening and fearsome at the film’s climax, while simultaneously demonstrating yet another failed attempt on her part to defeat the young Emperor Kuzco (the first being turning him into a llama instead of killing him early in the film, setting up the film’s comedic premise). Yzma also demonstrates a degree of anthropomorphism, a quality of these animal transformations that I will explore in greater detail in Chapter Five.

Related to their transformations, even the manners in which these two characters face defeat are comical. Both characters are vanquished in their anthropomorphic animal forms—Mim as a dragon (differing greatly from Maleficent’s dragon, as I discuss in Chapter Five), and Yzma as a kitten. They are both neutralized through means other than death, unlike the other characters in this study, and in both instances, there is an element of irony in their defeat: in *The Sword in the Stone*, Merlin turns into a microscopic germ to defeat Mim by making her sick, after the increasing intensity of more and more outrageous animal transformations during their duel. In *The Emperor’s New Groove*, Yzma’s transformation itself serves as her defeat, ironically subduing her through her own potions, which she had attempted to use to kill Kuzco, as well as

creating the humorous juxtaposition of her attempts at power and control with her ultimate fate as a harmless, tiny kitten.

The narrative structures of these two films further support Mim and Yzma's roles as villains that are not to be taken particularly seriously, albeit in different ways. *The Sword in the Stone* departs from the format seen in many Disney films, including the other five case studies in this dissertation, wherein one primary villain is present throughout the majority of the film and either catalyzes the plot (as in *Snow White*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *The Emperor's New Groove*) or is responsible for a key element of the protagonist's situation, whether known to the protagonist or not (as in *The Little Mermaid* and *Tangled*). Madam Mim, however, appears only in one ten-minute "episode" toward the end of *The Sword in the Stone*, with no mention of her character or indication of her influence at any other time in the film. As observed by former Disney animators Ollie Johnston and Frank Thomas, *The Sword in the Stone* lacks "a plot motivated by any real villain" (*The Disney Villain* 136); rather, the episodic structure supports a collection of several minor antagonists. The meandering nature of the film and the lack of a centralized villain, obstacle, or goal contribute to its potential to be classified as a comedy within this study, and Mim as a comical villain, mostly by nature of it having little else—the film struggles to create significant dramatic stakes through its disjointed narrative, and thus the primary unifying element is the comical hijinks of Wart and Merlin's adventures.

Though Mim is the last of *The Sword in the Stone*'s "antagonists" to appear, she is mostly incidental to the plot, rather than a final obstacle to the hero's larger goal or a catalyst for the film's events. The way Mim is shuffled in amongst the rest of the obstacles and subplots of the film, rather than being introduced early on or appearing at the climax of the story, suggests that she is not particularly significant to the story, but is merely another of Wart's minor obstacles on

his journey. Further, the silliness of her multiple transformations and performance of the song “Mad Madam Mim” upon her introduction establish her character and set the tone for the rest of her time on screen. This silliness is continued in her interactions with her nemesis Merlin and her generally childish demeanour, with no real “adult” moments—she is even described as “a cross between an aging spoiled brat and a young crotchety hag” by former Disney animators Ollie Johnston and Frank Thomas (*The Disney Villain* 136). Even when Mim as a cat captures Wart as a bird, arguably one of the more “threatening” moments of their interaction, Wart escapes her with comical ease by pecking her on the nose, suggesting that, despite the scene’s buildup leading to her Wizards’ Duel with Merlin, she will not be difficult to subdue.

Where *The Sword in the Stone* is suggestive of a lighthearted, silly comedy mostly for its lack of dramatic narrative cohesion and focus on miscellaneous hijinks over a centralized struggle, *The Emperor’s New Groove* is clearly styled as a comedy, identified by director Mark Dindal and producer Randy Fullmer as inspired by the tradition and aesthetic of twentieth-century cartoon shorts (Dindal and Fullmer 2005). Though the film still values character and dramatic narrative elements, the inspiration of the “controlled anarchy” of early graphic narrative (Klein, *7 Minutes* 32) is apparent, setting it apart from the other films I examine in this study, which adhere more closely to the dramatic narrative and realistic style elements signature to Disney feature animation. Coming full circle from *Snow White*, with which the Disney studio aimed to break out of the cartoon short style of animation, *The Emperor’s New Groove* delights in its incorporation of cartoon conventions. The film follows in the steps of Disney’s animation/live-action hybrid comedy *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* (Zemeckis 1988), functioning almost as a deconstruction of the “sophistication” developed in *Snow White*’s production (F.



Thomas and Johnston, *The Illusion of Life* 25)—the guiding force in Disney’s philosophy toward their animated features over the twentieth century.

The Disney values of character development and story complexity are still at the root of *The Emperor’s New Groove*. However, it is apparent that aspects of the early cartoon tradition, such as prioritizing the gag over narrative sense (Klein, *7 Minutes* 10), hold a higher status than in other Disney features, frequently taking the viewer out of the world of the story through anachronisms and physics-defying humour. In audio commentary available on many DVD releases of the film, director Mark Dindal and producer Randy Fullmer express particular pride in the zany, “pure cartoon fun” of one scene in particular, in which Yzma and her henchman Kronk manage to track Emperor Kuzco back to the house of his peasant companion Pacha. Upon their arrival, Pacha’s wife, Chicha, and their two rambunctious children thwart Yzma in increasingly unrealistic, gag-inspired ways. Dindal and Fullmer point out several aspects of the scene that are not typical of Disney feature animation, such as the quick movements and timing as Yzma “zips back and forth” between an uncooperative Chicha and the useless Kronk, who is blissfully enjoying a round of jump rope with the children. A later moment with Yzma and Kronk locked in a dark closet, only their bright, glowing eyes visible in the pitch black frame, also makes their list of favorite comedic bits, proudly identified as likely the first time that such a classic visual from cartoon shorts has appeared in a feature animated film (Dindal and Fullmer 2005).

*The Emperor’s New Groove* often revolves around the antic gags and quick pacing of many scenes in the film, reminiscent of the “chase” cartoons of the thirties and forties (Klein, *7 Minutes* 172). Examples of this format abound, including a series of near misses during which Yzma comes unwittingly close to capturing Kuzco at a roadside diner-style restaurant, Yzma’s

misadventures at Pacha's house as detailed in the above paragraph, and the race back to the palace as the film reaches its climax. The pairings of Kuzco/Pacha and Yzma/Kronk represent the contrasting "fast versus slow" duos of classic chase cartoons, such as Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd of Warner Bros. fame (Klein, *7 Minutes* 175). Not only do the dynamics within each of these separate pairings follow this formula, but the two partnerships also play off each other: when one is slow, the other is quick; when the slow character or pairing is fast, the other becomes deliberate and sly (*7 Minutes* 175). *The Sword in the Stone* also reflects elements of the cartoon chase in the Wizards' Duel between Mim and Merlin. Though the rapid back and forth of the scene draws from the source material, Arthurian scholar Alice Grellner notes the significance of the Wizards' Duel from a cartoon animation perspective, "allow[ing] the animators full scope to indulge in their favorite techniques of rapid movement, impossible situations, astonishing reverses, and the animated-cartoon equivalent of the car chase" (Grellner 119).

*The Emperor's New Groove* contains other iconic elements of the chase cartoon as well, including the "malicious cute" character. In cartoons, according to Klein, "If you're cute, you had better use that cuteness for a ruthless purpose. The cute little guy often hides a streak of sadism in chase cartoons" (Klein 176). In the spirit of sadistically cute characters such as Warner Bros.' Tweety Bird, *The Emperor's New Groove* features a minor recurring character known as Bucky the squirrel, a cute woodland creature who appears at random throughout the film to cause mischief. Of greater significance, Yzma herself references the tradition of the malicious cute character through her transformation into a small, fluffy kitten during the film's climax, despite the continued presence of her villainous tendencies. Dindal and Fullmer state that their goal in having Yzma transform into a "kitty-cat" was to tweak audience expectations of having a villain transform into a towering, terrifying monster. They explain that the character "had to be really

soft, really fluffy; except for her bad attitude you would want to have her in your lap purring away. The pliable animation/really cuddly type thing goes a long way to create irony of how she looks and how she acts” (Dindal and Fullmer 2005). In this way, Yzma follows Klein’s description of a cute character with a “ruthless purpose”—though, ultimately, Yzma is neutralized by her transformation and no longer poses a threat by the film’s end.

The cartoon stylings of *The Emperor’s New Groove* are apparent not just in its structure and content, but in the characters’ movements as well. Several classic cartoon movement characteristics as described by Bishko can be found in both Yzma and other characters, such as mid-twentieth century Warner Bros. cartoonist Tex Avery’s “extremes of [Quick], Strong, Direct and Bound Effort” and use of Shape changes such as Ascending and Retreating (Bishko, “Uses and Abuses” 31), as well as the “frequent use of held Bound Flow with grotesquely distorted shapes” identified by Bishko in 1990s Nickelodeon cartoon characters Ren and Stimpy (Bishko, “Uses and Abuses” 32). Bishko also speaks of cartoons’ trend toward a general “economization of movement,” distilling the detail and nuance of the twelve Principles of Animation down to three primary ones: Anticipation, Squash and Stretch, and Follow Through and Overlapping Action (“Uses and Abuses” 32). Dindal and Fullmer acknowledge this simplification as well, explaining in their commentary that the rapid speed of many scenes in *The Emperor’s New Groove* necessitates the simplification of characters’ actions for the sake of clarity. Thus, *The Emperor’s New Groove* is an interesting example of a film that attempts to integrate the long-held principles of Disney’s animated features—character animation, complex plot and character motivations, and realistic elements of style—with the contrasting values of the cartoon short: gags and spot laughs, graphic anarchy, and the surreal. After spending decades “taming” the

cartoon (Leslie 147), it appears that in *The Emperor's New Groove* Disney lets the proverbial dog off its leash—though, not back into the wild entirely.

Yzma's comical role stems from the cartoon influence of her film, while Mim's comes out of her childish characterization. However, both are supported by their movement, which lacks the sense of composure characteristic of the previous category's villainesses. Directly contrasting *Snow White's* Evil Queen and *Sleeping Beauty's* Maleficent, Mim and Yzma are seldom still, and extreme shifts in Effort are frequent, rather than the rare events of the previous category's characters. Their control over their emotional responses is much lower than that of the Evil Queen or Maleficent, so outbursts are more extreme as well as more commonplace. Laban observes that "young animals and humans have a much more varied scale of effort capacities at their disposal than their elders" (*Mastery of Movement* 12), supporting Mim's childlike characterization, and perhaps drawing a link between Yzma's human form, in which she too demonstrates a "varied scale of effort capacities," and her "young animal" form at the end of the film.

Mim is very active and dynamic in general, much more so than the Evil Queen and Maleficent; as mentioned in the previous chapter, this hyperactivity functions with little Spatial Intent as compared to her predecessors. Her manic, exaggerated physicality and childish attitude and behaviour cause her to come across as silly and cartoonish in comparison not only to other villains, but even to other characters within her film. Mim's use of Effort and Shape are not fully integrated, resulting in a spilling out of Effort that is not adequately supported or organized by Shaping. As such, her use of Effort is less communicative and more self-centred, further demonstrating her childlike mindset. Her body organization tendency toward Navel Radiation also supports this characterization, being one of the earliest developmental patterns to emerge in

infant movement (Hackney 68). Mim is easily excited, described by Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston as “impulsive and undisciplined” (*The Illusion of Life* 344). Her “contrast of wild actions and restraint, with unexpected outbursts accenting her overall timing” (F. Thomas and Johnston, *The Illusion of Life* 180) manifests in her Phrasing, with moments of high energy Exertion bookended by brief calm. Both Mim and Yzma often use pre-Efforts<sup>106</sup> in addition to or instead of fully crystallized Efforts, representative of their childlike behaviour. Child development movement profiler Janet Kestenberg Amighi explains that, with pre-Efforts, “we often see as much of an individual’s feeling states as their intentions” (Kestenberg Amighi et al. 93), seen in the common use of the pre-Effort Vehemence (a precursor to Strong Weight Effort) when either Mim or Yzma throws a tantrum. I believe that the juxtaposition of Mim and Yzma’s crone statuses with their childlike characterizations through these aspects of behaviour and movement supports their comical villainess statuses.

Mim and Yzma both vacillate between various extremes of Effort elements, but they do favour certain elements more than others, such as a preference for Quick Time Effort. Considering Yzma in particular as an animated cartoon form, where graphic narrative takes precedence over dramatic narrative, Quick Effort tends to be used in a more comedic fashion than Sustained (supporting Bishko’s observations of Tex Avery’s characters). On the other hand, looking at her as an autonomous human being in terms of character animation and the film’s dramatic narrative, the shift to Quick occurs when she has lost her composure, whether angrily yelling at Kronk or being caught playing emperor by Kuzco. These observations support Mim’s

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<sup>106</sup> Pre-Efforts represent the second stage in child development of Effort, following Tension Flow Attributes. They are less refined and crystallized than Efforts and tend to be unsupported by Shape. Pre-Efforts involve an “inner focus on muscle tension” as well as an “outer orientation on the task at hand” (Kestenberg Amighi et al. 92).

use of Time Effort as well, though the role of cartoon-style graphic narrative is less present in her film.

Yzma demonstrates clearer Shaping patterns than Mim, corresponding with the generous application of the Animation Principle of Squash and Stretch<sup>107</sup> to create more cartoonish movement. This exaggerated Shaping manifests particularly in Phrasing moments of Preparation and coincides with the Animation Principle of Anticipation; it also contributes to Yzma's highly exaggerated, cartoonish emotional reactions to obstacles. Her preference for Quick Time Effort often serves to make these Shape changes appear even more extreme, as does her general tendency to shift between Effort elements suddenly and dramatically. Although she puts little importance on her use of Space Mode, her Shape changes often take her to the edges of her Kinesphere and sometimes beyond, another physics-defying characteristic of cartoon animation (Bishko, "Uses and Abuses" 31-32). Yzma's lack of consistent Body Attitude also contributes to her cartoon presentation, separating her further from other Disney characters who are drawn with more focus on character animation and realistic style. All of these "cartoon" qualities support Yzma's role as comical, in contrast to villains such as the Evil Queen or Maleficent.

Interestingly, *The Sword in the Stone* and *The Emperor's New Groove* are the only films in this study that are not "princess" films, but rather feature male leads. Further, they make up a very small category of Disney animated films with a male protagonist and female antagonist, raising the question of whether a female villainess only appears truly threatening or is taken seriously when pitted against a female heroine. In the next section, I return to "princess" film villainesses, exploring characters who incorporate comedy with more serious, threatening elements.

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<sup>107</sup> Squash and Stretch addresses the elasticity of changing shapes with movement while maintaining consistent inner volume (F. Thomas and Johnston, *The Illusion of Life* 47-48).

## Combination

### **Ursula (*The Little Mermaid*) Mother Gothel (*Tangled*)**

Possessing characteristics of both comedic and more serious, threatening villains, Ursula and Mother Gothel represent a more complex villain categorization, and one that has grown increasingly common in Disney animation from the second half of the twentieth century onward: those who possess comedic, dramatic, or flamboyant traits, but also have serious, threatening moments and characteristics. *Snow White*'s Evil Queen and *Sleeping Beauty*'s Maleficent are primarily serious threats with little humour, while *The Sword in the Stone*'s Madam Mim and *The Emperor's New Groove*'s Yzma present somewhat two-dimensional, comical antagonists who, despite having stated an objectively threatening goal—to destroy their respective protagonists—play largely comedic roles. Ursula and Gothel, in contrast, may often play for laughs—Ursula with her flabby body, garish makeup, and melodramatic nature, and Gothel with her acerbic sense of humour and her own melodramatic sensibilities—but both clearly have sinister sides that demand to be taken seriously at various points in their respective films.

*The Little Mermaid* and *Tangled* return to the dramatic narrative and centralized role of the villain standard in most Disney films, incorporating a musical theatre influence instigated by Howard Ashman and Alan Menken, who were brought on for *The Little Mermaid* and several subsequent films after creating the camp musical *Little Shop of Horrors* in 1982 (Sells 183). Ashman and Menken encouraged a return to Disney's musical fairy-tale format of the past, but with a flashy twist. In addition to camp musical theatre, *The Little Mermaid* and other Disney Renaissance films to follow “recall and reenact the elaborate filmed fantasies of Busby Berkeley” (Bell 114), with massive production numbers such as “Under the Sea” complementing

the camp performance of Ursula's "Poor Unfortunate Souls" and the "I want" number (a staple in the Ashman-Menken musical formula) of Ariel's "Part of Your World" (Sells 178).

Norman Klein notes the influence of other popular music-based media as well, observing that *The Little Mermaid*'s musical numbers are edited like music videos, reflecting the rising popularity of MTV and the music video format in the 1980s (Klein, *7 Minutes* 47). This style of augmenting musical theatre camp and production numbers with pop music stylings has since become signature to Disney animation, and can be found not only in the majority of Disney films from the Renaissance era of the nineties, but also in more recent films, including 2010's *Tangled*. Ursula's melodramatic, camp image is echoed by Mother Gothel, who even has a similar musical number of her own that is simultaneously campy and over the top while also revealing the sinister, threatening nature of her character. These multiple pop culture elements serve to complicate the clear-cut, fairy-tale archetype roles of serious villainesses such as the Evil Queen and Maleficent, but also present something more complex than the primarily comical, silly roles occupied by Madam Mim and Yzma.

Gothel and Ursula are similarly presented as Terrible Mother/crone hybrids (albeit in different ways) imbued with elements of camp, musical theatre, and *femme fatale*. For these two particular characters, part of their melodramatic natures also stems from the caricatured "type" each represents, with comedic elements to be found in the pre-established cultural understandings of what these character types represent. Ursula is heavily influenced by camp icons and drag imagery, most notably the drag queen Divine and camp figures such as Joan Collins and Tallulah Bankhead (Sells 182-83). Bringing together these camp influences with the danger of the *femme fatale*, Bell observes that the character of Ursula "not only captures the



melodramatic, languorous, and rapacious movement of the *diva*, but her octopus tentacles physically manifest the enveloping, consumptive sexuality of the deadly woman” (Bell 117).

Mother Gothel follows in this new exaggerated, melodramatic tradition without such overt drag and camp references, representing instead the judgmental, overbearing mother, seen in media from Woody Allen’s *Oedipus Wrecks* (1989) to the television series *Gilmore Girls* (Sherman-Palladino 2000-2007), and bringing the Terrible Mother archetype as represented by the Evil Queen and other early Disney villainesses into contemporary understandings. Following the Disney Renaissance of the late eighties and nineties, in which Disney regained popularity and established *The Little Mermaid*’s musical theatre format as their new winning formula, the company entered another period of vacillating success, where they explored non-fairy-tale stories, non-musical formats, and the burgeoning field of computer animation. They came out of this period and into something of a second Renaissance with 2010’s *Tangled*,<sup>108</sup> echoing *The Little Mermaid*’s role in setting the tone for the following years with a return to the updated musical fairy-tale film—now incorporating computer animation and more varied stories, for female characters especially (though *Tangled* itself does not stray far from the heteronormative, romance-based plots of most Disney fairy-tale films). Because of *Tangled*’s position spearheading the beginning of not only a new era of Disney success, but an era built around reminding viewers of what they loved so much about previous successful films, it is easy to see the traces of *The Little Mermaid*’s characters in *Tangled*, especially the princess protagonist, Rapunzel, who longs to explore a world she has only ever been allowed to observe from a

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<sup>108</sup> 2009’s *The Princess and the Frog* arguably marks the beginning of this Disney era as a return to the “classic” fairy-tale film, but *Tangled*’s greater success and CGI animation style make it more readily identified with the position.

distance, much like Ariel, and the villainess, Mother Gothel, who lies to and manipulates Rapunzel out of her own selfish desires, not unlike Ursula.

Where the Evil Queen and Maleficent fit into the middle-aged Terrible Mother archetype and Madam Mim and Yzma represent the crone, Ursula and Gothel represent mother/crone hybrids, echoing their hybrid roles merging seriousness and humour. Ursula blends aspects of mother and crone through her age (presented as a contemporary to King Triton, Ariel's father) and previously discussed *femme fatale* imagery, combined with her role in Ariel's journey as the witchy Wisewoman on the outskirts of society, whom Ariel seeks for magical help. Gothel represents the two archetypes more in body than role, in the form of crone masquerading as mother through the magic of her transformations, appearing physically in each form at different points in the film. These two characters also employ *femme fatale* imagery toward comedy, but notably, it is not a "straight" *femme fatale* character so much as the idea of characters who should not be sexually desirable acting like *femmes fatales*—as discussed in the previous section regarding Yzma, only mocking or parodied employment of the *femme fatale* image can be put toward comedy. In Ursula's case it is her obesity (and possibly her age, though she appears to be more aligned in age with the mother than the crone) that makes her blatant sensuality veer toward the ridiculous. Gothel seems a little more deserving of the *femme fatale* label in terms of her appearance, but this appearance is the result of magic keeping her young—or rather, middle-aged—and her true age bespeaks that this role is not meant for her.

The melodramatic natures of Ursula and Gothel are reflected in their movement tendencies, which differ from both previous categories' villainesses. Unlike the Evil Queen and Maleficent, both Ursula and Gothel tend toward frequent movement shifts; however, where Mim and Yzma's extreme shifts tend to be grounded in Effort, Ursula and Gothel's are foregrounded

by Shape, both when they put on an act to deceive someone (usually Ariel and Rapunzel, their respective princesses) and as a means to demonstrate their nefarious motives, either to the audience or to other characters. Scattering qualities (Advancing, Ascending, Spreading) paired with Far Reach gestures serve as their means to claim ownership over space, showing their power and potential threat, while frequent changes in Shape, especially when coupled with Quick or Strong Effort, establish them as unpredictable. These Shaping elements also appear in Ursula and Gothel's frequent melodramatic reactions to events, creating humorous moments in equal measure with scarier ones. Related to their preference for Shape Mode, which involves the relationship between self and environment, both Ursula and Gothel have a tendency to interact with their environment—whether objects or other characters—in an intrusive way. Both villainesses constantly touch, use, or disturb the things around them, whether they are in their way or not, and they frequently assail the personal space of their respective princesses, touching them and otherwise invading their Kinespheres, usually as a means to either intimidate or manipulate.

The complexity of these villainesses is mirrored in that of their respective princesses, who likewise no longer follow the straightforward formulas of Snow White and Aurora. Do Rozario suggests that starting in the 1980s with *The Little Mermaid*, “the princess herself absorbed some of the exuberance of the *femme fatale*” (Do Rozario 44), leaving the villainess as a “grotesque parody,” more “camp diva” than *femme fatale* herself (45). Along with this shift, Do Rozario suggests that *The Little Mermaid*'s revival of the Disney princess shifted her image away from “prim” and toward “democratic” (45), “no longer embodying a regal ideal” (Do Rozario 46), and Bell observes that beginning with Ariel, the heroines' movement went from ballerina to burlesque “cheesecake” (Bell 114). “Where once it was the role of the *femme fatale* to disrupt

patriarchal continuity, under Team Disney, the princess herself has taken an active role in the disruption” (Do Rozario 57). Do Rozario's "democratic" characterization appears to extend in these films beyond the princesses and into how aspects of particular character roles are allocated amongst the characters, with princesses and villainesses sharing the *femme fatale*'s "exuberance" and sensuality, and villainesses (and other characters) taking on increasingly complex combinations of humour and seriousness.

## Conclusion

The three categories of villain types I observed among the characters of this study reflect various cultural influences on the mother and crone archetypes—many, echoing the previous chapter, revolving around the *femme fatale* and approaches to female age and evil. Within the case studies of this dissertation there is an overlap between serious villainesses and the earliest time period of Disney animation, linked to elements such as ballet influence, *femme fatale* influence, and early approaches to distinguishing feature animation from graphic narrative gag cartoons. Further, villains, along with other characters, are portrayed with increasing levels of complexity over time, with a major shift occurring in the Disney Renaissance of the 1980s and 1990s and continuing during the most recent period of Disney animation in the 2010s. However, there is not a perfect, clear-cut trajectory of villains progressing from serious to comical purely based on time period—earlier Disney films such as *Alice in Wonderland* (Geronimi et al. 1951) and *Peter Pan* (Geronimi et al. 1953) feature villains with aspects of silliness and comedy, and later films such as *Mulan* (1998) and *Moana* (2016) feature antagonists<sup>109</sup> who are more serious.

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<sup>109</sup> I hesitate to use the term “villain” or “villainess” for *Moana* in particular, as the primary antagonist of the film, Te Kā, proves to be a complex character who ultimately disrupts the black-and-white, archetypal patterns of previous Disney villains. I discuss Te Kā and other such recent Disney pseudo-antagonists in the Conclusion.

In his 1954 article on humour, Walt Disney suggests the growing importance of laughter in human relations, not only in individual or small-scale communications, but also on a global level, stating that "with the growth and spread of mass entertainment, like the movies, and the increased facilities of communication, humor has become an article of international merchandise" (Disney 328). Perhaps the gradual shift toward more comedic elements in villains is a result of Walt's belief in this growing importance of humour—by injecting levity into even a film's most threatening characters, Disney allows comedy to permeate more aspects of the film, thus increasing its potency. Walt further observes that "humor and its opposite are like the complementary elements of good and evil. Like the balance of hero and the villain in the dramatic arts" (Disney 328). While films such as *Snow White* and *Sleeping Beauty* achieve this balance through clear-cut, archetypally good heroines and evil villainesses, Bell and Do Rozario observe a blurring of these boundaries in later films, such that the "balance" that Walt describes manifests in the individual characters themselves. Princesses display more features of the *femme fatale*, while villains bring humorous elements into their more threatening natures, diffusing comedic potential from Walt's described "fable animals" to other roles.

I believe that Bell's female life cycle maps onto this taxonomy in an abstract form of "ontogeny recapitulating phylogeny" of Disney villainess evolution. Bell articulates a shift from powerful, active middle age to the more supportive role of old age, which is echoed in Valerie Frankel's language of the "waning" or "dwindling" shadow goddess (Frankel 301), identifying the cycle in myth and fairy tale as well. This trajectory also appears in the larger shift across these films of crone from threatening to benign, tying this taxonomy to that of the previous chapter. The middle-aged *femme fatale* villainesses, specifically *Snow White*'s Evil Queen and *Sleeping Beauty*'s Maleficent, exist to threaten and thwart, and are generally taken seriously.

After the earliest villainous crone, *Snow White's* Witch, there is a switch to a primarily comedic function in older villainesses, seen in Madam Mim and Yzma, who occupy the oldest stage in Bell's female life cycle, despite being villains. Rather than taking on Bell's suggested good, supportive role (a position Yzma only nominally occupies, as advisor to the emperor), their "benign" characterization is reflected in their largely silly, comical roles compared to younger, more *femme fatale*-esque villainesses. Following Bell, these women are postmenopausal and asexual, thus nonthreatening—both are easily thwarted at every turn, embodying Frankel's "dwindling" shadow goddess.<sup>110</sup>

These three villain types demonstrate numerous shared movement patterns between characters in the same category, which I believe reflect and support the characters' functions as primarily serious, comical, or a combination of the two. I find the primarily serious characters to demonstrate minimal Shaping, with Effort tending toward various combinations of Light, Sustained, Direct, and Bound. Their tendencies toward stillness allow for dramatic outbursts (usually through extreme Effort shifts) to stand out from their normal behaviour and destabilize the audience. Conversely, primarily comical villainesses engage in more Shaping and more regular extreme Effort shifts, showing a lack of control and often a childlike demeanour. Characters who encompass both serious and comical qualities also demonstrate Shaping tendencies, but with a more nuanced, controlled use of Effort. Additionally, these characters seem to weaponize their use of Shape, intimidating and destabilizing through invading the Kinespheres of other characters.

While these taxonomies serve to demonstrate the multiplicities of meaning found in animated movement, there is also a progression that allows each taxonomy to build on the last. I

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<sup>110</sup> The "combination" villainesses fit more closely with the serious ones in this structure, given the serious threats they ultimately pose and their generally middle-aged appearances.

have shown how this taxonomy develops out of the previous one, demonstrating a time period-based shift away from purely serious villains. This taxonomy also lays groundwork for the following one, as these serious, comical, and combination roles are further reflected in the characters' transformed bodies, and in comparisons and relationships between pre- and post-transformation bodies. I have briefly explored the patterns of these first two taxonomies in some of the characters' post-transformation forms throughout this and the previous chapter. In Chapter Five, I examine these bodies and their movement in greater detail, observing patterns based on type of transformation. Further, the age/archetype patterns observed in the previous two taxonomies continue to come into play in the following one, particularly in human-human transformations.

## Chapter Five:

### Taxonomy C: Transformation Type

#### Introduction

I have delineated three categories in this final taxonomy: transformations from a human form into an animal form (or multiple animal forms), transformations from a human-animal hybrid form into a human form, and transformations from a human form into a different human form. Grounding my initial inquiry in the difference between transformations from humans into animals and from humans into different human forms, the categories in this taxonomy explore how movement functions as an element of character animation to maintain or disrupt established traits when a character takes on a different form. As stated in the Introduction, I deal in this chapter with physical transformations of the characters' bodies, and I analyze how they move before versus after they change forms, rather than focusing on the actual moment of transformation. These transformations all take place due to magic, and therefore, are not "natural" processes that could be viewed as physical transformations, such as aging, despite the fact that many of them relate directly to age.<sup>111</sup>

The observations in the previous two chapters developed throughout the analysis process, with no expectations when I began regarding what I would discover about female age and villainy. However, I entered this research project with a clear hypothesis as to what I would find regarding transformation and movement. I presumed that a character's movement signature would stay the same in their new form. My expectations were only partially supported, and the patterns I uncovered proved much more interesting: while this hypothesis held true with characters who transformed from human to animal (Maleficent, Madam Mim, and Yzma), those

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<sup>111</sup> Mother Gothel's periodic "de-transformations" throughout her film complicate this delimitation, which I will address in the relevant section of this chapter.



who transformed but stayed human (the Evil Queen, Mother Gothel, and Madam Mim<sup>112</sup> again) in fact demonstrated significant shifts in movement signature between the two forms. I eventually found these early distinctions based on type of transformation to be further complicated: while I initially categorized Ursula from *The Little Mermaid* as a human/humanoid-to-human transformation by turning into the human girl Vanessa, I found through my movement analysis that Ursula could not be generalized in this way. She would instead have to form her own category, “hybrid-to-human” transformation.

Metamorphosis has a long history within animation that far outdates Disney, and it is in fact recognized as a key feature distinguishing animation from live action (Griffin 57). However, scholars have observed that Disney has created its own “unique mark on the tradition of metamorphosis in animation” (Griffin 57) in the form of character animation, specifically in the humanizing or anthropomorphizing of inanimate objects. Sean Griffin states that “the Disney studio’s philosophy of the ‘illusion of life’ emerged out of the tradition of metamorphosis as a consequence of this anthropomorphizing” (Griffin 58), a connection which I explore through the human-to-animal transformations in this chapter. Robin Allan identifies another source of transformation conventions, in the popularity of transformations in 1930s live-action films such as *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Mamouljian 1931), which were borrowed from the stage convention of disguise (Allan 38, 53). This foundation in disguise is apparent in many of the human-to-human transformations in this study, beginning with the first Disney animated feature film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in 1937, and its villainess, the Evil Queen. As discussed in Chapter Two, transformation is further linked with the image of the *femme fatale*, bringing together

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<sup>112</sup> Among Madam Mim’s multiple transformations is one human one, hence her presence in both categories.

elements of both metamorphosis (Dijkstra, *Evil Sisters* 273-74) and disguise (Doane 1), as I will explore throughout this chapter.

While the previous two taxonomies feature commonalities in movement among the characters in each category, this taxonomy focuses on larger patterns of change versus consistency. Characters within each group may exhibit completely different movement preferences; what they share is the relationship of movement between their own physical forms. Those villains who transform from human to animal all maintain their original movement preferences, while those who transform from human to human demonstrate significant changes in movement. Ursula, in her own category, is a more complex case which simultaneously fits into both and neither of the other two. Throughout this chapter, I consider these movement patterns in terms of character animation, the relationship between pre- and post-transformation bodies, and cultural influences on post-transformation forms in particular, ranging from the female archetypes introduced in earlier chapters to animal symbolism.

## **Human-Animal**

**Maleficent (middle-aged humanoid fairy to dragon)**  
**Madam Mim (older human to multiple animal forms)**  
**Yzma (older human to kitten)**

This grouping of characters demonstrates precisely what I expected to find before conducting my analysis: that each character's movement signature stays largely the same after transforming, despite a complete change in physical form. Prior to beginning my research, I was unaware that this pattern is actually an aspect of character animation, a common technique used by animators, and one originated at the Disney studios (F. Thomas and Johnston, *The Illusion of Life* 9). Animators use a variety of tools to build an animated character with depth, personality,

and consistency, including consistent look/appearance, building an inner landscape with thoughts, personality, and motivations for the character, and creating consistent styles of movement and speech (*The Illusion of Life* 9).

The three villainesses in this category are Maleficent (*Sleeping Beauty*), Madam Mim (*The Sword in the Stone*), and Yzma (*The Emperor's New Groove*). The first two characters, Maleficent and Madam Mim, have very little in common in terms of not only movement, but villain type and appearance as well, despite both transforming into animals (and even dragons specifically, as Mim's final transformation). In fact, although they are chronologically the two closest characters in this study, with only four years and one other animated feature (*One Hundred and One Dalmatians* in 1961) separating their films, they are perhaps the two most opposite in terms of movement preferences, as explored in previous chapters. What they do have in common, as does Yzma, is a consistency in movement signature between their pre- and post-transformation bodies.

### ***Maleficent***

The towering, fire-breathing dragon into which Maleficent transforms during *Sleeping Beauty*'s climax is perhaps the most iconic addition Disney has made to her character. During production in the late 1950s, the dragon fight sequence served as an experimental application of new Xerox technology to the animation process,<sup>113</sup> and in fact *Sleeping Beauty* was the last

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<sup>113</sup> Xerox's introduction tends to be discussed in relation to films such as *One Hundred and One Dalmatians* (Reitherman et al. 1961), when the process began to be used for larger portions of the films (B. Thomas 106). However, the dragon Maleficent, animated by Ken Anderson under the direction of Woolie Reitherman, was the first Disney character to feature Xerox technology. Animator Burny Mattinson recalls the application of Xerox primarily "as an experiment for enlarging and reducing [the dragon] in the frame" (Mattinson qtd. in "Happy Chinese New Year (of the Dragon)!"). The Xerox copy process was adapted by animator Ub Iwerks in the late fifties to make more efficient use of inkers' time as well as to create more accurate duplications of animators' work (F. Thomas and Johnston, *The Illusion of Life* 281).

Disney film to be produced using hand-inked cels, with xerography quickly taking over (Jackson, *Bio-Bibliography* 82). Foreshadowing her transformation, Maleficent is strongly associated with animal imagery in her human form (or humanoid, as she is technically a fairy), from her vampire bat-inspired design (Bell 117) to her Renaissance art-inspired horned headpiece and her scalloped sleeves resembling flames (Solomon, *Once Upon a Dream* 64), both of which allude to her dragon form. Maleficent's human form is likewise reflected visually in the dragon she becomes, and animation historian Charles Solomon notes the dragon's "ponderous, reptilian grace" and "long neck and narrow head with serpentine fluidity" that echo Maleficent's pre-transformation bearing (Solomon, *The History of Animation* 200). Animators have stated that Maleficent does not turn into just any generic dragon, but a "humanized reptile" that retains her personality (Johnston and F. Thomas, *The Disney Villain* 121, 126-7), though she is not very anthropomorphic, especially compared to the other two villainesses in this category.

Maleficent's movement further highlights the connection between her two forms, serving to bridge her transformation from human to dragon. Her character is quickly established in her first appearances, which convey a polarity of both temperament and movement tendencies. The audience first sees her as she presents herself to her enemies, demonstrating qualities I have explored in Chapters Three and Four: composed, regal, powerful, and wrathful, with a Pin Body Attitude and Bound torso. She is often stationary, limiting herself to one small area, and both her stillness and verticality contribute to and are emphasized by her somewhat restrictive use of the space around her. Once she transforms into a dragon she loses some of this stillness, but she continues to use an area of space around her that is small relative to her increased size. Maleficent tends to operate in linear pathways, such as pacing back and forth, and generally uses only one plane at a time in her gestural movements, which are primarily vertical, less often

horizontal or sagittal. This preference for moving in the Planes is echoed in her dragon movement, where she tends to move sagittally, but with an emphasis on the vertical aspect of the Sagittal Plane, particularly upward.

Maleficent's second scene in human form provides a fuller picture of her character, as she loses her composure in front of her minions and engages in more bombastic movements, primarily indicated by sudden Effort shifts to Quick, Strong, and Free. Her dragon form brings together movement elements of both these moods, as her Effort elements as a dragon align with these moments of anger and strong emotion, especially Strong and Quick. Even her verticality remains in quadruped form, keeping her torso relatively upright and at times even standing or moving using only her back legs. This upright stance allows Maleficent's gargantuan dragon form to further tower over Prince Phillip. Even when the back half of her body is horizontal to the ground, the exaggerated verticality in her front half and neck creates the illusion of an upright stance and a Pin Body Attitude, further emphasized, as in her human form, by Lengthening and Ascending in Shape Mode.

Dijkstra connects female transformations into spiders, snakes, and other stereotypically fearsome, predatory creatures with the imagery of women (and specifically *femmes fatales*) as "prowling sexual animals" (Dijkstra, *Evil Sisters* 273-74). Though Maleficent is representative of the *femme fatale*, her dragon transformation seems to be more about power or threat than overt sexuality, linking her animal transformation more to her serious, threatening "villain type" discussed in the previous chapter. Bell identifies this link between evil women and "animal phobias" (Bell 117), connecting Disney's villainesses to powerful, threatening creatures: "While the signatures of a witch are clearly written on Disney evil women . . . the construction of their bodies on predatory animals heightens the dangerous consumptive powers of the *femme fatale*"

(Bell 117). Bell also identifies the "dangerous and carnivorous threats to order" and "layers of rapacious animal imagery [that] align women's powers with predatory nature" (Bell 117-8), further drawing a connection between Disney villainesses and animal imagery.

Maleficent's two forms are clearly meant to resemble each other, strengthening the connection between her human form and her "predatory" animal one in terms of movement as well as design elements. This attention to the importance of maintaining a character's personality, despite extreme changes in form, is a key factor in Disney animation (F. Thomas and Johnston, *The Illusion of Life* 183), and one that can be seen in even more depth in Madam Mim, who transforms into a dragon as well, among several other animal forms. Unlike Maleficent, Mim's animal transformations revolve more around comedy than power or sexuality, primarily through the use of anthropomorphism to preserve the comedic elements of her character.

### ***Madam Mim***

Mim and Maleficent are polar opposites in many ways, including their very different performances of anthropomorphism in their post-transformation animal bodies. Once Maleficent turns into a dragon, she exhibits primarily animal behaviours: she rests and moves on all four legs, loses the power of human speech, and is drawn with more animal features than human. Mim, among her many transformations, also turns into a dragon—a very anthropomorphic one, consistent with her other animal transformations. In addition to bipedal movement and vertical orientation, Mim's dragon retains the power of speech, opposable thumbs, and even hair and eyes that resemble her human features. When Merlin defeats Mim by turning into a germ and infecting her she throws a very human fit, waving her limbs in the air (including her tail), pulling her hair with her hands, and bouncing up and down in a tantrum. However, despite Maleficent's

more animalistic behaviour, both dragons still manage to resemble their human forms, through colouring, movement signature, and other key visual elements of character animation such as horns, hair, and body shape.

Though visual indicators are a primary tactic for creating continuity between forms, such as keeping Mim's pink and purple signature colors and her mop of grey hair,<sup>114</sup> her Wizards' Duel with Merlin demonstrates the importance of movement signature in character animation to create a consistent and recognizable character. Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston highlight the delicate balance between creating realistic animals and preserving human personalities (*The Illusion of Life* 331-32), a concern slightly lessened in Mim's Wizards' Duel with Merlin, where the focus is less on a faithful representation of the animal kingdom and more on "maintaining personalities through a surprising change in forms and exciting action" (F. Thomas and Johnston, *The Illusion of Life* 183). The necessity to maintain a character's personality as they undergo physical change is present throughout many Disney feature films, and Mim is perhaps the clearest example of this rule, given her high volume and range of transformations.

Mim appears to be the animated embodiment of the phrase "the more things change, the more they stay the same." Her constant state is one of dynamic changes in both form and movement: during the Wizards' Duel Mim transforms into eight different animals over the course of five minutes of screen time; including her interactions with Wart prior to the duel, she shifts form seventeen times in ten minutes. As explored in previous chapters, Mim uses space and movement in extreme ways throughout all these transformations, creating a movement signature that gives her a manic, childish quality and serves as a tool in her character animation. Her frequent shifts between Near, Mid, and Far Reach Space and tendency to bounce all around her

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<sup>114</sup> And Merlin's myriad forms maintaining his blue palette, white hair, facial hair, and glasses.

cottage as she sings her song result in a dynamic use of both General and Kinespheric Space, which are continued throughout her multiple animal transformations during the Wizards' Duel with Merlin. This extreme use of Space (albeit with almost no intention in Space Mode) is complemented by her equally extreme Effort shifts, particularly between Light/Strong Weight and Quick/Sustained Time, the latter of which is often used in her Effort Phrasing, with moments of Sustained Time Effort serving as the Preparation and Recuperation phases bookending an action/Exertion performed with Quick Effort. All of these tendencies appear throughout Mim's various animal transformations, creating a consistent link no matter what form she takes.

Mim lacks the connection to the *femme fatale* that Maleficent and even Yzma have, and instead represents the link between metamorphosis, anthropomorphism, and character animation identified by Griffin, maintaining the very traits that distinguish her from the *femme fatale* and mark her as a crone—her messy mop of grey hair, unattractive features (googly eyes, big nose), rotund shape, and chaotic, childlike movement. While this consistency appears throughout her animal transformations, Mim's human transformation (discussed in the final section of this chapter) takes her into a different age bracket and is connected to significant changes in both movement signature and visual indicators of her character.

### ***Yzma***

Yzma brings together Maleficent's *femme fatale* influence and Mim's anthropomorphism, creating a unique example of animal transformation grounded in the comedy of juxtaposition. Yzma's human appearance incorporates *femme fatale* imagery and a crone body, giving her a look that, while comedic, is still clear-cut Disney villainess. However, rather than transforming into a "predatory" creature, to quote Bell (117), she surprises the audience (and herself) by



turning into a round, fluffy, light grey kitten, contrasting her human body shape and dark colour scheme. This deviation from the pattern established by Maleficent and Mim of visual continuity between human and animal forms furthers her comedic function, as discussed in Chapter Four. Despite the juxtaposition of both features and expectations, Yzma maintains her human movement signature, creating continuity between her two very different forms.

Though Yzma's post-transformation screen time is brief, her kitten form manages to demonstrate a number of similarities in movement to her human form, primarily in her rapid-fire Effort shifts and exaggerated use of Shaping. She shows exaggerated reactions through Quick Time Effort, combined with Strong Weight, Direct Space, or Bound Flow. Yzma's propensity toward Shaping also remains intact, with extreme and often rapid shifts between Retreating/Advancing and Ascending/Descending, demonstrating an exaggeration of the Animation Principle of Squash and Stretch that is in keeping with the cartoon influence of *The Emperor's New Groove*. Shaping associated with her speech patterns carries over as well, and continues to serve as a platform for continued shifts between Sustained and Quick Effort. As she speaks, Yzma becomes more anthropomorphic: she gestures with front paws/hands, at times using one paw to support her in quadrupedal fashion, at others demonstrating upright, bipedal posture, such as standing on her hind legs with her front legs crossed in front of her like arms.

In addition to the visual juxtaposition of Yzma's transformation, her kitten form comically contrasts her human form's age and crone status. Yzma's character in the original draft of *The Emperor's New Groove*'s script has a primary goal to become young and beautiful again (*The Sweatbox*), linking her to villainesses such as *Snow White*'s Evil Queen and *Tangled*'s Mother Gothel. Though this plotline was dropped, her transformation into a kitten allows her to technically accomplish this goal, and the choice of animal for this transformation creates links to

the sexual imagery of young, appealing, non-threatening "sex kittens" versus older, aggressive, over-eager "cougars."

### ***Final Thoughts***

None of the villainesses in this category explicitly present age, beauty, or desirability as primary motivations for their actions (with the exception of Yzma's early character development), yet there are subtle links to age and age-related imagery in all of their transformations. Age and beauty begin to take a more central role in the following section, and are particularly significant in the final category, human-to-human transformations.

I have observed in these three case studies that movement patterns demonstrated by a character in their original form are maintained after transforming into a different, non-human body and persist, to varying degrees, regardless of levels of anthropomorphism, visual similarity, or serious versus comedic function of the character and/or transformation. This consistency in movement signature is one aspect of Disney's character animation, serving to establish and identify a character through movement. As I will explore in the following sections, Disney also uses movement to establish character in the opposite way, by significantly changing a character's movement signature in order to support other changes.

## Hybrid-Human

### Ursula (half-human/half-octopus middle-aged Sea Witch to human young woman)

As mentioned earlier, I initially chose to include Ursula with the human-to-human transformation group. While her lower half is that of an octopus, her upper half is human,<sup>115</sup> and she transforms into a human rather than an animal: after turning Ariel into a human to pursue her love, Prince Eric, Ursula transforms herself into a beautiful human girl named Vanessa and uses Ariel's voice to trick Eric into marrying her instead, in a bid to ensure Ariel's failure. Early viewings of *The Little Mermaid* convinced me that the human-to-human designation would be most appropriate, but, as my analysis of Ursula grew more detailed, I found it impossible to treat her in the same way as the other human-human transformers. I found that her hybrid form differentiates her movement from the other case studies of both human-human and human-animal categories more than I expected, and her overall trends in pre- versus post-transformation movement differences likewise do not entirely follow those of either category. She possesses traits of both human and animal, and accordingly, her degree of change in movement tendencies also represents a blend of the two categories.

Initially, Ursula's movement preferences appear to shift significantly once she transforms, much like the Evil Queen in *Snow White*. Her first appearance as Vanessa features movement tendencies that differ completely from Ursula's, down to a shift in preferred Mode, from Shape and Body to primarily Effort. She also follows the human-human transformers' pattern of changing ages with her transformation, turning from a middle-aged woman to a young one. However, the audience eventually sees that Vanessa's new movement qualities function largely

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<sup>115</sup> This particular human-animal hybrid is popularly identified as a cecaelia (Hayward 37).

as part of her performance to fool Prince Eric. Her movement preferences shift again once she is alone so that they are much closer to Ursula's original ones, suggesting that she fits better with the cross-species transformers of the previous category, wherein she maintains her movement preferences despite a change from half-octopus to human. It is fitting that Ursula straddles these two transformation categories, presenting a hybrid approach to transformation-based movement patterns to echo her hybrid body.

Ursula operates primarily in Body and Shape Modes, and she makes dynamic use of the space she occupies without significant intention in Space Mode. Her human upper body and octopus lower body function as a cohesive whole, yet they often demonstrate different movement qualities, as explored in previous chapters. While her tentacles tend (with occasional exception) to shift and rearrange in relation to themselves, her upper half changes and moves primarily in relation to her external environment, not internal. These Shaping changes, particularly Ascending and Descending, involve either her entire body or her full upper body, sometimes integrating her two halves and sometimes not. Ursula demonstrates variety in Body Mode elements including points of Initiation, Sequencing, and Body Organization. In terms of Effort she tends toward Indirect Space and Free Flow, but does engage in frequent, extreme shifts between Effort elements, supported by Shape Changes. She is often Direct when she focuses on Ariel, accompanied by Quick Time Effort and Advancing Shaping as she crowds and intimidates Ariel by invading her Kinesphere, and occasional Bound Flow manifests in held tension in Ursula's hands and shoulders when angered or engaging in villainous scheming.

Vanessa's movements are significantly less dynamic, with minimal Shape and Effort changes, a smaller Kinesphere with gestures staying in Near Reach, and less movement in general. Effort Mode is most apparent in her presentation, with a preference for Light Weight and

Sustained Time, and Bound Flow in her torso. These distinctions between Vanessa and Ursula all but disappear as soon as Vanessa is alone, indicating that they are primarily put on as part of her disguise. In private, she moves more like Ursula in her original form, with extreme Shape and Effort changes and use of both Kinespheric and general space. Minor differences between Vanessa and Ursula do appear, such as Vanessa's Quick, Light, and Direct steps as she rushes toward the mirror versus the roiling of Ursula's tentacles, but the primary contrast here is between public Vanessa and private Vanessa.

Eric and Vanessa's wedding scene further demonstrates the differences between Ursula and the persona she adopts after transforming into the young, beautiful Vanessa. At a turning point in the scene, Vanessa loses her composure and fails to maintain her façade in the mayhem of an animal attack designed to thwart her plan. Her Pin Body Attitude is quickly lost in her extreme Shape changes, her Time and Weight Effort become Quicker and Stronger, and there is a shift in Bound Flow Effort from the torso to the hands. As she shifts her attention back and forth between dealing with these obstacles and walking down the aisle, the audience sees how differently Vanessa moves in comparison to Ursula when she is performing, and how similar their movement tendencies become when that performance cannot be maintained.

Transformation plays a significant role in Hans Christian Andersen's original "The Little Mermaid," and Maria Tatar observes the tale's "constant engagement with mutability and changes in identity" (Tatar 308), taken even further in Disney's version by extending these themes beyond the titular mermaid herself through the transformation and disguised identity of the sea witch. Tatar identifies the sea witch's "linkage with biological corruption" (Tatar 303), which in Ursula includes her own transformation and even her differently chimeric form. Ursula is distinguished from Ariel and the other "normal" merfolk through the presence of octopus

tentacles instead of fins composing her lower body, presenting what gender studies scholar Margrit Shildrick refers to as the “unnatural and . . . hybrid corporeality” of monstrous bodies (Shildrick 10). The octopus is linked in various traditions with sensuality and eroticism (Werness 298), transformation (Mather et al. 89), “sinister qualities” (Werness 298), and the Christian image of Satan (Trites 148). Sells posits that Ursula’s chimeric figure “provides the site upon which we can reconstruct the image of the mermaid” (Sells 184), with her octopus half suggesting an inverted Medusa and serving to situate Ursula outside of the colonized patriarchy of Triton’s merfolk kingdom (Sells 184), connecting her to the gynocentric imagery surrounding her discussed in Chapter Three.

While the human-animal hybrid is common in *The Little Mermaid* and not limited to villainous characters, it generally manifests in the standard half-human, half-fish mermaid or merman. Human-animal hybrids have a long history in mythology and fantasy, though Ursula’s cecaelian form is perhaps not as ubiquitous as Ariel’s mermaid, or other well-known mythological beasts such as the Minotaur, sphinx, or centaur. Film and media scholar Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock identifies historical conceptions of these and other hybrid creatures as monstrous, unnatural, and “threatening abominations” (Weinstock 2). The centaur, for example, appears in Greek mythology as wise but chaotic—untamed and uncivilized, representing man’s “uncontrollable passions” (Weinstock 75-77). This threatening and uncontrollable nature is apparent in Ursula and other villainesses, particularly Maleficent’s dragon form, which even resembles the centaur’s distinct carriage, with an upright, vertical torso contrasting other animal features. A number of hybrid monsters combine an animal with a woman specifically, including the half-woman, half-carrion-bird harpy, which is characterized as “insatiably hungry, constantly screeching, filthy in its appearance and habits, and pollut[ing] everything it touches” (Weinstock

308). Conversely, the siren, a fellow woman-bird hybrid whose mythos evolved over time into a sea creature closely linked with the mermaid (Weinstock 411), is, though equally dangerous, typically linked with temptation and sexuality (411)—the *femme fatale* of hybrid monsters.

Ursula's particular amalgam of creatures is unique in *The Little Mermaid*, not only in terms of the octopus symbolism explored above, but also in her movement, which draws from the biomechanics of both her human and octopus forms, ranging from human-inspired Contralateral "walking" patterns to octopus-like jet propulsion. The film's merpeople generally have a Spinal pattern of body organization,<sup>116</sup> reflective of their lower fish half, and their tails function only in support of their full-body movement (forward propulsion, balance, etc.). Ursula's tentacles often move independently of her mind or upper body's intention, attention, or needs, as if they have a mind of their own—in fact, a large percentage of the octopus's neurons reside in its arms, allowing them to act independently, with primarily local rather than central control (Mather et al. 86). This distinction creates an upper-lower separation in movement impulses, further visually separating Ursula from other members of her society through movement as well as appearance.

By behaving and moving more like Ursula in private, Vanessa is significant in suggesting the idea of human transformation as a disguise, following in the dramatic tradition described by Allan as well as the metamorphic tradition explored by Griffin. The Evil Queen's transformation into the Witch in *Snow White* also functions as a disguise, but there is never any indication that her new movement patterns are intentionally and knowingly put on as Vanessa's are, and that they can be abandoned at any time in favor of her original, "natural" ones. Further, the dual employment of both maintaining movement signature and changing it in her post-transformation

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<sup>116</sup> Emphasizing the connection between head and tail along the length of the spine, most clearly demonstrated in fish and aquatic mammals.

body is representative of Ursula's position as both human and animal, yet simultaneously neither. Returning Vanessa to Ursula's style of movement when in private is a clear choice in character animation, establishing Ursula's character within Vanessa, whereas the Evil Queen's character is not established in the Witch in the same way, but is instead overwritten or erased. As I will explore in the following section, the Queen's personality and movement are both different from the instant she transforms, even in private, whereas with Vanessa, when she is scheming alone with no audience, she is still "herself" (that is, Ursula) in her movement signature. I am inclined to link this difference to time period—like the gradual shift toward more nuanced use of Shape Mode, it may have to do with showing more inner depth and subjectivity in the villain in later films—with the Evil Queen as Witch, the audience only sees her in terms of how she presents to and affects the protagonist, Snow White, even when she is alone. However, in Ursula, the viewer is given a peek into her interiority through these dual approaches to her post-transformation movement.

## **Human-Human**

**Evil Queen (middle-aged queen to older peddler/witch)**  
**Mother Gothel (older to middle-aged woman)**  
**Madam Mim (older witch to young woman)**

While human-to-human transformations seemed the least interesting to me initially, this category has ultimately become one of the most fascinating and most revealing of larger patterns of gendered representation in Disney animation. As stated at the beginning of the chapter, I expected my hypothesis regarding consistency in movement quality between pre- and post-transformation bodies to hold true for this group, as it did for the human-to-animal transformation group. However, in conducting my analysis, I found the opposite to be true: this



category's characters tend to experience a significant shift in movement preference between their pre- and post-transformation bodies.

Though initially unexpected, this pattern of major shifts in movement signature for human transformations is a logical animation tool for demonstrating how comprehensive these transformations are, since they lack the impressiveness of a full species change—compared to turning into a giant dragon, simply transforming into an older woman seems relatively mundane. In the case of human-to-animal transformation, the consistency in movement between forms serves to highlight the fact that, despite such a full physical change, it is still the same character. In human-to-human transformations, the goal appears to be the opposite: because characters stay within the same species, factors such as movement are used to further highlight the difference between pre- and post-transformation bodies, particularly in cases where the new form is meant to serve as a disguise of some kind, such as the Evil Queen's transformation into the Witch in *Snow White*.

### ***Evil Queen***

I have discussed the contrast between the Evil Queen in her original form and the Witch she becomes at various points throughout the previous two chapters. This distinction between two characters existing within one villain is reflected even in the process of animating her, with the Queen animated by Art Babbitt (Culhane 173) and the Witch by Norm Ferguson (F. Thomas and Johnston, *The Illusion of Life* 105). Walt Disney initially intended to further separate the two personas by casting a second actress to voice the Witch, until voice actress Lucille LaVerne, cast as the Queen, proved her ability to create two separate characters—the “cool, regal” Queen and the “cackling” Witch, made to sound older by LaVerne removing her dentures (Hischak 123).

Many of the key aspects of the Evil Queen's movement have been discussed in previous chapters, including a preference for Space Mode, and the use of Far Reach, High Diagonal gestures with Peripheral Pathways. When Shape Mode arises, she tends toward Scattering qualities, particularly in the Vertical and Sagittal Planes, and her Body Attitude is usually Pin or Wall, characterized by Shape Flow Lengthening upward. In terms of Effort, she shows a preference for Sustained Time and Light Weight Effort, often combined with Direct Space. Exceptions to these patterns are most common during angry outbursts, as explored in Chapter Four.

The Witch tends toward the opposite Efforts—Quick, Strong, and Indirect—though she shows more Effort variation than the Queen in general. She prefers Shape Mode rather than Space Mode, with full-body involvement in Shaping and little intention in Space. She gestures primarily with Spoke-like Directional Movement, as opposed to the Queen's Arc-like arm movements, and tends to do so in Near and Mid Reach. At times her use of Near Reach serves to create a stronger contrast to her Far Reach gestures, while at others it combines with her Ball Body Attitude and Shrinking<sup>117</sup> Shape Flow to create a sense of being drawn inward and downward, further separating her from her old self. In contrast, the Queen's Far Reach gestures and Growing<sup>118</sup> Shape Flow give the impression of taking up space, rather than appearing to be weighed down by it like the Witch (despite her more active, almost manic energy). Despite the Queen's Spatial Intent and larger Kinesphere, overall, the Witch simply moves more after her transformation, with fewer held body parts and more exaggeration of movement through Shaping and Effort shifts. As the Queen, there is often a clear distinction between active and held body

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<sup>117</sup> Shape Flow adjustments that draw the body/inner volumes toward centre.

<sup>118</sup> Shape Flow adjustments that draw the body/inner volumes away from centre.

parts, such as when standing still before her mirror and moving only her arms and head, or dramatically sweeping her arms up and ending in a held position as she speaks.

These movement qualities create a contrast between the Queen and the Witch, the threatening, powerful middle-aged woman and the frightening, unpredictable older one. The impression created by all of these shifts in movement preference is that of a completely new personality, one less dignified and restrained, reflected in the Apollonian/Dionysian duality of the two personas discussed in Chapter Four. However, the Queen's occasional outbursts of anger hint at the passion and impulsiveness that lie beneath, suggesting perhaps that the Witch represents the Queen's shadow, which Jung identifies as instinctive and irrational. Joseph Campbell states that Dionysus "represents the dynamic of the unconscious" (Campbell, "Psyche and Symbol"), and the Witch's lack of restraint could be a reflection of her inner turmoil, or perhaps a concrete manifestation of the apparent mental spiral into insanity that drives the Queen to the point of deception and murder. Though the Queen's transformation into the Witch is meant to function as a disguise, it ironically reveals more than it conceals.

### ***Mother Gothel***

More than seventy years after *Snow White's* release, Disney returns to the themes of age, beauty, and female envy in *Tangled* and its villainess, Mother Gothel. Gothel echoes *Snow White's* Evil Queen, appearing throughout the majority of the film as a middle-aged *femme fatale*, the Terrible Mother pitted against the maiden, in her attempts to claim the maiden's youth and beauty for herself. In the various fairy-tale versions of the "Rapunzel" story upon which *Tangled* is based, Mother Gothel's characterization ranges from "wicked witch" to "benevolent guardian" (Tatar 106), and Disney's version portrays this range, in part, through her

transformations. She raises Rapunzel and appears to care for her and protect her in her own way, with Rapunzel believing Gothel, as her mother, to have her best interests at heart. She grows more desperate and fearful that she will lose access to Rapunzel's magic, which is what keeps her from aging, and her villainous motivations rise to the surface. As these ulterior motives gradually become more apparent, her fear is realized as her body begins to age without access to Rapunzel's magic hair. This long-form transformation (or de-transformation) brings Gothel's appearance closer to the stereotypical "wicked witch" image seen in the Evil Queen's transformation in *Snow White*, likewise revealing her shadow or true self through the form of the crone. Unlike the Evil Queen's Witch, however, this older form is quite literally Gothel's "true self," and the younger, middle-aged form in which the audience sees her most frequently throughout the film is actually the product of magical transformation.

Unlike the Evil Queen, Gothel does not change Modes with her transformations, staying primarily in Shape Mode no matter her physical form, though there is a change in her preferences within Shape Mode when she transforms, as well as other aspects such as Effort and Body Attitude. The middle-aged Gothel exhibits frequent and often extreme three-dimensional Shaping, which serves to emphasize her melodramatic nature throughout the film. She tends toward Scattering Shaping qualities (Advancing, Ascending, Spreading), often invading Rapunzel's Kinesphere and forcing her to Retreat or otherwise Gather in response. Her Shaping supports her use of Effort, and while her use of Time Effort varies between Quick and Sustained, she tends toward Indulging elements in Weight (Light), Space (Indirect), and Flow (Free). Shifts into various combinations of Strong Weight, Direct Space, and Bound Flow usually signify a palpable change in Gothel's mood, often when she loses her temper with Rapunzel or drops her passive-aggressive façade. These moments of change are also accompanied by a shift in Body

Attitude, from the Screw Body Attitude she usually exhibits to an upright Pin Body Attitude, reminiscent of *Snow White*'s Evil Queen.

In her younger form, Gothel seems to revel in her body's mobility, with frequent oscillations in Shape, Effort, and Space, but as an older woman, these changes lessen significantly. Her Effort becomes more Bound and less Light and Quick, and her use of Shape Mode shifts from Shaping to primarily Shape Flow. Her Body Attitude becomes more Ball-like, coupled with an increase in Heavy Passive Weight,<sup>119</sup> causing her to appear to be weighed down, much like the Witch in *Snow White*. Gothel's transformation-based changes in movement are subtle in comparison to those of other characters in this study, reflecting the unique nature of her transformation, which often appears as frequent "refilling" or "recharging" throughout the film rather than complete changes into a new form. In the moments leading up to these mini-transformations, Gothel only displays the beginnings of the re-aging process, primarily through surface-level indicators in appearance, such as greying hair, skin discoloration, and looser skin. Recalling the discussion of Gothel in Chapter Three, these smaller "transformations" in particular function much like getting her roots done or having botox injections, where natural signs of aging gradually creep up over the course of the film until she is able to visit her stylist and esthetician—in the form of Rapunzel's magic hair—and get them touched up.

While Gothel's movement qualities only shift significantly after the full transformations that occur at the beginning and end of the film, from older to middle-aged or from middle-aged to older, subtle shifts in Shaping do suggest some movement changes during these less extreme mini-transformations. While she usually displays a range of Shaping choices, Gothel's slightly increased preference for Enclosing during these moments brings her shoulders and spine into a

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<sup>119</sup> Weight that drops or gives in to gravity, rather than actively mobilizing (as in Light and Strong Weight). Passive Weight can be either Limp or Heavy, correlating to Light and Strong Weight Effort.

rounded shape, reminiscent of the Ball Body Attitude she has when her body is fully aged. In addition to reflecting the realistically gradual shifts in movement and mobility that occur with age, this tactic allows the animators to show how Gothel gradually ages without Rapunzel's magic at hand, yet still keep her fully older and middle-aged forms separate by showing minimal movement shifts in these more prolonged transitions.

Gothel's character references a number of past Disney villains. She possesses the obsession with youth and beauty of the Evil Queen, and the flamboyance and self-absorption of Ursula. Like Maleficent, she is responsible for a young princess being forced to live in isolation in the woods, without knowing her true family or royal identity. She shares traits with villains, both female and male, beyond the scope of this study as well, with shades of *Cinderella's* Lady Tremaine in her treatment of Rapunzel, and her use of emotional manipulation and gaslighting is reminiscent of Judge Claude Frollo, the villain of 1996's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Trousdale and Wise). Of all these characters, her connection with the Evil Queen is perhaps the strongest, and parallels can be found throughout the film. Both Gothel and the Evil Queen "are obsessed with physical appearance and are willing to lie and kill to preserve their beauty" (Hischak 151). As mentioned in Chapter Three, a mirror motif echoing the Evil Queen's magic mirror even appears throughout *Tangled*, beginning with Gothel comparing Rapunzel to herself in it. This scene conjures up the Evil Queen's obsession with her own mirror and her comparison to Snow White. The mirror becomes one of the final objects associated with Gothel, as the film's climax ends with an aged Gothel looking at herself in the jagged remains of the shattered mirror before plummeting to her death.

Like the Evil Queen, Gothel seeks youth and beauty—more so youth in Gothel's case, versus beauty in the Queen's—and approaches this goal in terms of her relationship with the

maiden archetype, the film's princess heroine. Interestingly, while the solution to the Evil Queen's beauty problem is to eliminate the younger, fairer Snow White, Gothel's solution requires Rapunzel not only to live but to stay with her forever, reversing the parallel between the two. This reversal is apparent in the ways in which the two villainesses go about accomplishing their goals as well, with the Evil Queen transforming from young to old in order to get rid of her princess foil, and Gothel from old to young only through retrieving hers. There is even a reversal between Gothel and the Evil Queen in terms of their relationship with inside and outside, home and away. In *Snow White*, the Evil Queen stays in her castle and is only ever shown inside—until her transformation, at which point she leaves her castle never to return. In contrast, Snow White is never seen inside the castle itself, and is forced even further away, outside of the castle walls and into the woods, in the Queen's efforts to be rid of her. In *Tangled*, Gothel regularly goes out into the world and forces Rapunzel to stay sequestered in her tower. However, whenever Gothel goes out, she eventually starts to age and must return home in order to get another burst of Rapunzel's magic to become young again, such that when Rapunzel goes outside and leaves of her own volition, Gothel's singular goal is to bring Rapunzel back home, to return her inside the tower.

Like the Evil Queen/Witch in *Snow White*, Gothel represents both mother and crone archetypes. As the Terrible Mother, Gothel hides Rapunzel away from the world and denies her the opportunity to live her life in the name of her own quest for youth and beauty, just as the Evil Queen forces Snow White to go into hiding in the woods and abandon the life she knew. Frankel points out that the cruel tendencies of the Terrible Mother are often a response to the patriarchal world, "in which women are most valued for youth, beauty, and fertility" (269), and youth and beauty are certainly driving forces behind both the Evil Queen's plot to murder Snow White and

Gothel's determination to keep Rapunzel hidden away for herself. The Queen and Gothel both fill the role of the "powerful older woman . . . all the more sinister because her villainy is often insidious and psychological in nature; she will readily resort to trickery and deceit to gain her ends" (Hallett and Karasek 58). As stated in Chapter Two, the Terrible Mother is often characterized by a dual nature (Frankel 279), and Frankel links her with the crone archetype of the Destroyer (284). This duality is seen in the double identity of the Queen/Witch in *Snow White*, where the archetype of the elderly crone is just as feared as the *femme fatale*, though in a different way. Rather than threatening in her beauty, she is feared as a "repulsive creature . . . associated with great age, entropy, death, and even doomsday" (Frankel 288), recalling animator descriptions of the Witch as a "grotesque menace" (Barrier 129). Gothel's dual nature is less literal than the Evil Queen/Witch's, which is represented through two very distinct appearances and personalities in her two different forms. Though it can be found in the contrast between her older and younger forms, it also exists between her façade of maternal care for Rapunzel and her seldom-revealed true nature, caring only about keeping Rapunzel's magic within her grasp. As the crone (the physical manifestation of her shadow, her seldom-revealed true self), Gothel primarily displays traits of the Destroyer, brought to ruin by her own obsession, while the Evil Queen's Witch encompasses Trickster, Destroyer, and even Wisewoman, as discussed in Chapter Two.

### ***Madam Mim***

I have explored a number of thematic links between *Snow White*'s Evil Queen and *Tangled*'s Gothel, including the mother/crone duality, the relationship with the maiden, and the shadow self. Mim's human transformation also deals with age, but it links the crone with the



maiden in a different way, more closely to that of Ursula/Vanessa in the previous category—through her transformation. Though the majority of Mim’s transformations take her into various animal forms, she undergoes a human transformation during her self-introduction to Wart through the song “Mad Madam Mim,” turning herself into a young woman meant to charm and mesmerize Wart. While each of her animal transformations echoes the movement tendencies of her original form, this brief human transformation does not. In transforming from her usual, self-described ugly self into a “beautiful, lovely, and fair” young woman (to quote the lyrics of Mim’s song), Mim specifically highlights how utterly different these two forms are, through physical appearance, her own verbal description, and of course, movement.

Mim’s movement tendencies, as discussed in the first section of this chapter, revolve around extreme Effort shifts, particularly in Time and Weight, and lots of movement in the general space around her, creating a manic energy. After her transformation into a young, attractive woman, Mim’s expansive use of the entire space around her diminishes in all three dimensions, as she stays within a small area of her cottage and refrains from jumping and bouncing up and down. She shifts slightly into Space Mode, with an increased focus on placement in space through lots of posing. Shape Mode becomes more prominent as well, supporting her use of Effort in a way absent from her usual movement, where extreme Effort changes explode out of her like a child throwing a tantrum. Her Effort takes on an overall more Light and Sustained quality, echoed by a similar shift in the music. She still demonstrates a fair amount of Quick Time Effort (though almost no Strong Weight), but it is not as extreme as in other forms, and her shifts between Effort elements are less dynamic in general, indicating a change from extreme to more neutral Effort intensity (Dell 18), and giving this particular

transformation a more controlled and calm feeling in comparison to her others. These differences between her older and younger forms echo those of *Snow White*'s Evil Queen.

Mim's physical appearance as a young woman also differs from her normal self, beyond her actual transformation. Despite still being human, she loses many of the characteristic features that serve as visual signifiers during her animal transformation, demonstrating non-movement aspects of character animation. Her fat, round body; short, unruly mop of hair; big, round eyes and dark eyebrows; and even bulbous nose appear throughout most of her animal transformations (many of the animal forms she selects have a protruding snout, beak, or horn to simulate her actual nose), yet in this young woman form, only her purple and pink colour scheme remains.

### ***Final Thoughts***

The transformations in this category and the previous one reflect the three archetypal stages of the female life cycle, exploring relationships between mother/crone and maiden characters and the presence of multiple archetypal stages in one character. They highlight perceptions of female age and its link to both desirability and morality, with each of these middle-aged or older villainesses narratively set in opposition to the young, moral heroines (or hero, in Mim's case) of their stories, demonstrating female youth as an object of desire, either to be coveted by older women or lusted after by men. The Evil Queen and Gothel seek youth and beauty, and these vain and unnatural desires are the catalysts for both stories. While Mim is not narratively set in opposition to a younger female character, her position as an old, unattractive crone is highlighted in how different her movement and appearance are when she transforms into one, in contrast with her myriad animal transformations, which all serve to emphasize her normal

appearance and movement. Additionally, her attempt to pose as a beautiful young woman is shown as a mirage meant to sexually tempt the male hero (in a G-rated, Disney-friendly way), which is also at play in Ursula's transformation in *The Little Mermaid*.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored some of the myriad ways movement is used in character animation, whether to connect multiple forms through common movement patterns as in the first category of this taxonomy, or to create difference as in the last, linking age-based human transformations with disguise (Evil Queen, Ursula) or deception (Gothel, Mim). In this taxonomy I have observed that movement signature is employed as an aspect of character animation in different ways depending on transformation type, regardless of a character's movement preferences, villain type, or time period. Characters who undergo cross-species transformations tend to retain elements of their original movement signature, while those who stay human tend to change their movement much more. Complex characters, such as Ursula, display a complex combination of these patterns. In a way, this taxonomy uses LMA to prove the efficacy of character animation, providing a detailed, specific way to observe changes or consistencies in movement and how they interact with other aspects of character, underpinned by fairy-tale archetypes and cultural themes.

The strength of this final taxonomy is that it presents a completely different point of comparison than the other two, yet each of these transformations returns to and supports the recurring themes of the previous two chapters about female evil and age/desirability—how youth and beauty make women more desirable, and how the evil women of this study may desire that desirability (or not). Even the animal transformations demonstrate connections to age in some

way, merging animal symbolism with female archetypes and images and often coming back to the *femme fatale* and her connection with transformation. While the animal transformations in this chapter link the metamorphosis aspect of the *femme fatale* to the graphic narrative tradition of animation (Bell 117; Dijkstra 273-74; Griffin 57), the human ones align more with disguise, linking the *femme fatale* to the dramatic narrative incorporated by Disney (Allan 38, 53; Doane 1).

While this taxonomy addresses the theme with which I began my research—physical transformation—I ultimately chose to discuss my findings on this topic last. Using LMA to analyze behaviour through movement uncovered a number of patterns and connections between the six villainesses that comprise this study, forming multiple layers of meaning through character animation. The observations in the final section of this chapter regarding age and female desirability became the foundation for the other two taxonomies through which I explore these characters. In terms of my own process of discovery, transformation has served as a foundation for other findings relating to women and evil (age, desirability, archetype, type of villain); however, I found the time-period taxonomy to provide the broadest method of viewing and categorizing the six case studies, and thus the most appropriate entry point for discussion. Observing commonalities between characters based on time period has allowed me to establish a foundation for Disney's link between female age and characterization as good versus evil, and the role movement plays in that characterization. I have further considered cultural influences on Disney's portrayal of evil women, and how the application of certain archetypes has shifted over time as Disney shifts their representations of female evil.

The villain-type taxonomy focuses more on specific character aspects, and the various roles that these villainous characters fill are linked in part to shifting attitudes toward women's

bodies and the related social anxieties that are poured into images of evil women over time. The three categories of villain type I observed among the characters of this study reflect various cultural influences—many revolving around the *femme fatale* and approaches to female age and evil. The serious, comical, and combination roles discussed in Chapter Four are further reflected in the characters' transformed bodies, and these links between transformation type and villain type are supported by the structure of my approach in allowing each taxonomy to build on the last. In this way, I visualize the presentation of these three taxonomies as funnel-like, or as a gradual focusing of multiple lenses, beginning with time period and ending with the most specific delimitation in this research, transformation. The taxonomic structure of my analysis and the order of discussion demonstrate the multiplicities of meaning found in animated movement, particularly related to female age, through a progression that allows each taxonomy to build upon the observations of the last.

## Conclusion

“[LMA] is finite information with infinite applications.”

-Nadine Saxton, personal conversation

I entered this research with the goal of demonstrating LMA's value as a means of cultural analysis through exploring potential cultural meanings in Disney's patterns of female representation. Considering LMA's strengths as an analytical tool in dance, industry, and ethnography, I believed that it would offer a unique, rich reading of animated characters through the lens of movement and the body. I accomplished this goal by using LMA to analyze and identify patterns in the movement of villainesses from six films across Disney's oeuvre, and exploring the significance of those patterns through the lenses of time period, villain type, and transformation. I considered my movement-based findings in terms of various influences, including fairy-tale archetypes, images of the female body drawn from ballet and Hollywood, other sociocultural influences ranging from health to comedy, and the history and development of the animation industry.

I found that several patterns exist among the six villainesses of my case studies, movement and otherwise. These patterns can be interpreted in multiple ways, necessitating an expansion from my initial focus on transformation to three taxonomies based on the aforementioned lenses. Considering the characters by time period in Taxonomy A (Chapter Three), I found influences from fairy-tale archetypes of mother and crone, ballet aesthetics, and the *femme fatale* of early Hollywood all at play in the earliest villainesses. These influences create a foundation for later eras, forming an "archetypal" Disney villainess figure to be referenced and subverted in future films, as additional layers of cultural understandings and concerns are added, such as rising obesity rates and artificial masking of aging. In addition to

reflecting these shifting cultural preoccupations, the different time period categories of this taxonomy demonstrate different primary Modes of Intent in terms of characters' movement, following a trend toward more personality and expression, which supports the patterns observed in Taxonomy B (Chapter Four) regarding villain type.

Building on these observations, I found the type/role of each villainess (Taxonomy B/Chapter Four) to again relate to age, reflecting the shift from crone to *femme fatale* as female threat. Older villainesses tend to possess more comical elements than middle-aged *femmes fatales*, with more complex combinations of seriousness and humour at play in those with more complex combinations of *femme fatale* and crone elements. I found some elements of the previous taxonomy's movement observations to impact this one, such as less dramatic Shaping in the serious villainesses, but also observed patterns related to consistency versus change in movement qualities—the more serious villainesses tend toward stillness and composure with infrequent, unpredictable outbursts of dramatic Effort or Shape shifts, while those with more comical elements layer their various movement preferences with more frequent or exaggerated shifts between Effort, Shape, or Space elements. These observations reflect a contrast between neutral and extreme intensity, suggesting that the serious villainesses generally exhibit neutral intensity, destabilizing the audience with rare extreme bursts, while the comical and combination villainesses fall farther along this spectrum toward extreme intensity in general. The comical villainesses in particular demonstrate the most extreme intensity, juxtaposing this exuberance with their old age/crone status as part of their absurd or comedic presentation.

I found these patterns in villain type further reflected in my exploration of transformation in Taxonomy C (Chapter Five)—not in linking specific types of transformations with specific levels of comedy or seriousness, but in exploring patterns within categories of transformation

type. The distinction between *Sleeping Beauty*'s Maleficent as a serious villain and *The Sword in the Stone*'s Madam Mim and *The Emperor's New Groove*'s Yzma as comical ones clarifies their differences as well as their similarities as human characters who transform into animals, which in turn further clarifies the connection between these transformations and age through, once again, the contrast between crone and *femme fatale*. My primary hypothesis for this taxonomy stated that human-to-animal transformations maintain movement signatures while human-to-human ones change. In demonstrating the accuracy of this hypothesis, I was able to identify the influences of Maleficent's serious, *femme fatale*-inspired character on her dragon form, and the influences of Mim's and Yzma's comedic, crone characters on their respective animal forms, through character animation, anthropomorphism, and juxtaposition. The other categories of this taxonomy also demonstrate the significance of age on Disney villainesses, as all three human-to-human transformations—and Ursula's hybrid-to-human transformation—involve the crossing of an age/archetype boundary for the purpose of youth, beauty, and/or desirability. The deceptive intent behind all of these transformations, linked to disguise or trickery, in contrast to the animal transformations' link to metamorphosis (or both, in Ursula's case), supports and is supported by the observation that these characters move very differently after they have transformed.

These patterns are significant in exploring how movement signature is used in character animation and how LMA is an effective tool in that exploration. In synthesizing my observations, I found that Disney reflects a number of cultural imaginaries about women and evil through the bodies and movement of its female villains, and that age is a recurring theme in female villainy, both as a means to set villainesses apart from young heroes and heroines, and frequently as a catalyst or point of conflict, particularly between villainess and female heroine. This recurring age component in turn continued to reflexively shape my research process, playing a role in the



taxonomic structure of my dissertation and in how those taxonomies intertwine. Based on the findings from these three taxonomies, I have concluded that while there may not be one “set” way in which all Disney villainesses are portrayed, there are a number of common threads that link them. Through this multiplicity of villainess presentations, I have found that movement is a significant means of animating difference as well as similarity, and that LMA is an effective methodology for conducting a close analysis of animated movement. I have concluded that LMA offers a unique, rich reading of these animated characters through the lens of movement and the body, and I have fulfilled my goal to demonstrate the value of LMA as a means of cultural analysis through its efficacy in exploring cultural meanings and influences in Disney’s female villains.

This process has also highlighted some of the unique aspects of using LMA as a research methodology, both in general and for animation in particular. While I have discussed various limitations in the Introduction, I do not necessarily view the following points as shortcomings of the methodology. First, expanding on questions of subjectivity raised in the Introduction and Chapter One, the development of the taxonomic structure I have employed demonstrates the subjectivity in both interpreting meaning from LMA observations and determining which elements to focus on and prioritize. While I have demonstrated how the three taxonomies relate to and build upon each other to support my observations and conclusions, they also serve to demonstrate that any researcher can choose any one of these or countless other different lenses for framing and interpreting the same movement observations. Alternatively, another researcher might make different observations by focusing on different aspects of the material. In movement observation, there are countless layers and possibilities—different elements to foreground, different patterns to identify, different conclusions to be drawn.

The second notable aspect of this research, referred to at various points in this paper, relates more specifically to the animated medium. Throughout the analysis process I found myself reflecting on the sometimes-paradoxical conclusions reached in applying LMA to two-dimensional, drawn forms that only give the illusion of human movement. I consider Yzma's Weight Effort though she has no real weight; how Mother Gothel's movement qualities indicate her personality, attitude, and goals, though she has no brain and thus no real motivations or intentions; Madam Mim's pathways and distance covered, though she exists in no real space. While I have endeavoured to hold these contradictions and questions in mind throughout my analysis, a deep theoretical discussion of the intricacies of the animated illusion and how it relates to a system and vocabulary based upon three-dimensional movement would merit its own separate dissertation.

Though the illusion of visual space is relatively simple to reconcile, I have found the work of Leslie Bishko and Donald Crafton to be of use in supporting my consideration of the aspects of weight and interiority, respectively. Bishko states that "in virtual worlds, we construct gravity by how we animate, capture, generate or calculate qualities of movement" (Bishko, "Empathic Experience" 48), identifying the Animation Principle of Squash and Stretch as a key contributor to the illusion of weight ("Animation Principles" 177-78). Working in conjunction with other Animation Principles that map onto the LMA Effort Phrasing pattern of Preparation, Exertion, and Recuperation, Bishko states that the common pattern of Anticipation, Squash and Stretch, and Follow Through/Overlapping "tends to develop effectively the intentional activation of weight and the weightiness of animated characters" (Bishko, "Animation Principles" 191). Though weight does not truly exist in animated characters—or because of it—Bishko states that weight (and, by extension, Weight Effort, which involves relating to gravity) "is constantly

addressed when discussing animation, because the illusion of the qualities of weight provides information about the materiality of form in motion” (Bishko, “Animation Principles” 190).

In terms of the interiority I often assign these characters, in *Shadow of a Mouse*, Donald Crafton presents a unique perspective on the relationship between animation and “real” by arguing that animated characters are actors and stars in the same way human performers are. The audience knows that they are drawings, yet their performances seem live and present, and characters often have a presence outside of the animated stories in which they appear (such as the members of the Disney Princess franchise, or, most famously, Mickey Mouse). Crafton suggests that while non-animated films are, to be technical, records of performances, cartoons *are* the performances themselves. When a cartoon “acts,” it is not only the “internal” performance of the animated character, but also the performance *of* the animation; in other words, what the animators are doing becomes part of the performance as well (Crafton, *Shadow of a Mouse* 4-5). In this way, the role of the animator in imbuing a character with life (or the illusion of it) may perhaps be understood in the same way an actor brings presence, backstory, and interiority to whatever character they play, inhabit, or become. Ultimately, Crafton suggests that “the real is not in the medium but in the viewer’s volition. Their performances are as real as we deem them to be” (Crafton, *Shadow of a Mouse* 296-97). Disney animators Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston emphasize the significance of the audience’s emotional investment as well:

[Animation] is capable of getting inside the heads of its audiences, into their imaginations. The *audiences* will make our little cartoon character sad—actually, far sadder than we could ever draw him—because in their minds that character is *real*. He lives in their imaginations. Once the audience has become involved with your characters

and your story, almost anything is possible. (F. Thomas and Johnston, *The Illusion of Life* 19)

By understanding the relationship that I as a viewer have with the characters I analyze, I am able to accept that they have interiority simply because I say so.

### **Contributions to Knowledge**

Due to its interdisciplinary nature, this research makes several contributions to knowledge in multiple fields. In the Introduction, I spoke to the ability for this research to expand the parameters of dance studies as a field and serve as a bridge to the fields of animation and cultural studies through its grounding in movement and the body. However, my initial goal in terms of contributions was not to champion a link between animation and dance through their shared theme of movement, so much as to explore and demonstrate what LMA can reveal about the cultural meanings to be found in Disney animation. I chose to focus on transformation as something that is not necessarily unique to animation, but has its own unique history and possibilities within the medium. The role of transformation in these animated films allowed me to further explore the capabilities of an LMA-based methodology on virtual bodies, and how this tool, typically linked to dance studies, can be applied to the non-three-dimensional, non-human, non-dancing body.

Though my work has been heavily informed by Leslie Bishko's, it both deviates from her goals and in some ways contradicts her suppositions regarding animation's current lack. Bishko presents LMA as, to invoke a Disney-inspired image, a fairy godmother through which the medium's potential for lifelike, realistic animation and communication can be fully realized. Through my work, I have identified how much Disney animation in fact already communicates

through movement. Overall, I have observed a chronological progression in movement qualities from Function (seen, among other things, in a preference for Space and Body Modes) to Expression (Effort and Shape Modes) and Outer (Space and Effort) to Inner (Body and Shape).<sup>120</sup> This shift reflects the nuances that Bishko argues LMA to be able to contribute to animation, thus suggesting perhaps that animators are already embarking on this journey toward increased capacity for character expression and interiority. Even so, given ever-changing technologies and Bishko's focus on computer-generated animation and, particularly in her later work, video games (which have their own requirements for verisimilitude and empathy different from animated film), her work to support increasingly realistic, expressive characters through the application of LMA continues to be an important pioneering force in bridging the fields of dance studies and animation.

In addition to demonstrating what LMA can provide to animation analysis, this methodology also has the potential to contribute to LMA training and observation practice. Kinesthetic empathy (Sklar, "On Dance Ethnography" 7) and the ability to attune physically to the subject of one's observation are important aspects of the observation and analysis process, yet these two-dimensional characters create a layer of separation from this approach, offering no real corporeality with which to engage. While their lack of material form can be viewed as a limitation of applying LMA to animated bodies, it also presents an opportunity to isolate and practice one's visual ability to discern LMA elements, without the support of a "kinesthetic channel" with which to connect in order to determine what underlies a particular movement.

I believe that this research also demonstrates an under-explored application of LMA, not only in animation, but in cultural analysis and particularly popular media. LMA can provide a

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<sup>120</sup> Shape functions as a bridge between Inner and Outer, rather than aligning more closely with one or the other.

unique approach to pop culture analysis through the lens of movement and the body, uncovering patterns and meanings in the bodies being analyzed. However, merging such a specialized movement terminology with another academic field has presented its challenges, which I have discussed at length in the Introduction. The difficulty in determining how and to what extent to combine my LMA observations with other aspects of cultural analysis in this dissertation is indicative of the need to continue with research that brings LMA into such conversations, making movement a better-understood way of discussing media of all kinds. At the same time, I recognize that the specialized and complex language of LMA poses a barrier in facilitating this understanding, and further applications of this methodology should continue to explore effective ways of incorporating LMA concepts in a readable way, without discarding the strengths found in its specificity.

Through the cultural analysis I have conducted with this methodology, this work also contributes a greater understanding of the representational patterns in Disney's older female characters. Following Elizabeth Bell's work, I have explored the female life cycle at play in Disney narratives, deepening the investigation of the later two stages of this cycle. My analysis has both supported and contradicted Bell's work by examining how Disney fixates on issues of age in its female villain characters, particularly when paired with a female protagonist. I have brought together a variety of cultural images and influences and considered how this bricolage creates the enduring icon of the Disney villainess, and what that icon in turn creates in cultural understandings of female age.

Dance critic Gay Morris writes that dance studies, like cultural studies, must engage with social and political issues, citing Stuart Hall that "the point of cultural studies [is] not to study culture per se but to understand what [is] going on in order 'to make a difference in the world'"

(Hall 1992, 278)” (Morris 85). As a significant source of cultural encoding, Disney is important to understand, made apparent by the countless books and articles about the company’s films, television shows, theme parks, stage productions, merchandising, subsidiaries and holdings, Walt Disney himself, and more. Despite Walt Disney’s insistence that “we make the pictures and let the professors tell us what they mean” (qtd. in Wasko 108), as a prominent aspect of popular culture, the Disney machine in all its media forms is an established source of cultural encoding. By working to understand the positive and negative impacts of these forms, audiences and consumers can bring awareness and conscious choice to their engagement with them, facilitating positive change.

Amidst all of the existing scholarship on Disney, why is it important to add my voice to the cacophony? How does my work “make a difference”? In their investigations of sociocultural reactions to transgressive bodies, gender studies scholar Margrit Shildrick (2002) and media scholar Niall Richardson (2010) explore how deviance is used as a metric by which to judge normalcy. Though Shildrick and Richardson focus on topics such as disability, bodybuilding, and transgender identity (rather than half-octopus hybrids and dragon transformations), the Disney villainesses of my study are used in conjunction with the heroes (particularly female) to create a picture of what bodily normality is, typically through beauty. The fairy-tale heroines Disney animates are described as not just beautiful, but the *most* beautiful (Bell 109), linking attractive, normative bodies with moral goodness, and non-normative bodies, or those that do not live up to the appropriate beauty standard, with moral deficiency—and invariably punishing them by the end of the film.

As a source of cultural encoding, Disney reflects and perpetuates cultural understandings of women and what women should and should not be through its female villains. I have found

socio-cultural significance in my observations on the representation of aging women, and I have observed a connection in the majority of these narratives presenting age as undesirable or feared due to its connection with villainous characters, often further linked with other socially undesirable attributes of the female body, such as obesity and unattractiveness. Just as the beautiful, young Disney princess presents an image of ideal femininity (Bell 120-21), so does the villainess impose guidelines about how women should (or should not) be—even the *femmes fatales* described by Bell reinforce the importance of youth and beauty, questing as they are after the greater beauty of their younger counterparts. The way these fantastical villains are portrayed impacts the way audiences see real non-normative or simply “undesirable” bodies (Towbin et al. 20). In my own early childhood, I recall watching *The Little Mermaid* and recognizing the body of my morbidly obese mother in the evil Ursula, drawing a connection of which I was likely unaware, and eventually turning that recognition onto my own body that was too fat—or too tall, too curly-haired, too deep-voiced, too different—and understanding through those differences what my “role” in life should be. Continuing to recognize these patterns and engage in conversations about their meanings and impact brings the subtext to the surface and redistributes control in how viewers consume and internalize these images.

Susan Bordo argues that “analyses and interpretations that go against the grain of dominant readings of literature are powerful to the degree that they excite the intellect and imagination of the reader; the actuality and effectiveness of social resistance, however, can be determined only by examining historical situations” (Bordo 295). Feminist author bell hooks states that subversion “happens much more easily in the realm of ‘texts’ than in the world of human interaction” (b. hooks 22). I have found that, by writing about a “fun” topic, I have had just as many (if not more) meaningful conversations about my research with non-academic



acquaintances as I have with those within the institution. When people ask about my research and learn that it is about Disney, they are almost always excited to share their favourite Disney film (or, conversely, talk about why they do not like Disney), and when I explain my work further, their understanding of my approach and its significance is immediate, as is their desire to further engage with the topic. By exploring issues of gender representation in popular, accessible media in a way that catches interest outside of academia, I can bring together separate conversations and not only share the positive possibilities of academic inquiry with a wider audience, but also bring more voices into the conversation and the work toward increasing critical consumption of popular media and the meanings and ideologies they transmit.

### **Future Directions**

This study has raised questions and opened several avenues for future inquiry into Disney animation and other areas. Even within the specific topic of this research, a number of patterns manifested through my observation that I simply did not have time or space to explore, such as the connection between transformation and the shift in a character's use of public versus private space (seen especially in *Snow White's* Evil Queen/Witch and *The Little Mermaid's* Ursula/Vanessa), or the inverse connection between a character's Spatial Intent and their use of general space (particularly apparent in the contrast of *Snow White's* Evil Queen and *Sleeping Beauty's* Maleficent to *The Sword in the Stone's* Madam Mim and *The Emperor's New Groove's* Yzma). Further explorations of the myriad influences on these and other Disney villains merit consideration as well, such as the parallels between Commedia dell'arte's Master and Zanni character types and the contrasting behaviour of *Snow White's* Evil Queen and Witch, perhaps intersecting with ballet influence in an exploration of class portrayal in her transformation.

Another recurring theme worth further consideration is the significance of hands, from the focus on hands as a point of Distal Initiation in the Evil Queen and Maleficent, suggestive of another link to ballet aesthetics, to the incorporeal pair of hands that Ursula conjures in *The Little Mermaid* to steal Ariel's voice, identical to the wrinkled, knobby hands of the Witch in *Snow White* despite in no way resembling Ursula's own hands. Significantly, the age-based transformations of the Evil Queen in *Snow White* and Mother Gothel in *Tangled* both demonstrate a focus on hands, creating another parallel between the two villainesses. In both films, the characters' transformations from middle-aged to older (and from older to middle-aged, in Gothel's case) feature close-up shots of their hands in particular undergoing these changes, shifting from smooth skin and slim, dextrous fingers to wrinkles and swollen joints. In both instances, the character herself is particularly aware of her hands as an indicator that she has transformed, with Gothel clutching her wrist to focus on her rapidly aging hand, and the Evil Queen exclaiming "look, my hands!" as she completes her transformation into the Witch.

Expanding on the discussion of artificial masking of aging signs in Chapter Four, the connection between transformation—particularly female transformation—and cosmetic surgery presents another point of further inquiry. Vivian Sobchack explores transformation as a sublimation of women's "dread of aging," suggesting this preoccupation to be "dramatized and allayed both through the wish-fulfilling fantasies of rejuvenation in certain American movies and the more general, if correlated, faith in the 'magic' and 'quick fixes' of 'special effects,' both cinematic and surgical" (Sobchack, "Scary Women" 79). Sobchack connects these issues with cinematic transformation on a larger scale as well: "The alternative to cosmetic surgery in what passes for the verisimilitude of cinematic realism is a change in *genre*, a transformation of sensibility that takes us from the 'real' world that demonizes middle-aged women to the world of

'irreal' female demons: horror, science fiction, and fantasy" (Sobchack, "Scary Women" 82), creating a link between the issue of cultural discomfort with older women—and even among older women themselves—and the fantastical transformations and monstrous creatures I have explored in Disney.

As I have discussed at various points during my analysis, the convergence of multiple cultural influences has led to the creation of the Disney villainess as its own icon and even trope, mimicked, referenced, and parodied in a variety of popular media. Given the wide range of movement patterns I have observed across just six characters in the Disney villainess pantheon, is it possible to identify enough commonalities to build a "villainess movement signature"? Future inquiries might build on the observations of this study with further analysis of these and other Disney villainesses, and determine if there are any consistent patterns that indicate a base, universal villainess movement signature, perhaps through a synchronic comparison with protagonist/heroine movement. Such a study might also expand to include male villains in a broader exploration of Disney antagonists, or even to compare female and male villains. Alternatively, one might focus only on male villains, exploring questions of masculinity raised by the portrayal of male villains versus heroes.

Further directions for expansion might address aspects of the animation process that are beyond the depth of my own understanding or access, such as how specific animation techniques and technologies impact the act of animating characters' movement. Though I introduce concepts such as Xerox technology and computer animation in this dissertation, I was limited in my ability to explore the details of the animation process in part due to the scope of my research, but also due to my own limited access and experience. Further directions may also involve applying LMA to the non-realistic, graphic illusion-centred style of cartoon animation. What elements can

LMA identify in movement and forms that are more abstracted from real bodies and physics, and how might the significance of those salient observations vary from the analysis of Disney's realistic style of animation?

The research presented in this dissertation is timely, considering the increasing popularity of Disney villains in the public imagination, with the Angelina Jolie-led live-action film *Maleficent* (Stromberg 2014) and its sequel, *Maleficent: Mistress of Darkness* (Rønning 2019); the Disney Channel television-film franchise *Descendants* (Ortega 2015, 2017, 2019), another live-action concept which follows the adventures of the children of Disney's most infamous villains; and the increasing prominence of villain-themed merchandise in Disney stores and other retailers, particularly (though not exclusively) marketed toward adults—as I write this reflection, I look down at the black, Maleficent-emblazoned sweater I am wearing and then over to the purple, villainess-printed pyjamas sitting on my bed, and laugh at how I have come full circle from where I began as a princess merchandise-clad child.

The *Maleficent* and *Descendants* franchises, among others such as ABC/Disney's television series *Once Upon a Time* (Horowitz and Kitsis 2011-2018), represent a current Disney trend in reviving or reinventing their animated features as live-action films, seen in other, less villain-focused productions as well. Disney has taken to rapid production of such films in the past decade, beginning with *Alice in Wonderland* (Burton) in 2010 and followed by *Maleficent* in 2014, continuing to release one or two a year, with a whopping five such releases in 2019 and countless more either rumoured or in development ("Disney Presents"). Interestingly, this trend seems to echo the company's early activity eighty years ago, taking well-known fairy-tale stories and adapting them to a realistic style of animation. Now, the early<sup>121</sup> Disney films themselves are

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<sup>121</sup> Or not so early, as several of these remakes are of films from the 1990s.

the well-known fairy tales, and the studio is adapting them to a live-action format—or a hyper-realistic form of digital animation masquerading as live action, as in the recent *The Lion King* remake (Favreau 2019), bringing new depth to Paul Wells’s classification of Disney films as hyper-reality.

Further, though my positionality as a dance scholar and not as an animator guides my consideration of this research’s contributions and future applications, this phenomenon opens avenues for related non-academic applications of this research beyond Bishko’s suggestions of LMA’s contributions to animation. Given the influx of live-action remakes of Disney animated films, and the trend toward focusing on villains (and often, more specifically, villainesses), in many cases calling back to the original films and characters through highly accurate reconstruction/embodiment (Jolie’s performance in *Maleficent* in particular demonstrates this trend), this work can be useful in guiding actors and directors in how to embody the desired elements of the original characters. Translating LMA’s applications in dance reconstruction to the entertainment industry, the observations made through this methodology can identify key movement patterns in whichever character is being translated to live action and help actors and directors to articulate and embody them.

The increase in villain popularity as seen in *Maleficent*, *Descendants*, and even *Once Upon a Time*, with its featured dynamic between reimagined versions of Snow White and the Evil Queen, also indicates another trend, one that can be seen in more recent Disney animated films as well: a shift toward more nuanced and even sympathetic portrayals, not only of established villainesses such as Maleficent, but also of female characters who occupy roles that might have previously labeled them as villainesses, but are instead presented as more complex characters. As explored in Chapter Three, in addition to reflecting shifting cultural

preoccupations, the time-period taxonomy suggests a progression toward more personality/interiority in the characters as expressed through shifting Modes of Intent, and also loosely connects to the increasing complexity of villain type/role. These trends are brought to fruition in the 2010s with the current era of Disney films and the ambiguous positions of what I refer to as their “anti-villainesses,” particularly in *Brave* (2012), *Frozen* (2013), and *Moana* (2016).

In *Brave*, the protagonist Merida is continuously at odds with her mother, Queen Elinor, who is narratively poised to fill the Terrible Mother role. Elinor even undergoes a transformation into a monstrous bear; however, through the task of reversing the magic that transformed her, Merida and her mother come to understand one another and emerge with a newly strengthened bond. *Frozen* echoes this tale of female familial love, with the sisters Anna and Elsa having grown estranged as Elsa hides her magic powers in fear of hurting her sister or anyone else. The character of Elsa was initially intended to be the villain of the story, based on Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Snow Queen” (Solomon, *The Art of Frozen* 14), but instead is presented as a sympathetic character who is able to control her powers and achieve her potential through the love and acceptance of her sister. *Moana* features the most antagonistic anti-villainess, Te Kā, who is initially presented as a giant lava monster keeping the eponymous protagonist Moana from saving her people and her island home. However, Te Kā is revealed to be Te Fiti, a benevolent island goddess who is merely suffering from the theft of her “heart,” a magic gem, which is restored to her with compassion and understanding by Moana.

All three of these narratives feature complex female characters in roles that vary from partially antagonistic to misunderstood, as well as supportive relationships with female protagonists that ultimately lead to happiness for all. Other Disney films from this decade, such

as *Zootopia* (Howard and R. Moore 2016), *Incredibles 2* (Bird 2018), and even *Coco* (Unkrich 2017), subvert the standard Disney narrative of older, evil woman pitted against younger, good hero or heroine in their own ways, whether with younger female villains (*Zootopia*, *Incredibles 2*) or more complex stories of older, positive female characters (*Coco*). Given that these films continue and strengthen observable trends that emerge during the Disney Renaissance and simultaneously offer completely new narratives and approaches to female representation, how might the methodology and conclusions of this research apply to or be impacted by their analysis? How have these female characters, who have evolved so much in terms of characterization, likewise evolved in terms of movement? What are the larger sociocultural influences and implications of these changes?

Cultural encoding and decoding exists as a feedback loop. Media and other pop culture elements both reflect and reinscribe social values. Cultural imaginaries form and inform popular media, including Disney films, and are likewise shaped and disseminated through these media. In this research, I have explored how movement contributes to cultural meaning and how LMA is instrumental in uncovering those meanings. LMA offers a unique, complex way of reading animated films through the lens of movement and the body, providing insight regarding Disney's patterns of female representation. Ann Daly observes that movement and behaviour are significant in their capacity to "maintain the dominant social order" (Daly 43), but movement also has the capacity to disrupt the existing order. Awareness of the patterns, movement and otherwise, that underlie female images and contribute to the meanings built from those images promotes more critical engagement with media and, hopefully, fosters positive changes in representation and meaning-making.

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## Appendix A: Glossary of LMA Terms

**Action Drive:** One of four Effort Drives (combinations of three Effort Factors), consisting of eight possible combinations of the Factors of Space, Weight, and Time, known as Basic Effort Actions. Basic Effort Actions lack Flow (associated with “the involvement of emotion” [Fernandes 176]), and are thus linked to functional, everyday actions.

**Advancing:** Shaping in the Sagittal Plane with a forward emphasis.

**Ascending:** Shaping in the Vertical Plane with an upward emphasis.

**Ball Body Attitude:** See Body Attitude.

**Body:** One of LMA’s four categories or Modes of Intent, focusing on body parts and connections, major body actions, Initiation and Sequencing of body parts in movement, and developmental movement patterns.

**Body Attitude:** “The habitual relationship of the torso and pelvis which forms the default posture that all movement arises from and returns to” (Bishko, “Animation Principles” 201). LMA identifies four Body Attitudes: **Wall** (flat and wide in the Vertical Plane), **Ball** (rounded forward or backward), **Pin** (narrow in the Vertical Dimension), and **Screw** (twisted in a spiral). Fernandes identifies a fifth Body Attitude, Pyramid, with a wide base and narrowing at the top (Fernandes 191), but this form is less widely recognized.

**Body Organization:** Refers to several full-body ways of moving grounded in infant and evolutionary Developmental Movement Patterns.

**Bound:** See Flow Effort.

**Contralateral:** The final stage in Developmental Patterning, connecting upper to lower on opposite sides of the body, such as in walking with the right arm and left leg moving forward at the same time and vice versa.

**Descending:** Shaping in the Vertical Plane with a downward emphasis.

**Direct:** See Space Effort.

**Directional Movement:** One of the three Modes of Shape Change; refers to straight (Spoke-like) or curved (Arc-like) linear movement, often gestural, bridging between self and objects, people, or environment.

**Effort:** One of LMA’s four categories or Modes of Intent, focusing on the dynamic qualities of how we move. The Effort category consists of four Effort Factors (**Flow**, **Space**, **Weight**, and **Time**), each containing two opposing qualities or elements.

**Enclosing:** Shaping in the Horizontal Plane with an inward emphasis.



**Exertion-Recuperation:** One of the four themes of LMA, referring to “the natural process or tendency to recuperate from some activity through complementary or different qualities, establishing a rhythm of balance in the body” (Fernandes 271).

**Far Reach:** Extending to the farthest reaches of one’s Kinesphere.

**Fighting Qualities:** Effort qualities that “share a kind of condensing or fighting character” in terms of their respective Factors (Dell 35)—for example, Bound Effort can be seen as “fighting the Flow of movement” (Dell 35); also known as Resisting, Condensing, or Contending qualities. The Fighting Effort qualities are Direct, Strong, Bound, and Quick.

**Flow Effort:** One of the four Effort Factors; refers to “the muscular tension used to let the movement flow (**Free Flow**) or to restrain it (**Bound Flow**)” (Fernandes 145).

**Free:** See Flow Effort.

**Function-Expression:** One of the four themes of LMA, relating “the functional aspects of the body structures to their expressive abilities” (Fernandes 272).

**Gathering:** The general Shaping quality of coming toward the body (Dell 56).

**Homolateral:** Movement differentiating the right and left sides of the body, vertically divided along the spinal column (Fernandes 96), like a lizard crawling.

**Homologous:** Movement differentiating the upper and lower body, often with one stabilizing while the other mobilizes, like a frog jumping (Fernandes 95).

**Indirect:** See Space Effort.

**Indulging Qualities:** Effort qualities that “share a characteristic property of rarifying or spreading out, going along with, indulging” (Dell 34); also known as Yielding or Accepting qualities. The Indulging Effort qualities are Indirect, Light, Free, and Sustained.

**Inner-Outer:** One of the four themes of LMA, referring to the “dynamic relation between the individual’s inner universe (Body; feelings, images, experiences, etc.) and the outer (Space; environment, other people, objects, social/political happenings, etc.)” (Fernandes 270).

**Kinesphere:** The “three-dimensional physical space around the body, reachable upon extending oneself without the need to shift one’s weight” (Fernandes 199).

**Lengthening:** A Shape Flow Growing adjustment in the Vertical Dimension; the opposite of Lengthening is Shortening.

**Light:** See Weight Effort.

**Mid Reach:** Taking place at a medium distance from the centre of the body.

**Mobility-Stability:** One of the four themes of LMA, referring to the dynamic interplay of mobilizing and stabilizing elements in all movement, and the capacity for one to make the other possible.

**Modes of Intent:** The four categories of Body, Effort, Shape, and Space (commonly referred to as BESS) used to group and organize qualities of movement for observation and description. Though these four categories integrate with each other and are always present in all movement (Fernandes 85), identifying which Mode's elements appear to be most significant or crystallized in someone's movement can provide a useful place to begin analysis.

**Movement Signature:** The patterns of movement that emerge in an individual after "observing a wide sample of motion over time" (Bishko, "Animation Principles" 200).

**Narrowing:** A Shape Flow Shrinking adjustment in the Horizontal Dimension; the opposite of Narrowing is Widening.

**Navel Radiation:** A body organization in which the limbs move and organize themselves in relation to the core or navel, like a starfish.

**Near Reach:** An action occurring close to one's body.

**Passive Weight:** Weight that drops or gives in to gravity, rather than actively mobilizing (as in Light and Strong Weight). Passive Weight can be either Limp or Heavy, correlating to Light and Strong Weight Effort.

**Peripheral Pathway:** A gestural or postural movement pathway that travels along the edge of the Kinesphere or Form, distanced from the centre of the body.

**Phrasing:** An aspect of Effort that considers the various ways in which Effort elements combine in sequence to carry out an action or connected series of actions. Phrases consist of three stages: Preparation, Exertion, and Recuperation.

**Pin Body Attitude:** See Body Attitude.

**Pre-Effort:** Precursors of Effort in child development; preceded by Tension Flow Attributes and followed by crystallized Efforts.

**Quick:** See Time Effort.

**Retreating:** Shaping in the Sagittal Plane with a backward emphasis.

**Scattering:** The general Shaping quality of going away from the body (Dell 56).

**Screw Body Attitude:** See Body Attitude.

**Sequencing:** Considers body movement in terms of “the initial impulse and its continuity” (Fernandes 100). Sequencing can be Simultaneous (parts moving at the same time), Successive (adjacent parts moving one after another), or Sequential (non-adjacent parts moving one after the other).

**Shape:** One of LMA’s four categories or Modes of Intent, focusing on how the body forms itself in space in relation to itself, objects, others, or the environment. The Shape category consists of three Modes of Shape Change: **Shape Flow**, **Directional Movement**, and **Shaping**, each of which can be further broken down into several qualities.

**Shape Flow:** One of the three Modes of Shape Change, which addresses the relationship of the body to itself, generally through subtle shifts or adjustments of inner volumes toward or away from centre in Growing or Shrinking patterns.

**Shaping:** One of the three Modes of Shape Change; refers to three-dimensional movement that facilitates interacting with and adapting to others and environment.

**Space:** One of LMA’s four categories or Modes of Intent, focusing on the geometry or architecture of space, including directions, pathways, levels, and Kinesphere.

**Space Effort:** One of the four Effort Factors; refers to attention or focus in space when moving, becoming either **Direct** through focusing on a single point, or **Indirect** through a diffuse focus on multiple points.

**Spinal:** A body organization pattern emphasizing the connection between head and tail along the length of the spine, most clearly demonstrated in fish and aquatic mammals.

**Spreading:** Shaping in the Horizontal Plane with an outward emphasis.

**Strong:** See Weight Effort.

**Sustained:** See Time Effort.

**Tension Flow Attributes:** Precursors of Effort and pre-Effort in infant and child development; followed by pre-Efforts and crystallized Efforts.

**Themes:** Four dialectics, each informing and containing the others, constituting broad themes of movement that are present in all aspects of LMA. These four themes are **Inner-Outer**, **Function-Expression**, **Mobility-Stability**, and **Exertion-Recuperation**. The two polarities of each theme form a continuum and dynamically influence each other in all movement.

**Time Effort:** One of the four Effort Factors; refers to “variation in movement velocity, becoming gradually faster [**Quick**] or slower [**Sustained**]” (Fernandes 157). Time Effort is not about how many minutes a task takes, but about the change in accelerating or decelerating movement.

**Wall Body Attitude:** See Body Attitude.

**Weight Effort:** One of the four Effort Factors; refers to “changes in the quality of the body weight, becoming either light [**Light Weight Effort**] or forceful [**Strong Weight Effort**]” (Dell 20). “Weight” in LMA terms is not related to an individual’s measurements in pounds or kilograms.

**Yield-Push, Reach-Pull Cycle:** A developmental cycle that establishes how we access space, starting with Yielding into and Pushing against gravity, and progressing to Reaching and Pulling out into space/environment.

## Appendix B: Film Summaries<sup>122</sup>

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

In 1937, Disney released its first feature-length animated film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, based on the Grimm Brothers' fairy tale "Sneewittchen" (1812). The Grimms' version of the tale begins with a queen wishing for a child "as white as snow, as red as blood, and as black as the wood of the window frame" (Tatar 81). She gets her wish, and dies giving birth to the child, aptly named Snow White. Several years pass, during which Snow White gains a stepmother. The stepmother is vain and grows envious when her magic mirror declares Snow White to be more beautiful than herself, compelling her to order her huntsman to do away with the young girl. The huntsman leads Snow White into the forest to murder her but ultimately lets her go. Snow White wanders in the forest until she comes across a cottage belonging to seven dwarfs, who take her in, while the huntsman returns to the queen bearing the lungs and liver of a boar. The queen eats these entrails, believing them to be Snow White's.

When the queen learns that Snow White still lives, she disguises herself—not through magic, but "by staining her face and dressing up as an old peddler woman" (Tatar 88)—and sets off to murder her stepdaughter. First she sells Snow White some beautiful staylaces, lacing her so tightly that she cannot breathe. However, the dwarfs revive Snow White after the queen leaves and so she must try again, this time with a poisoned comb, created using "all the witchcraft in her power" (Tatar 89). Again the dwarfs rescue Snow White. Thwarted, the queen makes a poisoned apple and sets off to try once more, and she at last succeeds. The dwarfs display Snow White's beautiful corpse in a glass coffin on a mountain, where a prince sees her and requests that the dwarfs give him the coffin and the fair maiden inside. Upon moving the coffin, the piece of apple

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<sup>122</sup> Summaries of fairy tales are compiled from Hallett and Karasek (2002), Tatar (2002), and Zipes (2001).

is dislodged from Snow White's throat and she awakens, falling in love with the prince and agreeing to marry him. The queen is invited to their wedding where she is made to don burning-hot iron slippers and dance to her death as punishment.

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The Disney version of the tale skips the background of Snow White's birth, beginning instead after she has grown into a beautiful young woman, orphaned and left to live with her "vain and wicked Stepmother the Queen" (*Snow White*).<sup>123</sup> As the film opens, the Queen approaches her magic mirror, asking it to confirm that she is the fairest in the land. When the mirror reveals that she has lost the title to her stepdaughter, the Queen is upset and determines that something must be done. At this point we see Snow White, who is not only beautiful but kind and good-natured as well, dressed in rags and completing chores as she smiles and sings with the birds that have flocked to her presence. A handsome Prince appears, having heard her singing, and Snow White runs and hides, demurely expressing her interest by blowing the Prince a kiss.

The Queen observes this interaction and is more determined than ever to eliminate Snow White. She enlists a Huntsman to take Snow White into the woods to murder her, ordering him to bring back her heart as proof of the deed. The Huntsman hesitatingly agrees, but is ultimately moved by Snow White's beauty and innocence; rather than killing her, he tells her to run away, which leads her to come upon a cottage in the woods and befriend the seven dwarfs who inhabit it. The Huntsman returns with a pig's heart instead of Snow White's; the Queen is satisfied at first, but soon discovers the Huntsman's deception and realizes that she must take matters into

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<sup>123</sup> Note about capitalization: In quotes, words are capitalized as they appear in the film (I.e. an image of a book shows the phrase with capitalization). Titles such as Queen, Huntsman, Prince, etc. are capitalized per conventions observed in official books and other commentary released by Disney. Likewise, similar titles are not capitalized in the fairy tale, which is reflected in my summary.

her own hands. She concocts a potion that will turn her into an elderly peddler<sup>124</sup> and poisons an apple with the “Sleeping Death,” a curse which can only be cured by “Love’s First Kiss.” Disguise and plan in place, she departs from the castle and journeys into the woods. She finds Snow White alone in the cottage, the dwarfs gone off to work, and offers her the “Wishing Apple,” which Snow White takes in hopes of finding her Prince again. The dwarfs rush back just as Snow White succumbs to the poison and chase after the Queen-cum-peddler, cornering her on a cliff. A fortuitous bolt of lightning strikes the rock and she falls to her death, her victory short-lived. The dwarfs return home and place Snow White in a coffin of glass and gold; the Prince appears as they mourn and kisses her in sorrow, awakening her and allowing them both to live happily ever after.

### ***Sleeping Beauty (1959)***

Three versions of the “Sleeping Beauty” story are widely included in the canon of European fairy tales (Hallett and Karasek 17; Zipes, *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition* 684): Giambattista Basile’s “Sole, Luna, e Talia” (“Sun, Moon, and Talia” 1634), Charles Perrault’s “La Belle au Bois Dormant” (“The Beauty in the Sleeping Wood” 1697), and Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm’s “Dornröschen” (“Briar Rose” 1857). In Basile’s version, wise men prophesy that Talia, sometimes described as the daughter of a king, sometimes that of a lord, will die from a splinter of flax. After the prophesy comes to pass, Talia’s body is found by a king from another land, who is overcome by his attraction to her. Nine months later, Talia gives birth to twins who awaken her by sucking the flax splinter from her finger. The king, in his delight, incites the jealousy of his wife, who attempts to have Talia and her children murdered and fed to her husband. She is

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<sup>124</sup> While the character refers to her own transformed persona as that of a peddler, she is called “the Witch” in most Disney literature written about the film.

thwarted and punished, and Talia lives happily with the king and their children. Notably, the evil female character appears only in the second half of the tale, rather than cursing the princess at its beginning, and her jealousy and attempted solution of murder and cannibalism recall the methods employed by Snow White's stepmother.

Perrault retains the basic structure of Basile's tale, but alters and expands many of the details, including the role of the villainess. Upon the birth of their daughter, a king and queen ask the seven fairies of the land to attend the young princess's christening as her godmothers. They all bestow gifts upon her, but when the last, elderly fairy is slighted, she curses the child to prick her finger on a spindle and die. A younger fairy is able to alter the curse so that the princess will merely fall into a hundred-year sleep, after which time a prince will wake her. These events transpire accordingly, and it is after the prince and princess are wed that they have two children, and the prince brings his wife and children to his kingdom. His ogre mother, who had grown suspicious at the prince's sneaking away over the past several years, plans to eat the princess and her children, but ultimately fails and dies, allowing them to live peacefully. The Grimms' tale is very similar to Perrault's, although the fairies are replaced by wise women, and for the first time the princess is awoken with a kiss. Most notably, their version of the story omits any persecution by the prince's mother or wife, ending the tale after the princess is awakened and married—a convention that has persisted in many subsequent adaptations, including the Disney film.

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Released in 1959, Disney's *Sleeping Beauty* tells the story of a princess who is cursed as an infant by an evil fairy, doomed to prick her finger on a spindle and fall into an eternal sleep unless she is saved by true love's kiss. The film's opening credits introduce the incorporation of the Tchaikovsky ballet score for *The Sleeping Beauty* (1890) and are followed by a storybook



opening similar to that found in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, with a narrator providing necessary background information: the king and queen of a sufficiently vague “far away land, long ago” (later established in the film as the fourteenth century) have at long last had a child, Aurora. The royal couple has declared a holiday in her honor, and the citizens of the kingdom have all come to pay homage to the infant princess. Among the attendants are the young Prince Phillip—Aurora’s betrothed—and the three good fairies Flora, Fauna, and Merryweather. As the fairies are blessing Aurora with their gifts, the evil fairy Maleficent appears in a bluster of wind, lightning, and thunder. Maleficent, “quite distressed at not receiving an invitation” (*Sleeping Beauty*), curses Aurora to prick her finger on a spindle and die before her sixteenth birthday ends. The fairies are able to mitigate the damage of the curse, turning the sentence of death into an eternal sleep, one only to be ended by true love’s kiss. In an effort to protect Aurora from Maleficent’s machinations, the fairies disguise themselves as non-magical peasant women and spirit her off to a cottage in the woods, where she is to remain hidden until the curse’s purview has passed.

When the princess’s sixteenth birthday arrives, Aurora is happily situated in the forest as the peasant Briar Rose, while Maleficent’s frustration at being foiled reaches its peak. As Aurora cavorts in the forest and meets a handsome prince (her betrothed Phillip, unbeknownst to either of them), her fairy godmothers prepare a birthday celebration for her, using their magic for the first time in sixteen years. It is this premature decision that alerts Maleficent to their location, and when they bring Aurora to the castle that evening, Maleficent is at last able to enact her curse. The fairies put the rest of the kingdom to sleep, while Maleficent captures Prince Phillip to keep him from waking Aurora. Phillip escapes with the help of the good fairies, fights and defeats Maleficent—who transforms into a towering dragon in an attempt to thwart him—and makes his

way to his princess, waking her with true love's kiss. The kingdom awakens, Phillip and Aurora dance, and everyone lives happily ever after.

### ***The Sword in the Stone (1963)***

Based on T. H. White's 1938 novel of the same name, *The Sword in the Stone* (1963) follows the childhood adventures of the legendary King Arthur through a loosely connected, episodic structure. This structure originates from the source material, which details Arthur's education at the hands of the wizard Merlin,<sup>125</sup> and is the first of four novels (a fifth was published posthumously) about the life of the legendary monarch. While the basic premise of a young Arthur (called Wart by his family) being tutored by Merlin is taken from White's book, as well as some of the individual adventures—Merlin turns Wart into a fish to teach him to use his intellect in the face of a stronger adversary; into a squirrel to learn about the laws of nature; and into a sparrow to learn how to fly—the details of the Disney film have little in common with its source material.

In the chapter in which Madam Mim appears, Wart and his foster brother Kay are playing near the forest and venture into it when an arrow goes astray. In retrieving it, they encounter a cottage belonging to a witch—Madam Mim, an accomplished woman with a B.A. from Dom-Daniel and particular skills in pianoforte, needlework, and necromancy. Kay wants to return home, while Wart is curious and insists upon looking at the cottage, causing them to be lured inside and captured by the witch. She locks them up in cages with the intent of eating them, and the boys must conspire with their fellow prisoners, who are all animals, to escape. Wart sends a

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<sup>125</sup> Many of the characters' names vary slightly between White's novel and the Disney film: Merlin is spelled "Merlyn" by White, Madam Mim is "Madame Mim," and Wart is "the Wart." For consistency and ease of reading, I will use the Disney spellings throughout.

goat to fetch Merlin, who arrives and engages in a duel with Mim. While it is ultimately Merlin who saves the day, Wart is called upon to prove his character and resourcefulness, risking his life in his refusal to abandon Kay and attempts to thwart Mim at every turn.

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In the film adaptation, Wart encounters Mim alone, still transformed into a sparrow from Merlin's most recent lesson. After falling down her chimney, Wart is discovered by Mim, who identifies herself as a powerful and dark witch. Mim introduces herself through the song "Mad Madam Mim," complete with many transformations, and when Wart reveals his connection with Merlin, Mim decides that she must destroy him. Merlin arrives, engaging Mim in a Wizards' Duel, in which they both undergo a series of magical transformations into various animals in an attempt to best the other. Merlin ultimately defeats Mim by turning into a germ and making her sick, leaving her in bed to heal and continuing on with Wart to their next adventure.

### ***The Little Mermaid (1989)***

"The Little Mermaid," written by Hans Christian Andersen in 1837, tells the story of the youngest daughter of a widowed mer-king who rules deep below the sea. The little mermaid loves to listen to her grandmother's stories of the world above the ocean, and she cannot wait until she turns fifteen and is allowed to visit the surface. At last her birthday comes, and she swims to the surface, where she sees a great ship full of people, among them a handsome prince. She is captivated by the prince and the festivities taking place on board the ship, and when a storm sinks the vessel and throws the prince overboard, she saves him and carries him to the shore before leaving.

The mermaid continues to pine for the prince. When her grandmother tells her that men on land have immortal souls—and that she might have one too if a man were to fall in love with and marry her—she decides that she must find a way to be with her prince. She seeks help from the sea witch, who promises her a potion that will give her legs; however, the witch warns her that she will be in constant pain, and she will never be able to be a mermaid again. Even worse, if the prince marries someone else, she will die and become sea foam. The mermaid agrees to these terms, and the sea witch gives her the potion in exchange for her beautiful voice, leaving her mute. She swims to the surface at the edge of the prince’s castle, where he finds her the next day in her newly human form.

The mermaid grows very dear to the prince and stays at his side, but he pines for another girl, whom he mistakenly believes to have been his saviour on the day the little mermaid rescued him from the shipwreck. He eventually marries this other girl, a princess from a neighbouring kingdom, and the mermaid is devastated with the knowledge that she will die the following morning. Her sisters appear with a knife from the sea witch that will turn her back into a mermaid if she uses it to kill the prince, but she cannot bring herself to commit the act and allows her body to turn to foam instead. Because of her suffering she becomes a “daughter of the air” and is granted the opportunity to earn an immortal soul through performing good deeds.

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Transformation plays a significant role in the original story, and Andersen’s “constant engagement with mutability and changes in identity” (Tatar 308) is taken even further in Disney’s version, as not only does the titular mermaid herself transform, but so does the sea witch, multiple times. Released in 1989, Disney’s *The Little Mermaid* marks the beginning of an era commonly known as the “Disney Renaissance,” during which the company experienced a

resurgence of popularity in their animated productions, which had dwindled significantly since the fifties. The protagonist of the film is a teenage mermaid named Ariel, the youngest daughter of King Triton. Fascinated by the world above the ocean's surface, Ariel falls in love with a human prince named Eric and rescues him from a storm at sea, singing to him as he regains consciousness. Her father's disapproval of both her infatuation with the surface and her love of a human prince drives her to the sea witch Ursula, a morbidly obese half-human, half-octopus hybrid. Ariel makes a deal with Ursula to trade her voice for a pair of legs—with the stipulation that if she is unable to make Prince Eric kiss her before the sun sets on her third day as a human, Ursula will own her soul forever. Ariel swims to the surface with the help of her sea-creature friends and meets Prince Eric, who has been pining for the mysterious woman with the beautiful voice who saved his life—clearly not the mute girl Ariel appears to be. Still, they spend time together and very nearly share a kiss, thwarted only by Ursula's eel lackeys, who have been sent to spy on her and impede her progress.

Sensing that her plan may fail, Ursula transforms herself into a beautiful girl named Vanessa and uses Ariel's voice (along with a bit of her own magic) to trick Eric into marrying her. Ariel is heartbroken, but upon learning that Vanessa is actually Ursula in disguise, she rushes to the wedding to save her love. She gets her voice back but is too late—the sun sets on her third day as a human, and she turns back into a mermaid moments before Eric can kiss her. Ursula transforms back into her half-octopus form and absconds with Ariel back under the sea, only to run into Ariel's father, King Triton. Triton trades his own soul for his daughter's, giving Ursula the power to rule the sea with his magic trident. Ursula then transforms once more, this time into a giant version of herself; she creates storms and maelstroms and is on the verge of killing Ariel when Prince Eric harpoons her on the bow of his ship. Defeated, Ursula sinks limply into the sea

as her tentacles twitch around her. Triton is freed and, seeing how much his daughter loves her human prince, grants Ariel legs with his magic trident and allows her to marry him.

### ***The Emperor's New Groove (2000)***

Following the Disney Renaissance of 1989-1999, *The Emperor's New Groove* (2000) represents a somewhat unexplored genre for Disney animation: the non-musical comedy. Despite what the title may suggest, *The Emperor's New Groove* is not based on Hans Christian Andersen's "The Emperor's New Clothes" (1837), except perhaps in that both stories are about an emperor whose self-importance and sense of superiority land him in trouble. The film underwent many changes during its production. In its original incarnation, the story loosely followed the premise of "The Prince and the Pauper" by Mark Twain (1881), with the young emperor swapping places with a peasant who resembles him, but as the film evolved this framework faded into the story as it now exists (Silverman 305).

The film is about the trials and tribulations—and subsequent lessons learned—of Kuzco, the young emperor of an unspecified South American kingdom in an unspecified ancient past. Kuzco is self-centred and cares little for the people he rules, going so far as to make plans to destroy an entire village in order to build himself a summer home. His advisor, the elderly Yzma, longs to seize the emperor's power for herself, and when Kuzco callously fires her, she plots to poison him. Her plans go awry, however, when her selected poison turns Kuzco into a llama rather than killing him. She sends her henchman Kronk to kill and dispose of Kuzco, but in his incompetence he loses the llama-emperor's unconscious body, dropping the sack containing it onto the cart of a passing villager. The villager, a man named Pacha, is leaving the city after coming to beg Kuzco to reconsider destroying his village—the intended location of the

aforementioned summer home—to no avail. It is not until Pacha reaches his home that he discovers the talking llama he has acquired and learns that it is Emperor Kuzco. He eventually agrees to help Kuzco return to the palace, and the two embark on a journey full of obstacles, not the least of which is Yzma, who has learned that Kuzco is still alive in llama form. She and Kronk set out to find him, and after some comical near misses she confronts Kuzco back in her lair at the palace, interrupting his search for an antidote that will return him to human form. An extended struggle ensues, in which Kuzco is transformed into a variety of creatures (a sequence reminiscent of the Wizards' Duel in *The Sword in the Stone*) and Yzma is ultimately turned into a small, fluffy kitten. Kuzco eventually triumphs due to the teamwork he learned with Pacha and returns to human form, now a wise and benevolent ruler, while Yzma is stuck in her feline form.

### ***Tangled* (2010)**

*Tangled* (2010) gives the Disney treatment to the “Rapunzel” fairy tale, recorded by the Brothers Grimm in 1812 (Tatar 105). The tale begins with a husband and wife who live next to a powerful old witch with a beautiful garden. The wife becomes pregnant and comes to crave the lettuce the witch grows, a variety called “rapunzel,” prompting her husband to sneak into the garden and steal some for her. He is caught by the witch, who allows him to continue taking the lettuce only if he promises her their unborn child. He agrees, and the witch takes the child away as soon as she is born, giving her the name Rapunzel. When Rapunzel turns twelve, the witch locks her away in a tower with no way in or out, save climbing Rapunzel's long hair and entering through the single window at the top.

Many years pass, until one day a prince hears Rapunzel singing in her tower and climbs up to her. The prince asks Rapunzel to marry him and she accepts, as long as he will bring her

enough silk to braid a ladder so that she can leave the tower. The prince continues to visit Rapunzel without the witch's knowledge, until Rapunzel accidentally reveals their secret meetings by asking the witch why she is so much heavier to pull up than the prince.<sup>126</sup> Enraged that Rapunzel has been seeing the prince, the witch cuts her hair and banishes her to the wilderness. The witch tricks the prince into climbing the severed hair on his next visit, and when he learns that Rapunzel is gone he flings himself from the tower, blinding himself on a bramble patch in his fall. He wanders the forest for many years, mourning the loss of Rapunzel. Eventually he hears her voice, having come to the wilderness where she was banished and has been raising the twins to whom she gave birth. Rapunzel's tears from reuniting with the prince heal his blindness, and he returns to his kingdom with her and their children, where they live happily ever after.

The Grimms' story of "Rapunzel" borrows from a tale by Giambattista Basile recorded in the 1630s, as well as an eighteenth-century version by Friedrich Schulz, which was in turn influenced by a seventeenth-century French fairy tale by Charlotte-Rose Caumont de la Force (Tatar 106; Zipes, *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition* 474-75, 479, 484). In Basile's tale it is an ogress who owns the garden and demands the unborn child as payment, and she does not take the child until she is seven. The passing prince falls in love not with the girl's voice, but her beautiful face, and the young lovers manage to escape the tower and the ogress with the aid of three magic acorns. The versions by Charlotte-Rose de la Force and Friedrich Schulz both feature a fairy with a beautiful garden to tempt the pregnant wife. Upon receiving the newborn child as payment for the requisite theft, the fairy herself makes the child beautiful before spiriting her away. Here, the fairy hides the girl in a tower in the woods to "shield her from her destiny" and provides her with

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<sup>126</sup> Earlier versions of the tale have Rapunzel asking why her own clothes no longer fit, implying that she became pregnant from the prince's visits.



everything she could possibly desire, apart from some company. The girl's liaison with the prince is discovered when she becomes pregnant, and the fairy removes her to a "pleasant enough" seaside before returning to exact vengeance on the prince, who is thrown from the tower by the fairy's power, rather than through his own despair. The prince finds his love and their children, but they face one more obstacle when their surroundings subsequently turn inhospitable and prevent them from eating, until the fairy takes pity and transports them to the prince's kingdom.

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Disney's version of the story has shifted which characters hold power, whether political or magical. Rather than a man and woman of no consequence and a powerful old witch with an ordinary (although sought-after) plant, *Tangled* begins with a royal couple and an ordinary old woman with a magic flower. The old woman, Mother Gothel, has been using the flower's magic to keep herself young for hundreds of years, keeping it hidden away deep in the woods so no one else can use it. When the king and queen of the land learn that they are going to have a child and the queen subsequently falls ill, they search for the flower to heal her, taking it from the forest. The queen is healed, and she gives birth to a daughter named Rapunzel. Gothel finds that the flower's magic has transferred to the infant's hair, so she kidnaps her and hides her away in a tower deep in the woods, raising Rapunzel as her own daughter and never allowing her to cut her hair, which would destroy its magic.

Eighteen years later, the power reversal extends to the next generation of characters as well: while in the fairy tale the common-born Rapunzel is rescued by a prince who hears her singing from her tower, in the film Rapunzel is a princess herself and it is a common thief whom she encounters. Rapunzel, whose hair has grown to absurd lengths, longs to leave her tower and see the world. She begs Gothel, who is a manipulative, gaslighting parent, to allow her to go see

the floating lanterns that are released every year on her birthday—in honor of herself, the lost princess, unbeknownst to Rapunzel. Gothel refuses, reminding Rapunzel through song that “mother knows best” and that she is never to ask to leave the tower, before taking her own leave. At the same time, a thief by the name of Flynn Rider has been chased into the woods after stealing a tiara (Rapunzel’s, in fact) from the castle. He happens upon the tower while Gothel is away, and after a rough introduction, Rapunzel convinces him to take her to the city to see the lights.

Rapunzel and Flynn bond on their adventure and eventually fall in love, while Mother Gothel follows them and schemes to get Rapunzel back, gradually aging the longer she is away from Rapunzel’s magic hair. She eventually convinces Rapunzel that Flynn has betrayed and abandoned her (when he has in fact been captured and sentenced to hang due to Gothel’s machinations), and the two return home to the tower in the woods. As Flynn escapes and makes his way to the tower, Rapunzel discovers that she is the lost princess and that Gothel kidnapped her to hoard her hair’s magic. Flynn arrives and is stabbed by Gothel, and Rapunzel barter her freedom to save him—if she is allowed to use her magic hair to heal his wound, she will stay with Gothel forever. With his last breath, Flynn cuts Rapunzel’s hair in order to free her from Gothel’s servitude. The magic now gone, Gothel ages rapidly, falling out of the tower window in her distress as her body disintegrates to nothing. Rapunzel cries over Flynn’s body, and her tears heal him with the same magic that her hair held. They return to the castle where she is reunited with her parents, Flynn is welcomed by the royal family, and they live happily ever after.

## Appendix C: Field Notes

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

The film begins with the Queen walking up the steps to a dais; her body is in Pin Attitude and her steps are Sustained. She speaks to her magic mirror, extending her arms to Far Reach Space in her Kinesphere as she raises them to High Diagonal Side before crossing them in front of her. Rather than folding her arms close to her body in Near Reach, a common gesture, she holds them in Mid Reach, level on the Horizontal Plane in front of her chest – already we are given the sense that placement in Space is important to her movement, particularly in her arm gestures. The rest of her body remains still during this sequence, with the exception of one Quick, Bound head movement. Her arms alternate between Far and Mid Reach several more times throughout the scene, tracing Peripheral Pathways with Sustained Time Effort, resulting in a broad, sweeping feeling.

As she asks her mirror who is the fairest one of all and receives a dissatisfactory response, the Queen uses Shape mode, Ascending and Retreating as she brings her arms into Mid Reach. Her arm and head movements are Indirect and gradually go from Sustained and Light to Quick and Strong as she reacts to the mirror's revelation that her stepdaughter Snow White is more beautiful than her. She ends the conversation, and the scene, by dramatically sending her arm down with Quick, Strong, and Bound Effort as her upper body Ascends and Gathers in opposition.

The scene changes to one of Snow White cheerily performing her chores outside the castle, the Queen watching from her window. When Snow White meets her Prince, the Queen angrily closes the curtains with Quick, Strong, and Direct Effort (Punch). Shortly afterward, we see the Queen in her throne room commissioning a Huntsman to dispose of her stepdaughter.

Again, the Peripheral Pathway she traces as she sends her arm into Far Reach Diagonal is clear, and her movements as she speaks to the Huntsman are primarily Sustained. In her seated position her torso is more engaged in Shaping, Retreating and Ascending before Advancing and Descending with the patterns of her speech. In the previous scene as well as this one, the Queen's arms and head tend to move Simultaneously, as when bringing an arm in as she tilts her chin up, or at 7:03 when she Flicks simultaneously with her head and hand before Descending and Advancing as she instructs the Huntsman to take Snow White into the forest. Compared to her first scene, with its primarily full-arm movements, now the Queen also incorporates several smaller, Light gestures with her hands: a Quick, Indirect Flick; a Free, Indirect wave; the Quick, Bound drumming of her fingers. These Light, affectedly casual movements are followed by a sudden shift to Strong Effort as she Advances with her head to lean forward and reveal her evil plan: the Huntsman is to kill Snow White. Such extreme Effort shifts between Light/Sustained and Strong/Quick hint at the even more dynamic outbursts by Maleficent, to come later, in *Sleeping Beauty*.

When hearing the Huntsman's reticence to commit murder, the Queen stands angrily, Ascending with Strong, Direct Effort as she raises her arm from Middle to High. She lowers her hand through Mid Reach to her midline with Sustained and Bound Effort before shifting to Quick and Direct to point in Far Reach Low Diagonal. As she demands Snow White's heart as proof of her murder, the animation creates the illusion of a straight-on camera angle, as if the Queen is speaking directly into the camera; this perspective reveals the frequent subtle Ascending of her head connected to her speaking.

When the Queen next appears, Snow White has escaped to the woods and is comfortably settled at the cottage of the seven dwarfs. Thinking that the Huntsman has fulfilled his duty and

has killed Snow White, the Queen once more asks her mirror who is fairest. Her Pin Body Attitude is again apparent as she Retreats and Ascends with the question. Here as well we see gestures in Mid and Far Reach, her Sustained movements interrupted by a Flick (Quick, Light, Indirect) of her hand in Mid Reach High as she explains that Snow White is dead. She shows the mirror her trophy – Snow White’s heart (or so she believes) in an ornate casket – by Advancing with her left shoulder and Retreating with her right. Her movements turn Quick when she learns from the mirror that it is in fact a pig’s heart that she holds. She snaps the box shut and stalks away, Slashing with her arm as she draws her cape around her. She maintains her Pin Body Attitude as she descends a spiral staircase, Quick, Light, and Bound in her hurry to reach her dungeon lair. We see her walking (as opposed to climbing or descending stairs) for the first time as she crosses from the bottom of the staircase to the door.

Once in her dungeon she Ascends with Sustained Time Effort and tilts her head down with Quick as she absorbs the Huntsman’s betrayal and her own failure to eliminate her rival, twisting her body in a Screw Attitude before throwing the box to the floor with a Slashing gesture. Her Space pattern of Mid and Far Reach continues – an interesting tendency, as many of the other villainesses observed in this study combine Mid Reach with Near, not Far. Her Pin Attitude is less pronounced as she walks across the room to her bookcase, shifting slightly toward a Screw Body Attitude as she sweeps her cape and Advances and rotates her torso with her step.

The Queen holds her fingers delicately as she searches for a book on the shelf at 49:24, with the index finger raised slightly above the others and a Floating Effort Action Drive (Light, Sustained, Indirect). She Advances as she bends over her spell book to find her desired spell, then Ascends and emphasizes her Pin Body Attitude as she stands up straight, gesturing to

herself from Near Reach High to Mid Reach Low to indicate her “queenly raiment” (as well as her queenly movement) as she formulates a plan to transform herself into a poor peddler. Her movements are Sustained and Bound as she begins concocting her magic potion, and as she continues they become Quicker and Light when she completes and pulls away from actions such as pouring, lighting a burner, or opening a tap. She becomes even more lifted as she reaches for various items, lifting her torso to bend, keeping her elbow raised, holding the chalice containing the potion away from her in Mid Reach instead of Near. Animating these movements in this way (or performing them in this way, in the case of the live action reference model) may have been intended to create a clear, readable picture (making things more “interesting,” to repeat Luske), but it again gives her a balletic quality, similar to the way she holds her fingers.

At last her potion is complete, and she traces a Transverse Pathway as she stands at the window and raises the chalice to Far Reach High in front of her: a Quick, Spoke-like movement to send it straight out, followed by a Sustained, Arc-like movement upward. She repeats this movement, Quicker throughout this time, then brings the chalice in to Near Reach, Enclosing and bringing her head down in preparation. At last she drinks, Ascending and Spreading as she tilts back with her head and torso. Her Flow Effort becomes Bound, dropping the chalice and clutching at her throat, continuing to arch further into a Back Ball Attitude as the concoction takes effect before clutching her throat and bending forward into Front Ball. She Ascends and Descends with her breath as her body begins to react. This is the last we will see of the Queen; she is soon to become the Witch.

Amid swirling colors, bubbles, and flashes of lightning and thunder, the Queen begins to transform. Her hair is the first to change; she continues to arch back as it turns white, holding tension in her body and clasping her throat with one hand as the other reaches out, grasping at

nothing in Mid Reach. At 50:56 we see a close-up shot of her hands, held Bound as her perfectly manicured nails turn claw-like and her fingers extend and grow gnarled; she turns them over with Sustained Time Effort and takes in their wrinkled, knobby appearance in disbelief. Unlike many of the films to come, we actually see several of the Queen's features morph through the animation – as opposed to the transformation occurring off-screen or behind a puff of smoke. While the full transformation is interspersed with shots of smoke and swirls of color, bubbles, lightning and thunder, and liquids meant to resemble the potion she has just consumed, we see her hair go from black to grey to white, her hands grow and change from young to old, and her shadow cast on the wall morphs as her body shrinks from tall and upright to bent with age, her peddler's clothing also taking form in this shift as her voice changes and the transformation is complete.

The most immediately apparent movement shift is in the Queen-cum-Witch's Body Attitude, going from Pin to Ball in the transformation shown through her shadow and seen more clearly as she turns toward the camera in her black cloak. Her arm is held horizontally in Mid Reach, a gesture she has performed many times before, but it is now used to hide her face as her head sits lower than her shoulders in her hunched, extreme Ball Attitude.

In contrast to her prior focus on Space, now Shape becomes more significant. She Ascends and Descends much more frequently and exaggeratedly, as in her Ascending and Advancing to reveal her face for the first time (51:17), her dramatic Ascending and Retreating on discovering the perfect poison for Snow White (51:41), or her Ascending (51:56) as she speaks directly to the camera (This convention of facing the "camera" directly, which was employed earlier, becomes even more frequent after the Queen transforms into the Witch, perhaps to emphasize her devious plotting, as opposed to her prior tendency to delegate/give orders (or

something — do some more research here). Coupled with a shift from Sustained to Quick Time Effort and a slightly less Bound Flow Effort, the resulting impression is that of a completely new personality, one less dignified and concerned with appearance and behavior, perhaps to match her physical changes – this disguise is more than simply “staining her face and dressing up” (Tatar 88), as the queen in the fairy tale does. Her hand gestures lose their balletic grace as well, pointing with more Direct Space Effort, bending down from the wrist and breaking the line rather than holding the hand out, and curling her fingers from the first and second knuckles instead of extending them as she skims her spell book.

The Witch’s use of Shaping continues as she prepares the apple with which she will poison Snow White. She Advances downward to dip the apple into her bubbling cauldron, Ascending and lifting it back out with Sustained Effort. Shape plays a role in Phrasing as well, as seen when she Quickly Ascends before extending her arm into Far Reach to present the apple to her crow companion, who has been rather nervously observing the entire ordeal. This reach is a Spoke-like action, contrasting with the Queen’s preference for Arc-like arm movements and Peripheral Pathways.

The Witch Advances and Ascends as she talks to the crow, and the Ascending and Descending that accompany her speech in general have become full-body Shaping actions, as opposed to a movement pattern limited primarily to her head as seen in her prior form. She does Ascend and gesture with her arm in Far Reach High, as she proclaims that she will at last be fairest in the land, a combination that echoes movements of her previous form, but the details are different: rather than Ascending on a constant trajectory, ever higher into her Pin Attitude, her Ascending now crests and breaks, Descending a bit in between so that she bobs up to emphasize certain words. Her arm no longer follows a smooth trajectory on its Peripheral Pathway, but



traces a Central Pathway upward, bending and straightening in time with the pattern of Ascending as it reaches its final destination in Far Reach. Here and throughout the rest of her scenes, the Witch's movements are less frequently isolated to specific body parts and less Bound, making her appear generally more active and less restrained in her new form, almost restless.

More Near Reach gestures begin to appear, as when she brings her finger very close to her face while her eyes dart back and forth – a Quick gesture very unlike the Queen – or when she pulls her elbow back to draw her fist close to her body while she tells the crow what she has planned for the apple. At times this use of Near Reach serves to create a stronger contrast with her Far Reach gestures, while at others it combines with her Ball Body Attitude to create a sense of Enclosing that further separates her from her old self: the Queen's Sustained Ascending and Far Reach arm gestures give the impression of Spreading, taking up space rather than appearing to be weighed down by it like the Witch, despite her previously mentioned active energy.

This energy manifests as she contemplates the possibility of an antidote to her poison: having grown relatively still as the idea crosses her mind, she suddenly Ascends and stalks toward her spell book with Punching Effort (Quick, Strong, Direct). Just as the Queen's Pin Body Attitude occasionally gives way to a Screw Attitude when walking, so now the Witch's Body Attitude shifts slightly into Wall as she walks (1:03:45), a quality that will appear again when she walks in later scenes as well. She repeats her prior tendency to Descend while Advancing as she pores over the book, Initiating from her head, as well as the oppositional Ascending and Retreating when she finds what she seeks. She points to the book's antidote clause with Quick, Strong, and Direct Effort (Punch), the complete opposite of how her hand Floated (Sustained, Light, Indirect) over the book spines lined up on her shelf before her transformation. She Ascends at her discovery with Quick, Strong Effort as well – though she

presumably Descends and Advances over the book again as she reads (the camera cuts to a close-up of the page), since she Ascends and Retreats again after reading that “love’s first kiss” will revive Snow White, this time with Sustained Effort, before slamming the book shut with Quick, Strong Effort. She Ascends and Descends multiple times as she reasons that the dwarfs will surely think Snow White dead and bury her anyway; these frequent contrasts in both Shaping and Effort, as well as the increase in Quick Time Effort, serve to exaggerate her movement in comparison to her pre-transformation tendencies.

Ready to find Snow White, the Witch places the apple in a basket with Light, Sustained, Bound Effort, patting it with a Dab (Quick, Light, Direct) before heading to her trapdoor. As she descends the secret staircase and pulls the door shut over her head she repeats the phrase “buried alive”; the cycling of Descend/Advance and Ascend/Retreat during this four-syllable phrase results in a circular motion of her head and upper torso. She finally closes the trapdoor with Sustained Time Effort and descends the stairs, nothing like the way she did when she first entered her dungeon lair – certainly her mood shift plays a part, having gone from the fresh frustration of learning her plan had failed to her newfound confidence and satisfaction that this plan will succeed, but her new, freer personality and movement patterns also play a large part in this contrast. Her torso and arm move freely to balance both her laughter and her steps, whereas before these body parts were largely held (except when her arm was used to dramatically sweep her cape). The torso arches forward and back, switching between Enclosing and Spreading Shaping as she laughs, and her arm swings in Mid Reach in opposition to her torso – forward when she leans back and back when she leans forward.

The Witch climbs into a boat to leave the castle (Wring or Press steering boat; rhythm of that motion related to Shape?). Again as she walks we see a Wall-like Body Attitude emerging,

overlaying the Ball shape of her spine. Her body moves side to side in reaction to her steps, and her arm swings back and forth from the elbow in an effort to counterbalance herself.

As she walks through the forest this full-body response to her steps develops into an uneven gait, not quite a limp, with Sustained steps of her left leg and Quick ones on her right to catch herself. She raises her legs from the knees and places her feet down flat with each step rather than striding smoothly and rolling through her heel, and shakes her finger in the air (Mid Reach High) with a repeated Flicking Effort; all of this results in a sense that she is off balance (perhaps mentally as well as physically) and shaky, supporting her disguise as a non-threatening elderly woman. These qualities are masked by her dynamic Ascending/Descending and Effort shifts in earlier scenes, or perhaps are not present in those private moments, having been affected/effected as part of her disguise to fool Snow White.

At last the Witch arrives at her destination. The dwarfs have gone off to work and Snow White is making pies and dreaming of her Prince; she is caught off guard by the appearance of a stranger at the window. The Witch braces her hands on the windowsill and watches Snow White, Descending as she lets out a devious cackle. She Ascends as she prepares to speak then Advances with her upper body, the rhythm of her words once again emphasized by a pattern of Ascending and Descending as well. This speech Shaping pattern, observed in earlier post-transformation scenes, repeats throughout her conversation with Snow White. She points her finger in Mid Reach with Quick, Light, Direct (Dab) Effort, then reaches into her basket and presents the apple with Sustained, Indirect Effort.

Snow White's bird friends sense that something is amiss and attack the witch, causing her to Ascend Quickly in surprise before Descending and Retreating with her arms held above her (Mid Reach High) as she tries to fend them off. After Snow White helps her, she retrieves the

apple from where it fell, returning to an upright position (relatively speaking, given her hunched posture) through a pattern of Retreat/Ascend and Advance/Descend that results in cycling her torso through the Vertical and Sagittal Planes (1:10:57). She Encloses and continues to Ascend while Snow White comforts her, deciding to use this kindness to manipulate her way inside the cottage. She Retreats and Ascends as she clutches her “poor heart,” adopting heavy breathing and a limp and allowing Snow White to support her Heavy Passive Weight after she insists on being brought into the house to rest. Once seated, she alternates between Enclosing and Advancing as her focus switches between the apple in her hand and the victim before her.

Once inside the cottage she tries again to hook Snow White, telling her that the apple is in fact a “magic wishing apple.” While sharing this revelation she briefly reverses her previously established Shaping pattern, now Ascending as she Advances instead of Descending. The result heightens her perceived enthusiasm at the magical qualities of the apple, bettering her ability to convince Snow White to take a bite. She quickly reverts back to her standard Retreat/Ascend, Advance/Descend pattern when she begins to approach Snow White, asking what it is her heart desires. After Snow White admits that “there is someone,” she repeats another frequently performed movement, pointing her finger in Mid Reach as she says “I thought so.” Here again we find a slight variation on her normal pattern of Shaping: while her exaggerated Ascending and Descending as she speaks usually emphasizes words or syllables coinciding with Ascending, here it is the opposite, Descending on words that are emphasized in voice actress Lucille Laverne’s delivery.

The Witch at last places the apple in Snow White’s hand before backing away, her Effort Sustained and Light as if to protect the fragility of her impending success. As Snow White begins to make her wish, the Witch encourages her, Ascending and Advancing with one arm in

Mid Reach and the other extending toward Snow White in Far Reach, prompting her to continue. They both come in to Mid Reach as Snow White makes her wish, then clasp together in Near Reach as she takes a bite of the poisoned apple. The suspense of the scene is heightened as we see not Snow White falling to the floor, but the reactions of the Witch as she cautiously waits for her plan to succeed, maintaining her Sustained Effort and Advancing Shape. (These two qualities are affinities – we tend to Advance with caution, hence Sustained Time Effort, and Retreat Quickly – an example being reaching out slowly to determine if a burner on the stove is hot, then pulling your hand back quickly when you find that it is. In this scene, the Witch’s caution is more of a cautious optimism, as she sees that her victory is near, but not yet fully in her grasp.) She begins to Ascend and Descend as Snow White succumbs to the poison, and as we see the apple roll out of Snow White’s hand where she has fallen to the floor, the tension breaks. The music swells, and the Witch Ascends dramatically, stretching to her full height before Descending very low in an extreme use of High and Low Space in her Kinesphere. She Ascends again, somehow even higher, and points her arm straight above her head in Far Reach High as she declares triumphantly that she will at last be fairest in the land (as soon as she reverses her disguise, one assumes).

Her celebration is cut short, however, as she steps out of the cottage to find the dwarfs fast approaching. Her focus quickly shifts as she is thrown into action, her body Advancing briefly toward the dwarfs and her arms thrown back in opposition in a sort of double-take; she looks back and forth almost comically with several Quick, Bound turns of the head before making the decision to run away. She Winds Up before taking off, Initiating the run Peripherally with her Body Attitude echoing the Wall of her earlier walks. As she continues through the forest

however, her torso moves less and primarily her arms react to the movement, swinging to and fro from where they are held in the Vertical Plane in Mid Reach Front.

We see Shaping in reaction to her environment (1:16:02) when she gets tangled in some vines and arches back with Retreating Shaping. Once free, she begins climbing rocks, accessing space through Reach and Pull and shifting between Contralateral and Homolateral Body Organization as she uses her arms and legs to pull herself up (In comparison, the dwarfs' climbing is often more Homologous in nature). This moment of engaging her full body to climb emphasizes how different the Witch is from the Queen, who frequently isolates body parts and holds her lower body and torso still. She turns to see the dwarfs gaining on her and Retreats with her arms extended in Mid/Far Reach in front of her, taking a moment before finishing her climb and running off with small, Quick steps. Unfortunately she is thwarted again, Ascending and Retreating in surprise when she finds that she has reached the edge of a cliff and has nowhere to go. Ever resourceful, the Witch wedges a long branch under a boulder with Bound, Direct Effort and Presses (Sustained, Strong, Direct) as she attempts to lever it down the mountainside and onto the dwarfs. She celebrates her success a bit prematurely, arching back (Spreading Shaping) with maniacal laughter only for the cliff to be struck by lightning – the rock crumbles, the Witch Scatters with arms thrown out in Far Reach High, and she falls to her death.

### *Sleeping Beauty (1959)*

Maleficent makes her first appearance with a bang, appearing in the middle of a celebration honoring the baby Aurora amidst howling wind and rumbling thunder. In contrast to the chaotic storm she unleashes, the character herself is introduced in complete stillness, materializing slowly from a glowing green light. Rather than coming from Maleficent's body, the dynamic shift in the scene's mood is brought about by accompanying elements such as music, coloring (to suggest a change in lighting), and the aforementioned magically induced storm. This stillness is characteristic of Maleficent throughout the film, particularly when she speaks. Another immediate impression upon Maleficent's first appearance is a sense of verticality: she is tall and thin, with elongated neck, face, and fingers, and she exemplifies the Pin Body Attitude. Her costuming serves to exaggerate this image, with a headpiece adding to her height and a long staff in hand to emphasize the vertical line, and even the magical green light from which she appears stretches vertically before she takes form.

When she finally breaks her stillness, her movement is limited to her right elbow and wrist, keeping the limb in Mid Reach Space in her Kinesphere. In fact, Maleficent's Gestural movements in this scene stay almost exclusively in Mid or Near Reach Space until she drops her façade of pleasantness and begins to curse Aurora (9:03), when she extends her arm into Far Reach Space for the first time. Even when venturing into Far Reach, Maleficent limits her gestures to her Front and Sides, never crossing into the Back of her Kinesphere, and her use of the upper portions of her Kinesphere in these moments serves to underscore her verticality, as her arm gestures tend toward Side or Front Diagonal High even when they go through the Mid level, creating Peripheral Pathways much like her predecessor, the Evil Queen in *Snow White*.

As the rest of her body remains so still, Maleficent's primary points of expression are her head (including her face and neck) and her hands, with the latter tending to be the focal point of expression as much as her face. They are expertly used for small, subtle gestures, such as when she turns back to the king and queen with a mischievous "Why no, your majesty." Her fingers tend to be very deliberately placed in an arrangement that is almost balletic; for example, when petting her crow companion her thumb is placed relatively close to her two middle fingers while her index and pinkie are extended further out, mimicking a ballet hand position. This delicate, deliberate placement is present in other actions, such as when she pulls her hand back in mock surprise or curls her fingers around the edge of her cloak. Perhaps it is a preference for Space Mode, again reminiscent of the Evil Queen, that lends a deliberate, balletic quality to these minutiae.

Maleficent uses her head, neck, and facial expressions to great effect as she stands before the gathered crowd and speaks to the king and queen, Ascending and Retreating to somehow elongate her neck even further as an indication of mock-surprise (8:33), echoing her hand gestures with her chin and widening and narrowing her eyes to emphasize the dynamics of Audley's speech. It is often these Proximal body parts that initiate when she turns as well, whether it be her hand reaching to sweep back her cape, or leading with her head in order to maintain eye contact, asserting her dominance as she stares down her enemy.

In terms of Effort, the composed, calculating Maleficent that enjoys toying with her captive audience uses Light Weight and Sustained Time Effort almost exclusively. It is not until she is incensed or ready to unleash her wrath that her Effort qualities veer toward Strong and Quick, and her Flow Effort transitions from Bound to Free as she loses control of her anger, which is further demonstrated in later scenes.



Maleficent next appears after a sixteen-year time jump, during which time she tirelessly searches (or rather has her minions search) for the princess Aurora, who has been spirited away to the forest by the three good fairies. In stark contrast to the cool control exhibited in the prior scene, this Maleficent's patience has run out as her self-imposed deadline of Aurora's sixteenth birthday draws nearer and the princess has yet to prick her finger. She is in her domain, no longer putting on a show to intimidate her enemies; rather, her goal in this scene is to intimidate her underlings, and her movements reflect the different tactics she employs based on her target.

In contrast to her previous stillness, here Maleficent demonstrates agitation through pacing back and forth as the scene opens, as well as throwing her arms into Far Reach Space. Her arms are still High in her Kinesphere, but her verticality is otherwise lessened in this scene through various tactics: the high-angle shot suggested by the animation gives the audience the perspective of looking down on her; she bends her torso (Shaping?) for the first time to directly address her squat minions, and she even sits at the end of the scene, Descending/Retreating in contrast to her usual Ascending as she relaxes from her Pin Body Attitude for a brief moment when she is alone.

While there are a handful of other changes in movement patterns, such as a first foray into the Back of her Kinesphere with her head when her body arches or extending her arms into Low Far Reach Space rather than High, in many ways this scene serves to solidify Maleficent's primary movement qualities. She continues to initiate movement Distally, with her arms or head, and the rapid Effort shifts from Light and Sustained to Strong and Quick still signify a loss of temper. She Slashes multiple times in her frustration and repeats her somewhat mocking "surprise" reaction from the christening scene, again Ascending and Retreating with her neck, widening her eyes, and retracting her hand into Near Reach Space. However, there is a higher

ratio of Far or Mid Reach Space to Near, in contrast to her previous appearance, as well as a greater tendency to move her arms from the elbow or shoulder than from the wrist. Overall, the impression is of larger, less restrained movement.

A moment at [17:00-17:11] is significant in terms of movement, as several new and interesting changes occur. While Maleficent's use of Far Reach has been well established, there is an Effort shift, as well as a change in Shaping – whereas her tendency during moments of Far Reach has up until now been toward Scattering, with this particular use of Space generally associated with her loss of composure or a threatening action, here she is Gathering instead. Perhaps the distinction lies in intent: she is back to putting on a façade for this brief moment, luring her minions into a false sense of security before truly unleashing her anger. When she does vent her spleen, the shift is significant.

Maleficent appears in several brief scenes throughout the action of the film as Aurora learns of her royal birthright and Maleficent takes action to fulfill her curse. These moments all serve to reinforce her existing movement tendencies, as elements such as Pin Body Attitude and use of Space and Kinesphere are consistent with earlier scenes. She Initiates with her head in multiple scenes when taunting Prince Phillip as she Advances and Descends to invade his Kinesphere then Ascends and Retreats with Free Flow Effort to throw her head back in laughter, accompanying these actions with Spreading and Enclosing (1:02:21-28) as she becomes more dynamic in her victory. Her movements are Sustained in these scenes with Phillip, particularly when descending the stairs or walking with a Gliding quality, as well as after she succeeds in enacting her curse on Aurora, giving way to a Quick, Strong, Indirect Slash as she pulls her arm away to reveal Aurora's prone form.

The final appearances of Maleficent as a fairy before her transformation show her in a new emotional state: fully incensed and frantic as she hurls magic at Phillip in an attempt to thwart his escape and rescue of Aurora. She returns to her patterns of Far Reach arm gestures, Quick Time Effort, and the Slash Action Drive when directing magic through her staff, albeit with a slightly broader use of space as she becomes more desperate: more Wind Up/Anticipation, greater incorporation of Back Space, and a shift toward Initiation with the shoulder as opposed to the elbow. Notably, she also appears to slip into Shape Mode: Retreating when she is truly shocked at her crow having been turned to stone (as opposed to her false, mocking surprise in earlier scenes); Retreating, Ascending, and Expanding once again in shock when Phillip thwarts her attempts to stall him with a wall of thorns; and Ascending when she laughs.

Unlike *Snow White*'s Evil Queen, Maleficent's transformation sequence is brief, lasting only about six seconds. After teleporting to stand before Phillip, a burst of lightning renders Maleficent visible only in silhouette. Her form stretches and shoots up vertically, her torso continuing to lengthen to the point that it starts to look like the snake-like body of a dragon. As her silhouette passes through a thick cloud, the outline of her robe sleeves fades into dragon wings, her new dragon form complete once her head and neck have extended above the cloud cover and the air clears, having transformed while she was conveniently obscured.

Despite such a drastic physical change, many of Maleficent's characteristics are still apparent in her new form, including her elongated face, horns, and coloring. A number of her signature movement tendencies can be identified as well, including Body Attitude, Initiation, and Effort. Maleficent's tendency to Initiate movement with her head and neck are apparent in dragon form; as a humanoid fairy she often leads with her chin, and as a dragon her elongated neck serves this tendency very well, allowing for greater mobility in these Initiations. She rears

back with her neck in Wind Up/Anticipation before surging forward, Advancing to attack Phillip while allowing the rest of her body to remain relatively stationary. Due to the combative nature of the scene, Maleficent as dragon exhibits a constant push and pull of Advancing and Retreating during her battle with Phillip, whether moving her whole body or just her neck and head as previously mentioned.

In terms of Effort, her movements echo those of fairy Maleficent in high temper, with Strong Weight Effort befitting her considerable bulk and aggressive goal. Despite her size, her Time Effort is often Quick, such as a Quick Retreat of her neck as she winds up in preparation to shoot fire at Phillip (contrasting the somewhat more Sustained wind-up when preparing to hurl magic from her staff as a fairy), or the Quick, Strong snapping of her jaws. In contrast, Maleficent's serpentine dragon walk comes closer to her more composed side: Sustained and about as Light as a giant dragon can be, this walk calls back to the Glide Action Drive exhibited by Maleficent in earlier scenes, reminding the audience that this is the same character. Just as care was taken for her character design to indicate that this is still the same Maleficent, her movement qualities are also used to bridge the transformation from human/fairy to dragon.

Even her verticality remains in quadruped form, as she keeps her torso relatively upright and at times even stands or moves using only her back legs. This upright stance allows her gargantuan form to further tower over Prince Phillip, or, when Phillip briefly has the higher ground, to reach up for him. Even with her back half horizontal, the extreme verticality in her front half and neck creates the illusion of an upright stance and a Pin Body Attitude. Ultimately this posture is her downfall, exposing her chest and underbelly to Prince Phillip's flying sword, and she Ascends and Retreats once more as it pierces her chest before falling to her death with Heavy Passive Weight.

### ***The Sword in the Stone (1963)***

Due to Mim's high volume of transformations and her appearance in only one ten-minute scene, I have veered from the previous two case studies' primarily chronological organizational structure for this chapter's movement analysis. Instead, observations are arranged loosely by Mode (Body, Effort, Shape, and Space) and related elements to allow for efficient comparisons across multiple physical forms. These forms are:

#### Introduction and Song:

Standard Mim (human)

Big

Small

Back to Normal

Hog Face

Beautiful

Normal

Cat

Normal

#### Wizard's Duel:

Crocodile

Fox

Chicken

Elephant

Tiger

Snake

Rhino

Dragon

Normal/Sick

### ***Phrasing***

Phrasing is apparent in Mim's movements more so than in other villainesses, and underlies changes and tendencies in her use of Body, Effort, Shape, and Space throughout her time on screen. While Phrasing in LMA divides a movement sequence into Preparation, Action, and Recuperation sections, for this analysis I have expanded the concept to include not only clearly defined movement phrases, but the larger structure of the scene as well. Mim's movement phrases combine to form larger phrases wherein the energy cycles through Preparation, Action, and Recuperation, providing an underlying structure to the whole scene almost like a series of nesting dolls, with larger phrases made up of smaller phrases, which can then be further divided. This clear structure, so different from anything seen in the previous two films discussed, makes sense within the context of the film. *The Sword in the Stone* is arranged more like a musical than

*Snow White* or *Sleeping Beauty*, with songs turning into “production numbers” rather than the more organic shifts from speech to singing that were valued before.

At the broadest level, Mim’s ten minutes of fame are divided into two main sections: her interactions with Wart, who has crash-landed in her fireplace in the form of a sparrow, and the duel with Merlin. The first of these sections can be further broken down into three parts based on Phrasing, with clear moments of Preparation, Action, and Recuperation: Mim introduces herself to Wart through the lively song “Mad Madam Mim”; she captures Wart by turning into a cat and plots his demise; and Merlin enters the scene, inciting Mim’s temper and causing her to call for a Wizards’ Duel. These larger phrases divide this half of the scene into separate sections, which are further broken down into smaller phrases, the majority of which revolve around her multiple transformations.

As the scene opens, Mim is seated at a table in her cottage, playing (and cheating at) a game of solitaire when Wart, in the form of a sparrow, falls down her chimney. When she discovers that there is a bird coughing up soot in her fireplace, she walks over and plucks Wart out of the ash, placing him on the table as he explains that he is actually a human boy who was transformed by Merlin. This interaction serves as the phrase’s Preparation. Mim’s dislike of Merlin is apparent, and she launches into the song “Mad Madam Mim” to demonstrate her magical superiority, making herself first big, then small, giving herself a hideous hog face, then transforming into a tall, thin, beautiful young woman. This dynamic, high-energy musical number is the Action of this larger phrase, though Mim’s transformation sequences can be further broken down into individual phrases as well, often apparent through shifts in Weight or Time Effort. After returning to her original form she ends her song, telling Wart that she will have to destroy him since Merlin has seen some good in him.

This Recuperative moment transitions into the Preparation for the next phrase, as she transforms into a cat and pounces on Wart (still in bird form) and eventually catches him after a fair bit of chaos (Action). Wart pecks her nose, causing her to turn back into a human in surprise (Recuperation), and before she can retaliate or make good on her promise of destruction, Merlin blows into the room. Mim does not appreciate him spoiling her fun and challenges him to a Wizards' Duel, constituting the final and longest main phrase of the scene. Mim and Merlin state the rules and begin the count, functioning as the Preparation; the series of rapid-fire transformations serves as the Action; and Merlin defeating Mim and putting her to bed (she merely falls ill rather than dying, unlike both White's novel and the fate of most Disney villains) forms the Recuperation – literally in Mim's case, as she must convalesce from her illness.

The Wizards' Duel features a complex and fascinating whirlwind of animated transformations. Upon the duel's commencement, Mim and Merlin exit the cottage and walk further into the woods, with Wart and Merlin's owl friend Archimedes looking on as they establish several rules. As soon as they face away from each other and begin pacing, Mim breaks one of these rules by disappearing. She reappears immediately behind Merlin in the form of a crocodile, and Merlin narrowly escapes her snapping jaws by disappearing into his hat, having transformed into a turtle. The duel has begun, and a fast-paced series of transformations follows, as each responds to the other. Mim gives chase, and Merlin speeds up by turning into a rabbit. In response, Mim turns into a fox, chasing Merlin into a hollow log. Merlin sneaks out of the log as a caterpillar, and Mim follows as a chicken. To avoid being eaten Merlin transforms into a walrus, crushing Mim, who retaliates by growing into an elephant; Merlin changes into a mouse, scaring Mim away. She returns as a tiger, chasing Merlin about until he manages to grab hold of her tail; just as he is about to chomp down it transforms into the tail of a rattlesnake. Escaping

into a hole in the ground, Merlin narrowly avoids Mim, and as she follows him through the hole and back out, he transforms into a crab so that he may pinch her serpentine neck in his claws. When he finally succeeds in grabbing something, he finds that it is actually a horn: Mim has transformed into a rhinoceros and rises up out of the ground as Merlin clings to her (A moment visually echoed in *The Little Mermaid* when Ursula grows to gargantuan size). She charges at a tree, and Merlin manages to escape in time to avoid being crushed, resulting in Mim's hefty form getting stuck in the tree instead. He turns himself into a billy goat, ramming the immobilized Mim and pushing her into a lake below. Completely incensed, Mim transforms into a large, purple dragon and chases after Merlin. Merlin transforms himself back into a mouse in an attempt to dodge as she breathes fire, but Mim manages to capture him. He appears to escape from her claws, but has in fact turned himself into a germ, infecting Mim with chicken pox and ultimately defeating her. The scene fades to Mim, back in her human form, bundled up in bed as Merlin, also human again, encourages her to get lots of rest and plenty of sunshine.

### ***Body***

The cartoonishly squat, round shape of Mim's body makes it somewhat difficult to determine her Body Attitude – although the line of her back is often straight, she is pitched forward rather than straight up and down, creating forward Sagittal stress. This, combined with her generous figure and less generous stature, make her body most closely resemble an equilateral triangle. Despite this forward leaning, her Body Attitude is closer to Wall than Ball, although she does cycle through both at various times, and her dragon form in particular veers into Ball Attitude.



Mim's Wall Attitude is especially clear when she transforms into a cat, beginning the moment she climbs onto the table as a human and continuing as she walks several steps (all while transforming from human to cat), slowly closing in on Wart before she prepares to pounce. Mim begins this predatory walk still in human form, overlaying a cat-like movement quality onto her human body parts, particularly in how she lifts her arms to take each step, Initiating from the elbow with clear successive sequencing upward through the shoulders and down through the wrists and into the hands/paws – a change from her general tendency toward simultaneous movements. Contralateral Body Organization is more apparent here, as well as in some of her other quadrupedal forms, whereas in general Mim often seems to exhibit Homologous movement (jumping up and down as if throwing a tantrum), Homolateral movement (hopping from one foot to the other), and Navel Radiation (flailing her limbs wildly).

Mim tends to initiate movement peripherally, as when she stands from her game of solitaire by reaching her legs toward the floor before even rotating her body away from the table. Her frequent arm flailing often initiates from the elbow, resulting in rapid shifts between Near, Mid, and Far Reach Space as she throws her arms behind her, swings them in circles, and clasps her hands together. She does initiate centrally on occasion, such as the chest initiation employed when turning toward Wart upon the declaration of her intent to “destroy” him, as well as when she turns to close the windows before approaching him.

### ***Effort***

Mim's Effort tendencies place her primarily in Passion Drive, as she frequently shifts between extremes of Weight (Strong and Light), Time (Quick and Sustained), and Flow (Free and Bound), with less attention to Space Effort. While Flow may occasionally become less

prominent or Space may come to the fore – shifting Mim into Action Drive – Weight and Time changes appear consistently, (so regardless of changes in Drive she is almost always in Near/Rhythm State). One of our first views of Mim features Quick, Light, and Bound hand motions as she straightens out her deck of playing cards, and she goes on to perform multiple Flicking movements (Quick, Light, Indirect), whether she is swirling or flipping her hand to do magic or fluttering her fingers in excitement.

Time and Weight are Mim’s defining Effort Factors in larger-scale movements as well. Her movements are primarily Quick rather than Sustained, although she divides her Weight Effort fairly evenly between Light and Strong. She is Quick and Light when she hops and skips during her song. She becomes even Lighter and Quicker when she makes herself small enough to hop about on the table in a manner reminiscent of the sparrow Wart has been turned into. Mini-Mim reverts to Indirect Space Effort when she begins zipping about on her also-miniaturized broom, becoming Free here as well, in contrast with her earlier relatively Bound Flow. In fact Mim often exhibits Indirect Space Effort as she spins, bounces, and frolics around the room throughout the scene, becoming more Direct as she engages in the duel with Merlin and turns her focus to her opponent’s demise.

Conversely, Mim also combines Quick Time Effort with Strong Weight, often resulting in both Slashing (Quick, Strong, Indirect) – as when she throws her cards down on the table or swings her arms in circles – and Punching (Quick, Strong, Direct) Action Drives. Mim Punches when she pulls her hair away from her face to forcefully reveal a new transformation, for example when giving herself a hog face to prove that she can become even more hideous, or when transforming back into her original form after being “beautiful, lovely, and fair.” She Punches when she jumps up and down as if throwing a tantrum (a frequent occurrence), in

contrast with her jumps when she is tiny or at the end of her song, which are more Sustained and Light, creating an emphasis upward as opposed to downward. Even in the scene's final Recuperation when she is sick in bed, Mim throws a fit rife with Punching, pulling her hair over her face and kicking her legs.

This Quick Time Effort transfers to Mim's various animal forms as well, maintaining her manic, childish energy throughout the fast-paced duel. Her gleeful hopping from foot to foot as both a crocodile and a fox is Quick and Light, and is clearly a vestige of human Mim's frequent physical expressions of delight and anticipation that carry through into her various forms. She gives a Quick, Light, and Bound wiggle of her backside both as a cat and a chicken that echoes the human wiggling of her fingers, and her movements as a snake are Quick and Bound as well, such as when she rattles her tail or pops in and out of the hole she entered while chasing Merlin. These common Effort Qualities are of particular importance in her snake form, as few other signifiers exist to remind the audience that this is still Mim: there are no arms or legs for her to fling about, and this is the only form Mim takes that doesn't have her signature rotund shape, likely due to her human shape's incongruity with snake anatomy (unless the snake has recently eaten a large meal, of course).

Though most of it is spent underground, Mim's time as a snake provides some dynamic Effort contrasts: Sustained and Indirect when rising above Merlin; Quick and Direct when striking and accidentally biting herself instead. This Quick, Direct quality carries through as she recoils in pain, Enclosing as her serpentine body bunches up and knots in on itself. This sequence of Sustained to Quick appears throughout Mim's time on screen, both as animal and human: the Punching motion as she snaps her crocodile jaws down on Merlin's hat is also offset by a Sustained wind-up; Mim Quickly plucks Wart out of her fireplace at the beginning of her scene

preceded by a Sustained reach; when tiny, she alternates between Sustained and Quick when stepping to produce and grab her broom, ending with a Sustained step followed by Quick flip of her leg (another Flick). In fact, Mim most frequently uses Sustained Time Effort to contrast her Quick tendencies, lending a sense of Phrasing to her movements: she is Sustained primarily when she is in Preparation or Recuperation, demonstrating how movement Phrasing and Effort coincide with the Animation Principles of Anticipation and Squash & Stretch. In their exhaustive guide to Disney animation, *The Illusion of Life*, Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston describe a simple Squash & Stretch drawing exercise of a ball speeding up and slowing down, and the connection to Time Effort is apparent. Leslie Bishko addresses how this Animation Principle also relates to Shape Mode, which I will explore in more detail later in this chapter.

Further examples of Mim's Effort-based Phrasing abound: in cat form, once she has caught Wart, she holds onto him in a Press (Sustained, Strong, Direct) as she aims him at a dart board (Preparation), Flicks (Quick, Light, Indirect) to release him (Exertion), and returns to Press to pull him out of the board (Recuperation). Moving to a slightly larger scale, the entire Phrase of her cat transformation begins with Sustained movement as she stalks toward Wart (Preparation), shifts to Quick Effort after she pounces as she chases him around the cottage (Exertion), and returns once again to Sustained as she settles into a seated position and says "I win" (Recuperation).

Most examples of Sustained Time Effort from Mim in her human form can also be found bookending Quick movements. Mim does a small jig as she introduces herself; the dance steps with her feet are Quick, Light, and Bound, but are preceded by a Sustained hop in the air and followed by a Sustained curtsy. During her song Mim takes a Sustained moment to slick her hair back, following it immediately with a Quick little hop and a Sustained curtsy. Even her longer

segments of Sustained Effort fall into this pattern: Mim is generally more Sustained when conversing with Arthur before and after her song, but those moments form the Preparation and Recuperation, respectively, of the larger phrase identified earlier in this analysis.

A small exception to this trend can be found in Mim's transformation into a beautiful girl, in which her Effort takes on an overall more Sustained quality (a change echoed by the shift in music). There is still plenty of Quick movement, but it is not as extreme as in other forms. This shift, combined with a more consistent Light Weight Effort, gives this particular transformation a different feel than the others – one that is controlled and calm (although not Bound) in comparison. Indeed, this is the form wherein not only the movement differs most from Mim's normal self, but so also does her physical appearance. Despite still being human, she loses many of her characteristic features that serve as visual signifiers of self: fat, round body; short, unruly mop of hair; big, round eyes and dark eyebrows; bulbous nose (many of the animal forms she selects have a protruding snout, beak, or horn to simulate her actual nose).

Mim also exhibits some interesting Effort tendencies in her walk – as Ollie Johnston and Frank Thomas observe, “the differences in philosophy between Merlin and Madam Mim are evident just in their body attitudes as they march off to begin the Wizards' Duel” (*The Disney Villain* 136). While the phrase “body attitude” here is used more generally than the LMA term, it is true that the two sorcerers walk quite differently, reflecting their individual personalities. Though Merlin keeps pace with Mim, his longer stride is Sustained in comparison with her characteristic Quickness, and Direct where Mim bobs up and down; this bounce in her walk appears a bit Screw-like at times, causing her posterior to rotate when she steps. The bounce remains in her four-legged walk as a crocodile, contrary to an actual crocodile's homolateral gait, and more closely resembling a dog padding along.

Body Attitude is also at play in conjunction with Shape: unlike Merlin, who achieves a tall bearing through Pin-like posture and an elongated neck, Mim simply sticks her nose up in the air, which creates the effect of attempting to achieve a tall bearing and failing.

### *Shape*

The forward Sagittal stress that affects Mim's Body Attitude is accentuated by her Shaping habits, primarily her tendency toward Advancing. Mim's Advancing is shown from her first appearance on screen: the opening tableau of Mim seated at her table playing a game of solitaire, perhaps the only time we see her still and calm, features Advancing as she leans over the cards. Once she begins interacting with Wart and moving about the space, her propensity toward Shape changes, with Scattering Qualities (Advancing, Spreading, Ascending) becoming apparent. She throws the cards down in a short Phrase marked by Shaping: Enclosing as she pulls in a bit (Anticipation) before Spreading out with Quick, Strong Effort and throwing her hand down as her head comes back and up (Action). As mentioned earlier, these Shaping Phrases occur frequently throughout Mim's scene and demonstrate the connection between LMA Phrasing and the Animation Principles of Squash & Stretch and Anticipation as outlined by Leslie Bishko and discussed in previous chapters. These principles appear to be more exaggerated in post-Classic Era films, including *The Sword in the Stone*, than in films such as *Snow White* and *Sleeping Beauty*, as is apparent when comparing the villains of each film. Further, the exaggeration of these Principles corresponds with an increased comedic element in the non-Classic Era villainesses explored in this dissertation, particularly Mim and Yzma (*The Emperor's New Groove*).

Mim's exaggerated use of Shaping grows even more apparent as she continues to move. Leading up to her song, Mim Advances and Retreats multiple times in relation to Wart's presence. One example is seen when she swoops in on "boy, I'm the greatest" (Initiating with her head) and then spins back out afterward. This moment also exemplifies her dynamic use of Kinesphere, as she shifts between Near Reach and Far Reach arm gestures. She Advances toward Wart as soon as she transforms back into her original size after being tiny, as well as when she surprises him by giving herself a hog face shortly afterward. She Advances and Ascends before several small, Quick jumps up and down, simultaneously pulling her hair down with a Punching action, then Encloses with Sustained Effort when clasping her hands together, in contrast with the Quick, Dabbing hand movements that follow as she repeats the jumping pattern. Her next transformation (into a "beautiful" young woman) is preceded by Retreating and Ascending into a Pin Body Attitude, and Shape changes are not as prevalent – giving way to a greater focus on Space and Effort – other than a lingering tendency toward Scattering as observed in Mim more generally.

After her song has ended, Mim continues her persistent Advancing as she makes it clear that she will not stand for Wart's goodness nor his association with Merlin, coming toward him with Quick, Strong Effort. She approaches Merlin similarly upon his appearance, Advancing in Punch Action Drive (Quick, Strong, Direct) and invading his Kinesphere as she confronts him. Her actions become Indirect, Flicking as she comically slaps Merlin in the face several times and then gestures dismissively for him to step outside, accompanied by Advancing and Ascending. Before walking past Merlin to precede him out of the door she Ascends further and Retreats – not in surprise, as this Shape change has indicated for both Maleficent and the Evil Queen in

their respective films, but in self-satisfaction that she has bested Merlin by challenging him to a duel.

Mim's tendency toward Advancing continues even after the whirlwind of animal transformations begins: from her first appearance as a crocodile she directs her energy forward, ever on the offensive as she chases Merlin, even when her transformations are in reaction to his. In many of her animal forms Mim engages in Shaping that suggests the roundness of her original body, even when she is in a longer, slimmer frame: in crocodile form, for example, Mim's Advancing downward toward Merlin (whom she now towers over) allows her to be rounded despite her more elongated shape. In contrast, moments of Retreating (such as when mouse Merlin frightens elephant Mim into rearing back on her hind legs) not only stand out as the rare occurrences they are, but also provide something of a break for the audience in the practically nonstop Advancing energy of this extended chase scene.

Other Shaping elements are at play as well, coming back to the role of Squash & Stretch and the corresponding breath Shaping. As discussed earlier, these elements underlie everything Mim does in a much more obvious and even cartoonish way compared to the two villains discussed in previous chapters. This Shaping also contributes to Mim's characterization as childish and carries through to her various animal transformations: as a crocodile she Descends in anticipation as she reaches into Merlin's hat, then later Retreats (also in anticipation) before chasing after Merlin. In contrast to these Gathering movements, the preparation for giving chase as a fox is Scattering, going into Far Reach as she tosses away Merlin's rabbit tail before running after him. As a human, frequent contrasts between Spreading and Enclosing demonstrate her childlike temper, such as her post-cat transformation behavior when Wart resists his capture or her tantrum in the final moments of the scene when she lies sick in bed.



### *Space and Kinesphere*

In conjunction with this extreme use of Shaping, Mim also makes dynamic use of Space and Kinesphere, constantly shifting between Near, Mid, and Far Reach Space as well as High, Middle, and Low Levels, particularly with her arm gestures. These gestures are often Quick and Strong, such as swooping her arms to make herself disappear, swinging them up and around, and waving them frantically, contributing to (or perhaps resulting from) her manic, hyperactive energy. She even uses her Back Space when she throws her upper body and hands back, both when expressing positive emotions (primarily laughing) and negative ones (such as shock at Wart invoking Merlin's name).

While her first transformation – growing “huge, [to] fill the whole house” – is brief and functions primarily as a demonstration of Phrasing (a jump in Anticipation/Preparation, the Action of expanding in size, and Recuperation when she is forced to stop growing), we also see an interesting use of Mim's Kinesphere, as her Far Reach arms and legs echo her magical transformation, until she gets too big and must bring her arms down and back into Near Reach – her Kinesphere has gotten larger than the physical space of her house. By the end of this sequence her body is large but her use of Kinesphere is small. In contrast, when she shrinks down to “small as a mouse” size she returns to Far Reach gestures and expansive use of her Kinesphere.

While Mim constantly uses the full range of her Kinesphere, she doesn't frequently seem to put great care into the placement of her body or limbs in Space. The only physical form in which this characteristic changes is that of the beautiful girl – her only human transformation that does not maintain her general physical appearance. When Mim first takes on this form her arms are in High Reach Space (Side High) – not an uncommon space for them to occupy, but

they are posed, held in a way that suggests a clearer Spatial intent on Mim's part. This shift in Mode echoes a key difference between the forms of *Snow White's* Evil Queen, whose human-to-human transformation includes a significant shift in movement signature and primary Modes, and *Sleeping Beauty's* Maleficent, for whom more similarities of movement signature can be found between forms in her human-to-animal transformation.

This attention to posing also suggests something of the objectification/gaze associated with the young, sexually desirable female form, as for once Mim moves (or stays still, as it were) for the benefit of the viewer (Wart, male) rather than for her own purposes as she usually does. Even if the actual level of her beauty or desirability is up for debate, the contrast in intention between this form and all the others that Mim takes is striking.

Although the nature of her use of Space shifts, underscored by slight adjustments toward more Sustained, Light movement, Mim still makes dynamic use of her Kinesphere in this beautiful girl form, particularly by the frequent High placement of her arms. Immediately after Mim transforms back into her original form, her use of Effort is once again Stronger and Quicker, and she returns to her previously established habits of bouncing around, pulling her hair, and putting less intent into her use of Space. In contrast to this human-to-human transformation, Mim's human-to-animal (and animal-to-animal) transformations echo Maleficent's, in that her use of Space follows the same pattern as her use of other Modes, staying relatively consistent between forms. There are some exceptions, such as when a form has a small Kinesphere such as chicken, or in tiger form, when she keeps her shoulders raised and arms tucked into Near Reach Space as she runs, using them to wind up before extending everything into Far Reach when she pounces.

In addition to her use of Kinesphere, Mim makes expansive use of the space around her in nearly every form she takes – she is seldom still, and her restlessness takes her all over the space she occupies, whether her cottage or the designated outdoor dueling area. As an animated character, not to mention a sorceress, Mim has the freedom to move through space creatively and easily, forging complex pathways and utilizing all three dimensions of space – in this case a “virtual 3D,” as the scene occurs in what is really a flat, two-dimensional world created within animation cels. If we “buy into” the three-dimensional illusion created by the interplay of static backgrounds and animated cels, however, Mim makes full use of space in the horizontal, vertical, and sagittal planes. Again, the primary exception to this pattern is when she takes the form of a young, beautiful girl, opting to stay mostly in one place and gesture pseudo-gracefully with her arms and legs.

### ***The Little Mermaid (1989)***

Our first impression of Ursula is one of roundness: she spies on Ariel through a round bubble which mimics a crystal ball; she is comfortably ensconced in a round cavern within the smooth, rounded walls of her lair, furnished with clamshells and other round objects; even her flesh is round, with bulging rolls of fat on her torso and arms and smooth, rolling tentacles for her lower body. Though we will see that her Body Attitude is primarily Screw, she Descends into her seat with Limp Passive Weight, giving her form a rounded, Ball-like shape to complete the picture.

Ursula's head and shoulders Shape with her speech much like previously discussed characters. Though Shaping in conjunction with speech is not uncommon, each character does so in their own way: *Snow White*'s Evil Queen and *Sleeping Beauty*'s Maleficent isolate their heads, Ascending and Descending primarily from the neck, while the Evil Queen's elderly witch form Shapes with her entire torso. Ursula Shapes with her head and shoulders when she speaks, but rather than the two body parts moving together, they Ascend and Descend either in opposition or with clear Sequencing from shoulders to head.

The focus is soon drawn to Ursula's hands, which she moves with Quick, Light Effort: flipping her wrist with a dismissive "Bah!" as she criticizes King Triton and delicately plucking a shrimp (still alive and trembling in fear) from the tray at her side. The Initiation from the elbow and Sequencing through the wrist that accompanies these movements echoes previously discussed villainesses and can be found in the remaining two case studies as well, indicating that there are certain movement qualities which appear to be associated with female villainy in Disney's animation vocabulary.

Once Ursula begins moving around her space it is easy to see that, like many villainesses, she has a flair for the dramatic. She bemoans the injustice of her situation, banished from Triton's palace and "wasting away," Ascending before she flops onto her back with Heavy Passive Weight. This moment provides an example of Ursula's dynamic use of all dimensions in both Shape and Space, the buoyant force of the water allowing her not to limit herself to a generally vertical orientation. As she lifts herself from her tantrum she exhibits a Yield and Push mode of spatial access (an action commonly seen in babies when learning how to press up on their tummies), then continues to use her arms to hoist her massive body out of her small grotto, Sequencing through her arms, chest, belly, and tentacles as she goes. This sequencing is echoed after she gently drifts down from her cavern perch and lands with Light Weight Effort, her arms Floating (Light, Sustained, Indirect) after her tentacles; this moment highlights the connection between LMA's Sequencing and the Animation Principles of Overlapping Action and Follow Through, as Ursula's arms continue to settle after the bulk of her body has already landed.

Ursula often carries tension in her arm movements, in contrast to her tentacles, which are constantly shifting and reorganizing in relation to themselves, creating a sense of restlessness and constant movement (and perhaps constant scheming) even when her upper body is still. This self-relational movement/focus on inner organization is characteristic of Body Mode, while Ursula's upper body often exhibits more elements of Shape. The fluidity of movement one might expect both from her octopus form and being underwater is reflected in the smooth Sequencing of not only her ever-shifting tentacles but her entire body.

After Descending in reaction to her body's landing, Ursula Ascends as she heads down the tunnel-like hallway of her lair. She merges her human and octopus halves in the way she uses her tentacles to propel herself forward, "walking" on them almost as if they are human legs: the

tentacles continue to roil and roll below her, but her pelvis, resembling an obese woman's large, round buttocks, shifts in the Sagittal and Horizontal dimensions to mimic bipedal walking. This Contralateral stride is further approximated by the brief oppositional swing of her arms, despite the lack of legs for her arms to be moving in opposition to.

Ursula's upper body movements tend slightly toward Sustained Time Effort, with changes to Quick used primarily for dramatic emphasis, as when she turns toward Flotsam and Jetsam at the end of her first scene with Quick, Strong Effort to order them to continue to watch Ariel. While her Flow Effort is not entirely Free (as mentioned above, her arms in particular often display Bound Effort when she is frustrated), the sense of fluidity provided by the buoyancy of the water and her invertebrate form cause the flow of her Initiations and Sequencing in Body Mode to be more apparent than in other villainesses in this study.

Key Body Mode elements/preferences:

Body Attitude	Modes of Access	Body Organization	Initiation	Sequencing
Screw	Yield and Push	Contralateral ("walking", spiraling)	Central (pelvis, stomach, chest)	Sequential
	Reach and Pull (later)	Navel Radiation (jet propulsion)	Distal (head, arms)	Successive (arms first, then torso)

Ursula's next appearance is brief, again spying on Ariel from afar. Her use of Shaping, and particularly Ascending, becomes more apparent with her reactions to Ariel's situation. She Ascends, and her torso briefly Retreats before it Advances and Ascends as she arches back and raises her arms into Mid/Far Reach Space, shaking her fists in glee at what an easy target Ariel will be. Her torso then Retreats again in Preparation before she propels herself backwards (Initiating from her shoulder and Sequencing down through her hips) to land on a cavern ledge with Quick, Light, Free Effort. She Ascends with amused disbelief, exclaiming that not only

does Ariel love a human, but a prince at that, Arcing her arm in Mid Reach as she collapses in a fit of laughter.

Initiating with her head, Ursula Ascends to sit up, then Descends slightly and Encloses as she clasps her hands together. She contemplates what a great acquisition “King Triton’s headstrong, lovesick girl” would be with a Quick, Light, Bound shake of her head before turning to her dismal “garden” of polyps (the souls of her victims), again Initiating with her head, hinting at Ariel’s intended fate.

Key Shape Mode elements/preferences:

Shaping Qualities (Scattering/Gathering)			Directional Shaping	Shape Flow
Vertical (Ascend/Descend)	Horizontal (Spread/Enclose)	Sagittal (Advance/Retreat)		
Speech	Clasping hands	Wind Up	Arc-like (primary)	Tentacles
Wind Up	Excitement, anticipation	Talking to Ariel	Spoke-like (less frequent)	

In her next scene, Ursula has finally lured Ariel to her lair with the promise to solve her forbidden love dilemma. Again, her tentacles contribute to a fluid, rolling element in her movement. Her Weight Effort is Light, due to the buoyancy provided by the water combined with the performance of detached benevolence she is putting on for Ariel. As the scene progresses, Ursula’s Weight Effort gets gradually Stronger, once she senses that she has Ariel on the hook, so to speak, and just needs to reel her in.

After Ariel has entered the lair, Ursula makes her appearance by again leveraging herself out of a small cavern with her arms. As she floats to the ground she strikes a pose, placing her arms carefully in Space with one hand on her hip and the other to the Low Side Diagonal. Rather than “walking” as she moves away from Ariel to take a seat at her vanity, Ursula Winds Up with Descending and Enclosing Shaping before Ascending and Spreading with a Light, Sustained, Direct (Glide Action Drive) jump to land in her seat. She Flicks her wrists—a frequently seen

villainess hand gesture—as she squirts some sort of hair product into her hands. Interestingly, she uses one of her tentacles to pick up the bottle, the first (but not only) time they are used for something other than background movement, support, or locomotion. Here the tentacle is Quick and Direct, in contrast to the more Sustained, Indirect quality they usually possess.

Ursula's Quick, Light Effort continues as she applies the product to her hair while speaking to Ariel. She twists her body toward Ariel while remaining seated, then extends her arm in an Arc-like movement in Far Reach Space before once again flipping her hand (Flick Action Drive) when she pronounces Prince Eric to be “quite a catch.” Ursula's frequent hand flips are often characterized by Limp Passive Weight with her hands falling open toward the ground, such as after she completes her primping ritual, applying lipstick and then letting the hand flop down from the wrist.

As Ursula continues to convince Ariel of her altruistic nature she finally turns fully toward Ariel, Initiating the movement from her upper torso and shoulder before propelling herself forward, once again using her arms for momentum, almost as if swimming. This shift in Ursula's attention signifies the beginning of her musical number, “Poor Unfortunate Souls.”

As the first notes of music play, several movement patterns begin to emerge: a bouncing quality as Ursula uses her tentacles to propel and hold herself above the ground, arms gesturing between Near and Far Reach, clasping her hands in Near Reach with slight Enclosing, frequent Ascending and Descending, and twisting/rotating her upper body with Shoulder Initiation. She strikes frequent poses, whether stilling completely for a moment or posing with her upper body while continuing to move about. Sells specifically identifies this scene, and these early musical moments in particular, as a camp drag performance, with Ursula's exaggerated performance and theatricality (182).



As the song picks up with the first chorus, Ursula Ascends and Retreats dramatically, clasping her hands to signify her faux sympathy for her victims' sad lives. She holds little tension in her body, arching her back and rotating her spine as she bounces about. She Ascends as she sings "and I help them" and Descends on the following "yes I do," matching her Vertical Shaping with the cadence of her speech (or in this case song), as many previously discussed characters have done.

The song slows for a moment as Ursula details the fine print of her business: there is always a price, and it must be paid. Again, the minutiae of her hands and their Flicking movements become the focus in this particularly villainous moment. As the music picks up again Ursula Ascends and propels herself upward, out of the dismal topic of payment and collecting on debt. She returns to the more energetic tone of the song with a shimmy of her chest and shoulders, Quick, Bound, and Light in contrast with her head, which sways back and forth with Sustained and Free Effort. She Advances as she pulls Ariel in to walk with her during a brief spoken interlude, once again moving Contralaterally to simulate bipedal locomotion. The simulation is even more complete this time, using two of her front tentacles as primary movers to clearly resemble legs, with each movement initiating from mid-tentacle as if she is bending her knee to take a step forward.

Ursula draws Ariel's attention to what appears to be a magical projector, again using a tentacle as a hand to move Ariel's face with Quick, Strong Effort. Her hand and arm gestures are Sustained and Light as she draws up magical images to further tempt Ariel into making a deal. She Ascends and Descends as she explains the stipulations of their contract with her hands held close together in Near Reach, gently tapping her fingertips together in Dab Action Drive (Light, Quick, Direct Effort). She Advances with her head and upper body with increasingly Strong

Weight Effort as she warns Ariel that if the prince does not kiss her within three days, Ariel will become Ursula's property, another polyp in her garden of victims. Ursula approaches Ariel with Quick, Direct Effort, Initiating with her chest while Simultaneously reaching for Ariel's face to draw her in, asking if they have a deal.

Ursula Descends as she gradually releases the held tension in her shoulders, backing away while Ariel ponders the consequences of making a deal with her: if she becomes human, she'll never see her family again. Ursula Quickly Ascends and Descends with a "That's right!" as she pretends to have only just realized this potential downside herself, arms Arcing in Mid-Reach before crossing over her chest, one fist placed under her chin in faux contemplation. She continues to Ascend and Descend with her speech as she reminds Ariel that she will, however, have the prince she has pined after.

As she continues to convince Ariel to take the deal, Ursula performs many Sustained, Arc-like movements with her arms, head, and torso in Near and Mid Reach. Amidst this series of related gestures is a brief moment wherein she wiggles her shoulders up and down – a smaller, Spoke-like moment interrupting the circular flow of the actions before and after it. This shoulder wiggle is Quick and Light, but differs from the shimmy earlier in the scene both in its slower speed, the Vertical instead of Sagittal movement of the shoulders, and the Flow Effort, clearly Bound in this action versus the Freer Flow of the previous one.

Ursula Advances toward Ariel again, Initiating with her head. This head-first Advancing (as opposed to the Witch in *Snow White*, for example, who Advances with her whole torso moving Simultaneously) is seen frequently, and is often so exaggerated as to put Ursula into a horizontal position. These shifts in orientation contribute to her varied, active use of all three Dimensions, and are facilitated, much like her Light Weight Effort, by the water around her. She

gestures Indirectly with her arm as she assures Ariel that she'll "have [her] man," then Ascends with a dramatic breath to Wind Up before swooping down toward Ariel, Advancing sideways from a hip Initiation before facing Ariel and continuing to Advance with a wag of her chin.

Ariel moves from Ursula's right side to her left as she ponders the choice before her, Ursula tracking her in a spectacular movement that makes use of the film's underwater setting: as Ariel moves from one side of the screen to the other Ursula's eyes stay locked on her, but not simply by using her neck to turn her head from side to side on a Vertical Axis (Horizontal Plane). Instead, she rotates her entire body along the Sagittal Axis (Vertical Plane), demonstrating Contralateral Body Organization, in a spiraling action reminiscent of the connectivity exercises of Bartenieff Fundamentals, a series of movement patterns developed by Irmgard Bartenieff, and a significant component of LMA's Body Mode. She Initiates the spiral with her arms, mimicking Bartenieff's Arm Circle exercise (Hackney 184), then Sequences through her head, shoulders, torso, and tentacles as her body untwists and fully faces Ariel in her new position. Interestingly, the octopus has symbolic associations with the spiral (Werness 298).

Ursula completes this movement sequence by once again pushing off her perch with her hands, propelling herself above Ariel's head and again spiraling her body so that she floats over Ariel on her back, turning her head to look at Ariel as she discusses "the subject of payment." She traces an Arc-like pathway over Ariel's head, ending with her body almost completely curved around its Horizontal Axis as it cycles backwards in the Sagittal Plane (Relative to her own body – because Ursula is now oriented in the Horizontal Dimension, her Kinesphere, Planes, and Axes have all moved with her and are effectively tilted at a ninety-degree angle).

Ursula's arm gestures tend toward Mid or Near Reach, with favorite gestures being the shrug, the wrist flip, and the hand clasp. Even when her arms approach Far Reach Space they do

not seem fully extended, due to both the rounded shape caused by excess fat and the unusual shape and proportions of her body, which make her arms appear short and stubby in comparison to both her girth and the length of her tentacles.

As Ursula nears the climax of both the song and her sales pitch, her Shaping changes escalate, with consistent Ascending accompanying frequent shifts in the Sagittal dimension: she Ascends and Advances, then Ascends and Retreats. After Descending and returning to a neutral Sagittal Shape for a moment she Ascends and Advances again, then shortly afterward Ascends and Retreats immediately followed by Descending and Advancing, all while convincing Ariel that she doesn't need a voice to get her man.

This Shaping tour de force precedes a dramatic shift in the musical number, Ursula turning and "walking" away from Ariel with an extreme, Free Flow sway to her "hips," twisting her torso to look at Ariel and, with grotesquely exaggerated sensuousness, rolling her hips in time with the pronouncement/double entendre that Ariel should simply rely on her body language. This hip movement is Quick and Strong, tracing first a Peripheral then Central Pathway (or is it Arcing then Spoking?) as she circles her hips around the Sagittal Axis (cycling in the Vertical Plane) then sends them straight to the side in time with the beat of the music. She Encloses with her chest to Wind Up before Spreading as she arches her back, thrusts her bosom out, and throws her arm and head into Back Space with a dramatic "ha!" as the song's climax begins.

She turns and "walks" in time with the music, arms held in Far Reach Low Diagonal and hands flexed in a clearly posed way, one of the few times Ursula pays attention to Space Mode. She Glides toward her clamshell cabinet of potions and ingredients, Direct in her lower body while Indirect in her upper. She tosses bottles behind her with Quick, Free, Indirect Effort, her

movements matching the music's increase in intensity as her arm gestures become broader, reaching further in her Kinesphere, and her Effort grows Stronger and Quicker. She again clasps her hands in front of her (this time in Low rather than Middle Near Reach Space), Enclosing before Spreading and Retreating as she flings her arms into Far Reach in Slash Action Drive (Quick, Strong, Indirect).

This Retreat serves as the Wind Up for Ursula to Advance with Quick, Direct Effort toward her cauldron, briefly pausing to add an ingredient before Advancing again. Despite similar Shaping Qualities, these two successive Advances are remarkably different. In the first, Ursula sends her entire body forward horizontally as if swimming, the Shaping accompanying her actual movement forward to a new location (her cauldron). The second Advance is accompanied by Ascending and Spreading as Ursula Scatters in all three dimensions. Her Weight Effort is significantly Stronger as she bursts toward Ariel in Punch Action Drive, accompanying her body's Shaping with Arc-like arm movements along the edges of her Kinesphere, which open from Front to Side in Far Reach before her body Retreats, Descends, and Encloses back to a neutral position, arms coming into Near Reach Space in a reversal of their previous pathway. This outburst is made even more dramatic by the crescendo in the music and an accompanying burst of smoke from Ursula's cauldron.

Ursula continues her intimidation tactics, popping up close behind Ariel and invading her Kinesphere as she Advances over Ariel's shoulder, prompting her to "make [her] choice" before walking away with Light, Indirect Effort, indicating that the offer will not be available for long and that Ursula will not be the one to suffer if Ariel doesn't take it. She reminds Ariel about the prince she is fighting for before again Advancing on her with a Quick, Strong, Direct (Punch Action Drive) head Initiation, overwhelming her potential victim, who is nearly within her grasp.

Much like Madam Mim in *The Sword in the Stone*, Ursula makes dynamic use of the space around her, particularly during her high-energy musical number. She briefly leaves her cauldron (and Ariel's side) to swim back and forth in the space above it, darting about with Indirect Space Effort and using her lower body and trailing her arms at her side to provide distinctly octopus-like movement. Moving herself forward with jet propulsion, where the tentacles bunch up and then release to create momentum, merges perfectly with the Animation Principle of Squash & Stretch, which deals with maintaining consistent volume (or hypothetical volume) in an animated form by expanding horizontally if it compresses vertically and vice versa. As Ursula moves through the water rather than walking along the ocean floor, octopus biology and the application of Squash & Stretch further combine with Ursula's Shaping as she shortens and lengthens, Gathering and Scattering in the Vertical Dimension (again, relative to her body and Kinesphere, as she is swimming parallel to the ground rather than upright).

After some more Advancing, Far Reach arm gestures, and invading Ariel's Kinesphere, Ursula conjures a written contract with a Dabbing (Quick, Light, Direct) gesture of her wrist. She hands Ariel a fishbone quill and urges her to sign, darting off to share her impending success with her eel familiars. She then shoots upward toward the top of her lair, twisting into another spiral with Strong, Indirect Effort and Ascending as her body expands Vertically and Encloses Horizontally. Coming out of the spiral with arms and tentacles spread in Far Reach (Impactive Phrasing), Ursula completes the song and her negotiation with Ariel with a series of Quick, Strong, Direct (Punch Action Drive) movements in time with her final repetition of the words "poor, unfortunate soul" as she prepares to finally cast her spell.

Bent over her cauldron, Ursula's upper body movements once again show a preference for Shape mode: Advancing downward as her hands and forearms make small circles first in

Near then Mid Reach; Ascending as she summons the winds of the Caspian Sea and clutches her hands in an Enclosing gesture; and creating Arc-Like Directional Shaping movements with her arms in High Reach above her as she sways back and forth, Initiating from the side of her torso. Her hand movements become extremely Bound and Strong as she summons the magic necessary to take Ariel's voice, clutching one hand to her own throat and holding matching tension in the other. Fittingly, as Ursula casts this spell she gravitates toward Spell Effort Drive, with attention to Weight (Strong), Space (Direct), and Flow (Bound).

Her Shaping grows increasingly dramatic as she finally gets what she wants, Gathering herself inward before Arcing her arms overhead into Far Reach Space as she Scatters, then Enclosing and Advancing her upper body toward Ariel as she commands her to sing. She beckons Ariel's voice toward herself with Quick, Light hand motions before Ascending and extending the gesture to her entire arms, now more Sustained as they trace a Peripheral Pathway upward along the Front edge of her Kinesphere. Her shoulders hunch over with her Enclosing chest as Ariel's voice is finally transferred into her possession, then she further Encloses, Winding Up before Scattering as she throws her head and upper body back and laughs maniacally. She continues to cackle with glee, leaving Ariel to fend for herself with her newly minted legs as the scene draws to a close.

Most frequently used Effort Preferences:

Qualities	States	Drives
Sustained	Near (Time and Weight)	Spell Drive
Free (Bound in specific body parts)	Awake (Space and Time)	Action Drive (Flick, Punch, Float)
Indirect		Passion Drive
Light		

The next time we see Ursula she is again spying on Ariel, this time to make sure her investment pays off and Ariel doesn't succeed in kissing Eric. Unfortunately, the relationship is progressing nicely, and Ursula reacts accordingly, Ascending then Descending in distress, each

Shape change accompanied by a Quick, Strong arm movement. Several of her previously established movement patterns appear again in this scene: Yield and Push as she presses her body up and into motion using her arms; small hand/wrist movements with Quick, Light Effort; Retreating to Wind Up before Advancing, this time to sweep bottles out of the way in Slash Action Drive (Quick, Strong, Indirect) before Advancing to collect the ingredients she needs to cast another spell.

The spell is for Ursula herself this time, to transform herself into a human in order to thwart Ariel. She turns away from her potions cabinet, Initiating with her shoulder as she darts toward her cauldron with Quick, Indirect Effort. She violently hurls ingredients into the cauldron (more Ascending and Descending accompanied by Quick, Strong Effort). She Encloses, briefly Ascending before Descending while she rants about her desire to make King Triton suffer through his daughter. As the spell begins to take hold, Ursula again Descends to Wind Up before she Ascends and Spreads. She Encloses briefly before her body arches back with laughter as she morphs into a slim-waisted, dark-haired human woman.

Shortly after, we see Ursula (soon to be introduced as Vanessa) in her human form, walking along the beach and singing with Ariel's voice so that Prince Eric may "discover" her as his rescuer. In stark contrast to her movements in her original body, she moves here with a great deal of held tension in her upper body, so Bound that her head, neck, arms, and torso do not even move as she walks forward. Her Body Attitude is distinctly Pin-like, and she walks with Sustained, Light, Direct Effort (Glide Action Drive). Her physical features are reminiscent of Ariel's (Sells even describes her as "Ariel's evil double" [185]), but her movement qualities in this and following scenes show clear differences. Where Vanessa is Bound, Ariel is Free, and she uses Quick Effort more frequently than Vanessa, who tends toward Sustained Time Effort almost



exclusively. These differences combine to make Vanessa appear more composed and refined than the rambunctious, easily excited Ariel, but they also make her seem more calculating in her movements, as if she is hiding something – and indeed, she is.

Ursula's plan is made clear in a scene taking place the following morning, when Ariel is crushed to learn that Eric (clearly under magical thrall) intends to marry Vanessa. Vanessa moves her head and arms with Sustained, Light Effort, demurely tilting her head and offering her hand to Eric's manservant Grimsby before placing it on Eric's chest, and later turning to glance up at Ariel's hidden form before resting her head upon Eric's shoulder. For once, Ariel is the one covertly observing Ursula/Vanessa, instead of the reverse; even so, Vanessa is clearly aware that Ariel is watching and appears pleased at the fact, while Ariel never has knowledge of Ursula's frequent surveillance.

Vanessa's preferences:

Body Attitude	Effort	Space
Pin	Sustained	Near Reach
	Bound	
	Light	

Vanessa's next appearance, as she prepares for her wedding to Prince Eric, further demonstrates how different her movement tendencies are from Ursula's, by making it clear that they are simply another part of her disguise. In private Vanessa moves like Ursula, or at least Ursula's upper, human half: she is more mobile in her use of the space around her and once again exhibits a tendency toward extreme Shape changes, whereas previously Vanessa moved with clear Effort preferences and very little Shaping. She swoops forward, Advancing toward her mirror with a nearly horizontal torso and sweeping her arms about in Far Reach. She spins around, Initiating with her arm and sequencing through her body in a way that mimics Ursula's earlier spiral. Slight differences between Vanessa and Ursula do appear, such as Vanessa's

Quick, Light steps as she rushes toward the mirror versus the more Sustained roiling of Ursula's tentacles, but the primary contrast here is between public Vanessa and private Vanessa.

Eric and Vanessa's wedding ceremony aboard Eric's ship provides an even closer comparison between Vanessa's public façade and her underlying sea witch persona. She begins walking down the aisle with her earlier Pin Body Attitude and Gliding Effort, breaking character when Eric's dog Max growls at her and she turns to glare and kick him out of the way with a Punching action (Quick, Strong, Direct). Facial expressions are an important part of her disguise, as her serene countenance turns briefly into a scowl in this and similar moments throughout the scene.

Vanessa's Light, Sustained head movements as she stands at the altar with Eric give way to Quick Effort as she is attacked by a formation of birds, Shaping in response to the threat. She briefly Ascends to Wind Up before ducking and Enclosing with Quick, Strong, Direct Effort (Punch Action Drive again), continuing to Shape in various Dimensions as the birds continue their assault, joined by sundry sea creatures in an attempt to delay the wedding. Vanessa's arms, previously held in Near Reach, flail in Far Reach as she loses her balance and fends off the animals. Her Body Weight becomes Heavy and Passive as she is buffeted about by a pair of seals, and the reactive Shaping (notably Retreating) continues as various creatures attack, screech, and throw water at her. Her body (and particularly her torso) has now become remarkably fluid and Free, in contrast to her earlier held tension and Bound Flow Effort, and each Shaping change Initiates from or ends in a distinct arch in her torso, whether forward, backward, or sideways. Her Effort shifts briefly to Bound as she clenches her fists at her sides in rage and again when she throttles Scuttle, Ariel's seagull friend, but these moments are quickly

cut off when a well-placed bite from Max causes her to lose the magic shell containing Ariel's voice, allowing it to return to its rightful owner.

Vanessa, along with Eric, Grimsby, and all of the wedding attendees, Ascends slightly as Ariel's voice returns to her in a swirl of light. In the background as Eric and Ariel reunite we can already see Vanessa reverting more fully to Ursula, returning to Ursula's frequent Yield and Push mode of access. She Ascends and Advances as she admonishes Eric to get away from Ariel, then Ascends again dramatically as she clenches her hands with Bound, Strong Effort and laughs maniacally when Ariel begins transforming back into a mermaid, having failed to kiss Eric by the sunset of her third day as a human. Even her facial expression has shifted from Vanessa to Ursula, with wide eyes and an enormous, toothy grin that barely fits on Vanessa's face.

She Ascends and arches back, extending her arms to the stormy sky in Far Reach High with another evil laugh as her body transforms back into her original form, Initiating from her raised arms and Sequencing down, rolling, flopping, and bursting out of her dress, Spreading in a very literal sense. As her body fills with fat, her raised arms bend slightly to accommodate their renewed girth and she sweeps them down in front of her as her audience gasps in shock and horror.

Ursula crawls across the ship, shifting from her characteristic Yield and Push to another mode of access, Reach and Pull, as she maneuvers herself across the deck with Quick, Direct Effort to capture Ariel, tentacles flopping in opposition with her Contralateral movement. Her torso Advances with this and her following actions as she slithers up to sit on the ship's ledge, clutching Ariel to her chest before diving into the ocean, Retreating with her torso to Wind Up before Initiating the dive with her head.

Back in the water, Ursula reverts to more animalistic movement, using jet propulsion to swim further into the depths. In addition to the connection with Squash & Stretch mentioned earlier, the jet propulsion movements of her tentacles resemble the Yield and Push mode of access Ursula often uses to lift her upper body. She Retreats suddenly as she is brought to a halt by King Triton, who has arrived to save his daughter. Regrouping, Ursula approaches Triton almost seductively, stretching her arm out to the side in Far Reach before bringing it in to dance her fingers along Triton's trident with Light, Indirect Effort. She changes tactics when Triton demands his daughter's release, Advancing with a burst of Quick, Strong Effort and unfurling Ariel's contract with a Flick (Quick, Light, Indirect) of her tentacle.

Ursula is thrown back by a blast from Triton's trident as he attempts to destroy the contract, her Heavy Passive Weight giving way to Ascending and Advancing when the attempt fails. She approaches Triton again from the side, Advancing with head and shoulder Initiation to tell him what he has already learned: the contract is legally binding and unbreakable (Ariel's status as a minor apparently of little consequence in underwater contract law).

Going after what she truly desires, Triton's power, Ursula informs Triton that she would be willing to transfer the debt from Ariel to her father. She slinks behind Triton with Light, Sustained Effort and Initiation from her protruding stomach, then leads with her chest as she turns back and forth and invades Triton's Kinesphere, much as she did Ariel's when urging her to take the original deal. During this short speech Ursula shifts between Quick and Sustained Effort as often as she does between chest and stomach Initiation. She moves with primarily Sustained Time Effort, punctuated with occasional Quick turns, such as Slashing (Quick, Strong, Indirect) in time with an emphatic "but" as she sends her arm into Far Reach High and offers Triton the opportunity to save his daughter, before returning to his side with torso Initiation and

drawing her arms back into Near Reach Space. Circling closely behind Triton, Ursula brings her face close to Triton's with another Slashing movement as she waits for him to accept her offer.

Ursula presents the contract to Triton, Enclosing with her chest as her head and shoulders Advance to create an exaggerated round shape. She Ascends and Advances Quickly once Triton signs the contract, laughing as he is transformed into a tiny polyp for her garden of souls. Triton defeated, Ursula Descends to pick up his crown and place it atop her own head, Advancing and Ascending with her head and shoulders to meet her hands halfway. She sets the crown on her head in a low-angle close-up shot, foreshadowing her impending final transformation into a giant version of herself. She bites her lip and slowly begins to laugh when she takes hold of the trident, Advancing and Descending toward it with a small shake of her head.

An action-packed three minutes follows. Ariel attacks Ursula, distraught over her father's fate, and the ensuing sequence consists of several rapid Sagittal Shape changes as Ursula Advances and Retreats in reaction to Ariel, again Enclosing with her chest to create a rounded shape. Her Effort becomes Quick and Strong, Punching and Slashing as she threatens Ariel, reacts to being harpooned by Eric, and sends Flotsam and Jetsam after Eric in retaliation. She aims the trident at Eric with Direct, Bound Effort before Ariel grabs her hair, pulling Ursula's upper body into Back Space and causing the trajectory of the trident's magic to strike Flotsam and Jetsam instead of Eric.

Ursula Ascends and Descends as she reacts to the death of her eels, Advancing and Enclosing to gather their remains close to her. Her mourning is brief, however, and she soon Ascends and Advances her head in the direction of Ariel, now swimming off to join Eric. Thoroughly enraged, Ursula uses the trident's magic to grow to gargantuan proportions, Ascending and Descending with Bound Flow Effort in her raised shoulders and heavy, angered

breathing. Her body creaks and expands in a swirling cloud of black ink, her new form stretching far above the ocean's surface to tower over Ariel and Eric. She rises out of the water with no Shaping, almost reminiscent of Vanessa's bound, immobile torso.

Ursula does not move nearly as much in her giant form as she does at her normal size. This lack of mobility may reflect the difficulty of moving such great mass, or may perhaps be simply because she does not have to: Ariel and Eric are tiny in comparison, and there is nowhere her victims can go where she cannot reach them. She Advances over Ariel and Eric as she taunts them, tentacles continuing to churn with Sustained, Indirect movement. She raises the trident to the sky and summons a storm with side-to-side swaying Initiated by her chest, then raises both arms above her in Far Reach High to bring a massive wave crashing down on Eric, separating him from Ariel.

Dipping the trident to the ocean's surface, Ursula Advances downward as she creates an enormous whirlpool, Ascending and twisting over her shoulder when she spies Ariel clinging to a rock. She shoots magic at Ariel with a Slashing motion of her trident, the first Quick movement Ursula has made since transforming into a behemoth. She Encloses as she continues to hurl magic at Ariel, so Direct in her focus that she does not see Eric gain control of a ship and begin to steer it toward her.

Ursula Ascends and Retreats, Winding Up to deliver her final blow to Ariel. As she begins to Advance, Eric harpoons her with the bow of his ship, causing her to Enclose over the ship in response. Her body sways forward and backward several times with Heavy Passive Weight before she finally sinks into the ocean, tentacles continuing to roil about in Shape Flow with the last vestiges of life. She is defeated.

Comparison between Ursula's forms:

	<b>Ursula</b>	<b>Vanessa</b>	<b>Giant Ursula</b>
<b>Body</b>	Screw BA; shifting/inner volumes; Initiation, Sequencing, Body Organization, Modes of Access	Pin BA	Wall BA?
<b>Effort</b>	Shifts	Sustained, Light, Bound	Sustained, Strong
<b>Shape</b>	Constant Shape changes in all Dimensions	Minimal Shaping	Minimal Shaping(?) Advance, Ascend, Enclose
<b>Space</b>	Mid and Near Reach, Far Reach Space	Near Reach Space	Far Reach Space(?)
<b>Movement in General Space</b>	Dynamic, extensive	Minimal (increased when not "acting")	Minimal

### ***The Emperor's New Groove (2000)***

Like Madam Mim, movement observations for Yzma have been arranged by Mode (Body, Effort, Shape, and Space) and related elements for this analysis. Due to the frequency and often short duration of Yzma's appearances, this format makes it easier to observe larger patterns and avoid redundancy.

#### ***Body***

While Body Attitude has frequently been among the first observable elements of previous characters' movement signatures, Yzma's primary Body Attitude is not immediately apparent. Upon her introduction she appears to be in Pin Attitude, sitting in the emperor's throne and doling out judgment to hapless citizens, and does demonstrate this Body Attitude periodically throughout the film, such as when giving Kuzco's eulogy after her attempt to poison him, and during her confrontation with Kuzco in her lair as the film reaches its climax. However, she also frequently reverts to a posture suggestive of Ball Attitude, apparent for the first time when she enters her secret lair, and present in many other scenes throughout the film. Body Attitude can be harder to discern in malleable, pliable animated characters than in live, human bodies, and it follows that Yzma, in a film created more in the surreal cartoon tradition than the hyperreal Disney one, would display Body Attitude less clearly than a character such as *Snow White's* Evil Queen. Not only is Body Attitude less relevant to Yzma's movement signature, but it would appear that she has no maintained Body Attitude at all. Instead, the moments that appear as Pin, Ball, Screw, and even occasionally Wall are in fact the result of her extreme Shaping tendencies.

Other elements of Body Mode are marginally more prominent. Yzma exhibits Passive Weight at various times, such as when she is irritated at Kronk at 13:00 (Limp Passive Weight)



and when Kuzco (as a goat) butts her while fighting for the antidote that will turn him back into a human (Heavy Passive Weight). Her Initiation and Sequencing of body parts tend to be situational. Rather than consistent patterns, she initiates movement from different body parts at different times: standing up (8:00) with elbow Initiation at some times and shoulder Initiation at others, Initiating with her head when berating Bucky the squirrel (44:45), and Initiating from her torso when she orders her newly transformed guards to go after Kuzco. All in all, Yzma might just not be much in Body Mode – opposite of Mim, which is interesting, because they have a lot of other things in common, particularly in terms of Effort. Perhaps this lack of attention to Body Mode is because there's less of a sense that she has a body, since she's more cartoon [animation] than character [animation].

### *Effort*

Upon her introduction, Yzma performs a series of Mid Reach, gestural movements that are all Light and Sustained as she sits in Kuzco's throne: a sweep back and forth of her forearm, crossing her legs, drumming her fingers, moving her head as she blinks. Quick Effort begins to make an appearance as she Flicks to shoo a fly away, but any Quick gestures at this time are all small and limited to specific peripheral body parts: hand, forearm, eyes/head. She is performing, trying to project an image of collected control and power, much like her predecessor Maleficent.

When Kuzco appears she loses this aloof air, but is still adopting a persona – this time that of the simpering advisor. Her Effort shifts fully into Quick and Light as she hops from foot to foot, brushes off Kuzco's throne for him, and drums her fingers together in front of her chest (Near Reach). Considering Yzma as an animated form, Quick Effort tends to be used in a more comedic fashion than Sustained (supporting Bishko's observations of Tex Avery's characters);

looking at her as an autonomous human being, the shift to Quick occurs when she has lost her composure, whether intentionally (e.g. to yell at Kronk) or not (e.g. being caught playing emperor by Kuzco). As she fades into the background of the scene and becomes more passive, her reactions to Kuzco grow more Sustained until she collapses onto the throne (Heavy Passive Weight) and Quickens again.

Throughout these gestural shifts in Time Effort, Yzma's head movements as she speaks remain Sustained, rising and falling with the cadence of her voice. While this Effort quality is apparent in the action and occurs at multiple points in the film, it is a secondary component of the Shaping that is taking place when she speaks, Ascending and Descending throughout. Even so, it does contribute to Yzma's overall Effort and often creates a contrast when the rest of her movement is Quick. In addition to these extended Time Effort shifts, in later scenes Yzma often transitions between Quick and Sustained several times within a short period. Sometimes these shifts are rapid and serve to further reveal her frenzied state, and at others they are a bit more drawn out, functioning as a Phrasing element as at 13:15, when Yzma rolls her head and eyes with a Sustained Time Effort, in Preparation for a burst of Quick Action when she yells at Kronk. The link between Effort and Phrasing is more apparent in comedic characters such as Yzma and Mim, as they are animated in a more exaggerated cartoon style with more obvious Squash & Stretch and Anticipation.

In her second scene, we at last behold Yzma without any affectation; angry and unrestrained, her primary Effort Qualities are Quick and Strong. She Slashes (Quick, Strong, Indirect) when she smashes busts of Kuzco with a mallet and Punches (Quick, Strong, Direct) when she stomps back and forth. Her reaction is Quick when Kronk inadvertently suggests she murder Kuzco, and even the Press (Sustained, Strong, Direct) when she pushes down the lever to

gain entry into her lair is barely Sustained, veering further along the spectrum into Quick. In this scene we see a common tendency of Yzma to draw her shoulders up, exhibiting held tension in her shoulders, Bound Flow Effort, and Enclosing Shaping.

The Quick Time Effort continues as the scene progresses and Yzma solidifies her evil plan, transitioning into the dinner with Kuzco wherein she intends to poison him. Several of Yzma's Effort tendencies are apparent here, such as her use of Quick Time Effort in combination with a variety of other Effort Factors: Quick and Free hands when proclaiming that Kuzco will be "dead before dessert," Quick and Bound when tossing her own poisoned drink over her shoulder, and multiple instances of Dab (Quick, Light, Direct), such as when she uses a piece of broccoli to mime to Kronk that he should knock Kuzco unconscious (eventually switching to Punch in her attempt to get the message across). Her tendency to alter her Effort Quality in Kuzco's presence is also at work in this scene, shifting to more Sustained and Light movements when directly addressing him, and in the process highlighting the moments when she attempts to communicate only with Kronk by their contrasting Effort Qualities. These shifts between forced calm and poorly concealed (at least to the audience; Kuzco seems oblivious) panic are also signified through Shape (Ascending/Descending) and a small amount of Space (Far versus Mid/Near), but Effort remains the primary Mode at work in these moments.

Yzma's shift between Sustained and Quick appears throughout the film, as in the scene in which she gives a eulogy at Kuzco's funeral, having declared him dead after her attempt to poison him. Her movements are Sustained as she gives her speech – again, a performative act – but become much Quicker after. As she revels in her success (or so she thinks), she shifts between Sustained (34:50) and Quick as well, particularly in reaction to the revelation that Kuzco may not be dead. Yzma's search for Kuzco reiterates her established Effort patterns while

presenting some new ones: she Slashes when crossing out places she's already looked on her map, is Bound and Strong in her frustration at her continued failure, and continues to fluctuate between Quick and Sustained during a scene in which she attempts to eavesdrop on Kronk as he gathers intel from Bucky the squirrel, but she also Wrings (Sustained, Strong, Indirect) when she gets stuck in the mud on her trek through the jungle and Presses (Sustained, Strong, Direct) as she bends a fork in anger.

Quick and Strong continue to dominate, however, particularly in Yzma's arm gestures as she complains about Kuzco in the restaurant, continues to vent as she leaves said restaurant, and sits up in bed that night, awoken by Kronk's realization that they may find Kuzco at Pacha's house. Once in Pacha's home, we again see an Effort shift as she puts on a façade for his wife Chicha: Light movement switching between Quick and Sustained, with lots of Indirect arm gestures as she attempts to remain casual, as if she is merely stopping by to visit a distant relative, not attempting to capture a transformed emperor. Much like her earlier scenes with human Kuzco, the act is especially apparent when she drops it, as Light switches to Strong and Quick takes over when she attempts to search the house while Chicha is distracted.

Yzma grows more Sustained when she confronts Kuzco in her lair and her role as villain suddenly becomes a bit more serious and she basks in her imminent success. Quick movements continue to be interspersed throughout this scene (revealing the dagger strapped to her thigh, most of her interactions with Kronk), and as Kuzco and Pacha put up one last fight, Yzma cycles through a range of Effort combinations: fighting Pacha for the antidote is Strong (there is a brief moment of Light Weight Effort when she catches the vial) with a mix of Quick and Sustained; she Slashes when pointing after Kuzco and Pacha as they escape as well as when she pulls a curtain down; Presses when she pulls to tighten the knot after securing the curtain; and Wrings as

she uses the curtain to rappel upward in pursuit. While early in the film, Quick seemed to dominate as Yzma's primary underlying Effort Quality, toward the end, Strong appears to have taken over.

### *Shape*

Shape, in addition to Effort, is Yzma's primary Mode of movement, and is especially significant in her exaggerated cartoon reactions – there is almost always an element of Shaping underlying her movement, and her reactive Shaping is often extreme. Even upon her first appearance when she is rather still, seated in Kuzco's throne, we see Descending as she settles her chin into her hand, reacting with boredom to a peasant's plight. When she does finally move her whole body in this scene (6:10), she Ascends as she sends her arm out (Far Reach, Initiating at the wrist), then Retreats as she brings her arm back in to gesture to herself. As her movements get Quicker she continues to Ascend, Advancing as she berates the peasant before her.

Yzma exhibits a significant tendency toward Advancing, often with a straight spine so extreme that her head and torso end up pitched ahead of the rest of her body. She often Advances with Quick Effort, a Disaffinity that is generally a symptom of her tendency to do most things with Quick Effort – although there are instances when she conversely Retreats with Sustained Effort (also a Disaffinity), as when she finishes yelling at the peasant (Advancing, Quick and Strong) and Retreats back into her seat, the Recuperation of the Phrase. Much of Yzma's Shaping, as with her use of limbs, serves to create exaggerated contortions or oppositions in her body, which contribute to her cartoonish appearance. An early example occurs in the film when she Descends into Kuzco's throne in exasperation once she thinks she's alone, as her shoulders Ascend in opposition, further emphasizing the Descending Shape of the rest of her body. At

14:18, she combines a Retreating and Descending shape in her shoulders and torso with Advancing in her pelvis, causing her upper body to appear pitched back while her hips jut forward. Shortly later, at 14:33, the reverse occurs as Yzma Advances forward with her torso and a hyper-arched spine, with minimal movement in the lower body. After the extreme Ascending and Bound Effort during Kuzco's eulogy (creating the illusion of a Pin Body Attitude, as discussed earlier), Yzma quickly switches to Spreading and Enclosing with Free Effort in her torso to revel in her success; this use of Enclosing, often combined with Advancing, especially mimics a Ball Body Attitude during her pursuit of Kuzco later in the film, from a handful of jungle scenes to her visit to Pacha's house to their final confrontation at the palace. While Yzma demonstrates a preference for Effort Mode in her Gestural movements, she is exceptionally expressive Posturally through her use of Shape Mode.

As mentioned earlier, there is an underlying Ascending and Descending pattern of Shape that corresponds with Yzma's speech, a result of the Animation Principle of Squash & Stretch applied to the cadence of Eartha Kitt's line delivery. Similar to Madam Mim, the generally exaggerated use of Shape in Yzma corresponds with the generous application of Squash & Stretch to create more cartoonish movement and is apparent in the physical patterns surrounding her speech as well. This Shaping should be considered separately from other situational Shape patterns, and it affects other Modes as well, as in the previous discussion of Quick and Sustained Effort.

Accompanying her Quick, Bound movement, Yzma Retreats in surprise at Kuzco's appearance at 6:33, Scattering her limbs into Far Reach space before Gathering her arms back in to Near, raising her shoulders in an attempt to bring them even Nearer. She Advances in disbelief when Kuzco fires her, exaggerating the reaction by bringing her arms into the Back of her

Kinesphere in a Quick, Strong (Slash?) movement as her torso moves forward. Ascending and Descending are apparent as she sits down on the throne and crosses her arms.

Vertical and Sagittal Shaping patterns are apparent in her next scene as well: Advancing and Retreating of the torso once she and Kronk are in their lab gear, Descending in exasperation at Kronk's subpar intelligence, and Ascending (particularly in the shoulders) at 12:03 as she begins to formulate her plan to poison Kuzco. The dinner during which she puts her plan into action is filled with Ascending: she Ascends as she toasts Kuzco, Ascends at 15:30 when she believes she has succeeded in killing him, then continues to Ascend in shock when he is still alive. After Kuzco has transformed into a llama and been incapacitated, she approaches him, Advancing and Ascending as she leans over him (exaggerating the Advancing of her torso by placing her arms behind her) and then Retreating and Ascending as she pulls away.

Advancing and Ascending continue to dominate Yzma's Shaping tendencies. After Kuzco's funeral she Advances with her torso in Preparation before lying down (34:50), satisfied that things are finally going her way, then Advances again despite her sudden shift in mood upon finding out that Kuzco is not dead, briefly Retreating with her torso at the end of the scene in contrast. Even when she is barely moving she often has a sense of Advancing, as when Kronk carries her in a palanquin as they search the jungle for Kuzco. She Ascends throughout the scene in the restaurant, whether in frustration while venting to Kronk or in surprise when ambushed with a "Happy Birthday"-singing waitstaff (accompanied here by Retreating and followed by Descending).

Yzma shifts between Advancing and Retreating as she talks to Chicha when she visits Pacha's home as well. This scene (59:30) provides an interesting demonstration of Shaping in the moments when Yzma and Kronk are trapped in a dark closet, only their large, bright eyes

visible on a pitch-black background. Dindal and Fullmer speak in the DVD commentary about the fun challenge of animating such levels of expression with such limited body parts, and it is clear that their success was achieved primarily through the use of Shape, as Yzma and Kronk Ascend, Descend, and Advance in reaction to the conversation with Chicha and the children outside the door. When Yzma finally breaks free of the closet in a highly comedic, cartoon chase-inspired moment, the Strong Weight Effort behind her Advancing Shape takes her all the way out of the house and down the hill, causing her to attempt to regain control by Retreating against her forward momentum.

These Shaping tendencies continue to present themselves during Yzma's final confrontation with Kuzco and Pacha. In a particularly hectic moment, Yzma jumps on top of Pacha to fight him for the last vial of antidote, resulting in rapid-fire changes in Shape (particularly between Advancing and Retreating). Once this struggle ends, Yzma gains the upper hand by summoning her guards, Ascending as she commands them to seize Kuzco and Pacha and Descending when one hapless guard asks to leave, having been transformed into a cow in the chaos of transformative potions being thrown left and right. She leads her guards in a chase down the palace steps, Retreating even as her body continues to move forward in an effort to slow down once she reaches Kuzco, who has transformed into a whale. Many of Yzma's ensuing Shape changes are related to the Animation Principle of Wind-Up/Anticipation and the corresponding Preparation stage of LMA Phrasing, resulting again in body parts moving in opposition to her direction of movement – Retreating and Ascending as her guards fall through a hole before taking action, arms swinging back as she prepares to run forward, etc. As she swings up on a curtain in an attempt to reach Kuzco, we once again see her torso Shaping in opposition



to her physical momentum, Retreating (her Ball Body Attitude is apparent here) to balance her forward velocity before Advancing as she and Kuzco vie for the last vial, facing off at last.

### *Space*

While most of her gestural movements are more about Effort or Shape than they are about the particular placement of her limbs in Space, Yzma does make varied use of her Kinesphere, particularly with her arms. As she Ascends, Advances, and Retreats in her first scene in the throne room, her arms shift between Near and Far Reach multiple times, a pattern that is repeated throughout the film. When sending her arms into Far Reach, Yzma uses both Central and Peripheral pathways. These frequent changes in Reach Space are often associated with Quick Time Effort in addition to Shape changes, as when she braces her arms in Mid Reach Side while moving to the Front with her torso (Mid Reach) and head (Far Reach) to Advance with a Punch.

Yzma's variances of Space become less frantic when she is performing and working to keep her Effort more Sustained, such as her lofty "Take him away" with a small, Flicking gesture performed with her arm in Far Reach, or during Kuzco's eulogy, when her arms stay mostly in Near Reach, with the few Far Reach gestures appearing significantly less bombastic than those mere seconds later, once she drops the act of mourning. In contrast, the frequent Shaping changes that result from a lack of composure tend to be accompanied by equally frequent changes in Space, such as when reacting to Kronk's mention of killing Kuzco, bringing her arms into Near Space (Gathering, Preparation) before extending them out to Far (Advancing, Action) to grab Kronk, and repeating this sequence shortly afterwards when she pulls him in and then pushes him away. As Yzma commences plotting Kuzco's demise we see more Quick hand

gestures in Near, Mid, and Far Reach, in contrast with her body's slightly more Sustained movement. Despite all of these changes in Space, it would appear that Yzma's preference is to keep her arms in Near Reach, often close to her chest, such as during Kuzco's transformation into a llama, several search and chase scenes in the jungle, and the final confrontation back in her lair. Throughout these scenes her arms only extend to Far Reach when there is an external impetus, such as flying through the air with Kronk or pointing after Kuzco as her guards chase him.

Although Yzma's use of Shape, Effort, and Kinesphere is fairly dynamic, these movements tend to occur in a somewhat stationary way, making little use of her environment. She does move about in space by walking, but her truly expansive uses of the space around her come from the more cartoonish, less physically plausible moments: she frequently pops up in various locations in her secret laboratory, where the boundaries of space have been blurred by the cartoonish use of background; rides the crazy roller coaster required to gain entry into said laboratory; and experiences a dramatic fall from great height and subsequent bounce back up at the film's climax. With the exception of the purely vertical fall and rise, these pathways do tend to be complex, winding and weaving through horizontal, vertical, or sometimes both dimensions.

### ***Similarities and Differences in Kitten Form***

Hit with the last vial of transforming potion during her struggle with Kuzco and Pacha, Yzma laughs maniacally as she is engulfed in a puff of smoke and sparks, building the suspense as everyone waits to see what new, unbeatable form she has taken. Already Yzma's signature shifts in Time Effort make themselves known, as her obscured form laughs with a Sustained

Time Effort until the smoke clears and she is revealed to be a tiny, fluffy kitten, pausing suddenly before shifting to Quick Time Effort as she reacts to her new body with disbelief.

When Yzma transforms into a kitten (1:06:45) her appearance changes drastically. Interestingly, this human-to-animal transformation differs from others such as Maleficent and Mim in that Yzma does not retain many of her human characteristics in her new animal form. Kuzco, in contrast, does – not only in his llama form, but in the multiple rapid-fire transformations he experiences in the film’s climax. Her movement qualities, however, do not change significantly – most notably her tendency to shift between Quick and Sustained Time Effort. She gives a Light, Sustained meow after her new body is revealed, then switches to Quick and Strong to attack Kuzco’s head after he bends over her tiny form. This moment shows that Yzma’s propensity toward Shaping has also remained intact, as she Retreats and Advances in rapid succession in reaction to Kuzco’s movement. The Ascending and Descending Shaping associated with her speech patterns carries over as well, and continues to serve as a platform for continued shifts between Sustained and Quick Effort.

As she speaks, Yzma becomes more anthropomorphic: she gestures with front paws/hands primarily in Near and Mid Reach, at times using one paw to support her in quadrupedal fashion, at others demonstrating upright, bipedal posture. Though Yzma in cat form is less anthropomorphic than Mim, for example, she demonstrates more cartoon animation features, continuing with her tendency toward exaggerated Advancing to the point that her head seems to extend beyond her Kinesphere. In addition, to exaggerate her new tiny size, her voice is pitched up to a chipmunk-like squeak. She exhibits lots of Squash & Stretch.

Yzma spends little time in cat form, as the transformation takes place late in the film. Even so, we see enough movement from her to compare to her previous form. She attempts to

remove the cork from the antidote bottle with her teeth and paw with movement that is Direct, Strong, and, though it does not last long, Sustained. After failing, she falls off the ledge on which she has been perched with Heavy Passive Weight, arms flailing in Far Reach. She catches the bottle once again, much to her surprise, and demonstrates her joy through Shaping, Spreading with her whole body to echo the grin that spreads across her face. As the scene continues, she expresses surprise through multiple small, Quick head movements, reminiscent of human Yzma. She switches between human and animal movement throughout the scene, shaking her head and Initiating with her hip to jump once more for the antidote in a human way, then leaping from knob to knob with a Homologous, cat-like pouncing movement pattern. Finally, she Ascends and Descends in time with her evil laughter as she pronounces “I win,” a common villainous – and human – movement pattern.

Of course, Yzma does not win, and she makes a brief appearance in the film’s epilogue, where she is still in cat form and has been forced to join Kronk’s off-brand boy scout troupe. Along with Mim, Yzma is a rare case of the villain surviving to the end of the film in the Disney canon; unlike Mim, Yzma does not get to return to her original body. She stands on her hind legs with her front legs crossed in front of her like arms, and Advances with her hip while retreating with her upper body in a signature Shaping move of her human self.

### ***Tangled (2010)***

Gothel is introduced within the first two minutes of the film's prologue as a stooped, elderly woman with trembling hands and an unsteady gait. She desires to regain her youth, and has fortunately found a magic flower in the woods that allows her to do just that. She has chosen to hide the plant and keep it for herself, and her fear of its discovery is demonstrated by her Shaping and Effort when she visits the flower, Enclosing and Advancing over it with Direct focus, and Quickly Ascending when she fears the presence of an interloper. Gothel sings to the flower – thus accessing its power – with small, Light movements of her hands and fingers. The flower begins to glow, and her body transforms: her gnarled, curled fingers and wrists straighten and smoothen, her shoulders relax as the hunched posture of her Ball Body Attitude melts away, and her movements become more Sustained to reflect their newfound ease. She hides the flower and turns to leave, hunching slightly as she passes some royal guards in search of the flower – this time as a result of Enclosing Shaping rather than a Ball Body Attitude.

Subsequent prologue scenes demonstrating Gothel's obsession with the flower's age-erasing magic reinforce similar physical shifts: as she de-transforms and reverts to old age, her spine curves and her Body Attitude changes, her gait becomes less smooth, and her fingers curl, Initiating from the knuckles and opening Sequentially with Sustained Effort. Much like *Snow White's* Evil Queen, the hands become a focal point of her age-based transformation – in contrast, the younger Gothel's hand movements initiate primarily from her wrists, and the entire hand moves Simultaneously with Light Effort, which highlights the comparative ease. The transformation from old to young is always shown to be a relief to Gothel, usually through a deep breath, Ascending on the inhale and Descending as she releases her previously held tension on the exhale.

After the prologue has established Gothel's role and motive in kidnapping Rapunzel and raising her as her own child, the film cuts to the present, where a nearly eighteen-year-old Rapunzel waits in her tower for her "mother" to come home. On her arrival, Gothel stands at the base of the tower and calls up for Rapunzel to let down her hair. Her posture suggests a Screw Body Attitude, with her hip jutting out and her torso rotated. One hand rests on her hip while the other Floats from Near to Far High Diagonal, and she chastises Rapunzel for keeping her waiting; even this brief moment demonstrates Gothel's dramatic affectations and her demanding treatment of Rapunzel. She wraps Rapunzel's hair around her hand with a Flick and allows Rapunzel to pull her up, entering through the window with Initiation from her leg Sequencing into her pelvis as she swings her body inside.

Gothel's propensity for Shaping becomes increasingly apparent as the scene continues. She lowers her hood by Gathering as she Winds Up, Scattering to remove the hood and reveal her face and hair. She turns her upper body to set her basket on the floor before opening her arms dramatically from Mid to Far Reach as she greets Rapunzel, settling close to her – after many Shape changes – into an asymmetrical posture wherein her pelvis is neutral and her torso Retreats and Descends back and away. She supplements her Shape changes with frequent Light and Indirect arm and hand gestures, vacillating between Near, Mid, and sometimes Far Reach. Her Effort tends toward Light, Indirect, and Free, and this Free Flow Effort serves to further exaggerate her extreme shifts in Shape, particularly in her torso.

We see that her obsession with staying young has translated into vanity and self-absorption as she examines herself in the mirror with Light, Sustained movement, punctuated by a burst of Quick Time Effort as she makes a joke at Rapunzel's expense. She shifts between Spreading and Enclosing while laughing and admonishing Rapunzel for "taking everything so

seriously” before turning back to the mirror, continuing her examination with Quick, Light, and Direct (Dab) movements. Her Screw Body Attitude continues to manifest in frequent asymmetrical postures, twisting of the torso, and rotating hips when she walks. She sinks into a chair, Retreating in frustration when Rapunzel asks to go see the floating lanterns for her birthday, and dismisses the request with a Quick, Light, mocking response.

At this point Gothel begins singing as she enumerates the reasons why Rapunzel should never leave their tower. Her Shaping movements become even more extreme as she builds momentum, as does the Free Flow Effort of her torso, highlighted by exaggerated Central Initiation, arching of her spine, and swinging Rapunzel around. As the song ends, Gothel stills in an upright, almost Pin-like posture and opens her arms to Rapunzel, beckoning her to come in for a hug. Her hands Float over Rapunzel’s magic hair as she says she loves her, reminding the audience where her true priorities lie. The musical number resembles Ursula’s “Poor, Unfortunate Souls” performance in *The Little Mermaid*, not only in each villainess’s goal to convince her respective heroine that they only want to help, but in the varied use of Shape and frequent movement in general, environmental space.

Many of Gothel’s movements seem designed to keep Rapunzel off balance, from her frequent invasion of Rapunzel’s Kinesphere, to her extreme and often unpredictable Shape changes, to the way she swings Rapunzel around and otherwise manhandles her during the musical number. Even Gothel’s speech seems to support this goal, as her sentences are often peppered with Quick, Strong punctuations. These tactics, along with her passive-aggressive snipes, all serve to gaslight Rapunzel by keeping her under Gothel’s control without ever providing any explicit evidence, but occasionally Gothel slips up, dropping the facade when Rapunzel pushes too far. Gothel experiences one such outburst when Rapunzel mentions the

lanterns once again in a later scene: she grows very still before suddenly raising her voice and Advancing toward Rapunzel, and her Weight Effort shifts to Strong, accompanied by Direct and Bound Space and Flow Effort. This sudden shift in Effort highlights her usual Qualities of Light, Indirect, and Free, and demonstrates how they are often used to mask her true nature.

Immediately after the outburst and Rapunzel's resulting promise to stop asking about the lanterns, Gothel sinks back into her chair with Heavy Passive Weight and complains, "great, now I'm the bad guy," blaming Rapunzel for making her lose her temper.

Of course, Rapunzel does not keep her promise and soon escapes the tower with Flynn Rider, whom she had been hiding in an armoire. Gothel's discovery of Rapunzel's absence prompts a rare moment of true emotion, as she turns frantic at the prospect of losing her magic. She clasps her hands in Mid and Near Reach Space as she calls for Rapunzel, then rushes to tear away the rocks sealing the ground-level entrance to the tower, ripping them out in Slash Action Drive (Quick, Strong, Indirect), the reactive Shaping in her upper body apparent. Her Space Effort is Indirect when she finally enters the tower and looks frantically for Rapunzel, repeatedly Gathering and Scattering as she tears away bedsheets, curtains, and other objects in her search. She Encloses as she grasps at her hair in frustration, panic, and despair, then suddenly releases the tension she has been holding when she spots the satchel containing a tiara that Flynn left behind. When she realizes what the tiara is and what it means, she drops it, her Shaping once more exaggerated as she Retreats, breathes for a moment, then Advances to pounce on the satchel.

As Gothel follows after Rapunzel on her journey to the kingdom to see the lanterns, she repeats many of her previously established movement patterns, including frequent Shape changes, Mid Reach arm gestures, and Light Weight Effort employed in combination with



various other Effort Qualities. When she finally confronts Rapunzel again, Gothel's age has begun to catch up with her – displayed primarily in the streaks of grey appearing in her hair, rather than in any major changes in Body Attitude or movement signature. Physical indicators exist, however, in the form of Gothel's Shaping in this scene: while she usually displays a range of Shaping choices, here Gothel's slight preference for Enclosing brings her shoulders and spine into a rounded shape, reminiscent of the Ball Body Attitude she succumbs to when her body is aged. She still is able to stand fully upright, as demonstrated when listening to Rapunzel in between her own bouts of Shaping-laden speech. She moves her torso, hands, and forearms with Free Flow Effort as she launches into a reprise of her earlier song warning Rapunzel of the dangers of the outside world. She invades Rapunzel's Kinesphere again, grabbing her and frequently touching her hair. When Rapunzel refuses to obey, Gothel's generally Indirect Space Effort becomes Direct as she grows stern, striding toward Rapunzel as the music grows threatening. She swoops around, Initiating with her chest, before revealing the tiara in her possession, throwing it at Rapunzel with a Slashing motion. As her wrath grows, her Effort becomes increasingly Stronger and Quicker, finishing her song by dramatically raising her arms into High, Far Reach before swooping away.

Her first plan having failed, Gothel tries another approach, staging an attack and then “defeating” the thugs whom she ordered to go after Rapunzel. When Rapunzel sees her after taking down the two men, Gothel is already playing a part, raised shoulders (held tension) and concave chest heaving to show her exertion and adrenaline. When she spots Rapunzel she straightens and drops the branch she used as a weapon with Quick Effort; after hugging Rapunzel she raises her shoulders again, Enclosing and Advancing as she speaks. She repeats her previously failed attempt to encourage Rapunzel to come to her, standing straight and opening

her arms to Far Reach on a Low Diagonal, and this time succeeds: Rapunzel comes in for an embrace and allows Gothel to take her back to her tower.

Safely ensconced back in their hidden tower, Gothel believes all is well and back to normal, and her Effort returns to its usual Quick, Light, and Indirect, with several small, Flicking hand gestures as she chides Rapunzel for her foolishness. After Rapunzel realizes that she is the lost princess, Gothel approaches Rapunzel's room with Light steps and held tension in her raised shoulders, asking if she is alright. She drops her arms and shoulders with Passive Weight as she chides Rapunzel for mumbling, then grows very still when Rapunzel confronts her. The moment Gothel decides to deny the truth of Rapunzel's accusation, she immediately returns to her Shaping and Effort habits, releasing all held tension and flipping her hand with Light, Indirect Effort as she Advances. She again grows very still when Rapunzel insists, though her head continues to Advance slightly as she says that everything she did was for Rapunzel's own protection. She follows Rapunzel down the stairs, gradually increasing her Advancing, coupled with Enclosing as she approaches Rapunzel with one last effort to bring her back under control with words. Rapunzel grabs her arm, Gothel's Flow Effort becoming Bound in the brief struggle. After Rapunzel releases her and turns away, Gothel begins to follow after her with slow, measured steps and a shift to Sustained, Direct Effort.

Flynn arrives to save Rapunzel, and Gothel stabs him with Quick, Strong, Direct Effort (Punch). She continues to be stiller with fewer Shape changes now that her villainy has been revealed, with more Direct Space Effort and less Free Flow, particularly in her torso. She pulls Rapunzel after her with Strong, Direct Effort and exhibits held tension when Rapunzel insists that she will never stop resisting Gothel. Some of this tension releases when Rapunzel bargains

with her, agreeing to go peacefully if she will let her heal Flynn, and Gothel's head Ascends and Retreats slightly as she acquiesces.

This decision proves to be her downfall, as Flynn uses the opportunity to cut off Rapunzel's hair, destroying its magic and thus Rapunzel's value to Gothel. Gothel Ascends and Advances in her despair, fingers curling with Strong, Bound Effort. She gathers the useless hair to her in an attempt to retain its fading magic, Enclosing and Retreating with Light, Indirect Effort, shifting back to Bound and Strong as she grasps her wrist to focus on her rapidly aging hand. Her fingers curl again, this time with age as her hands become gnarled and wrinkled, her hair and the rest of her skin quick to follow. She Advances downward, a Shape change that smoothly combines with the final element of her transformation: a shift to Ball Body Attitude that signals her post- (or pre-) transformation change in movement quality. Now when she staggers forward she hunches under her cloak, Ball Body Attitude combined with Enclosing Shaping, and her steps become uneven and heavy with Passive Weight before she falls to her hands and knees before a shattered mirror, catching a glimpse of herself. She Encloses further as she continues to age, suddenly Scattering as she straightens with a final burst of energy and backs toward the window with a lack of Space focus, tripping and flailing her limbs in Shape Flow before falling out of the window, disintegrating into nothing before she hits the ground.