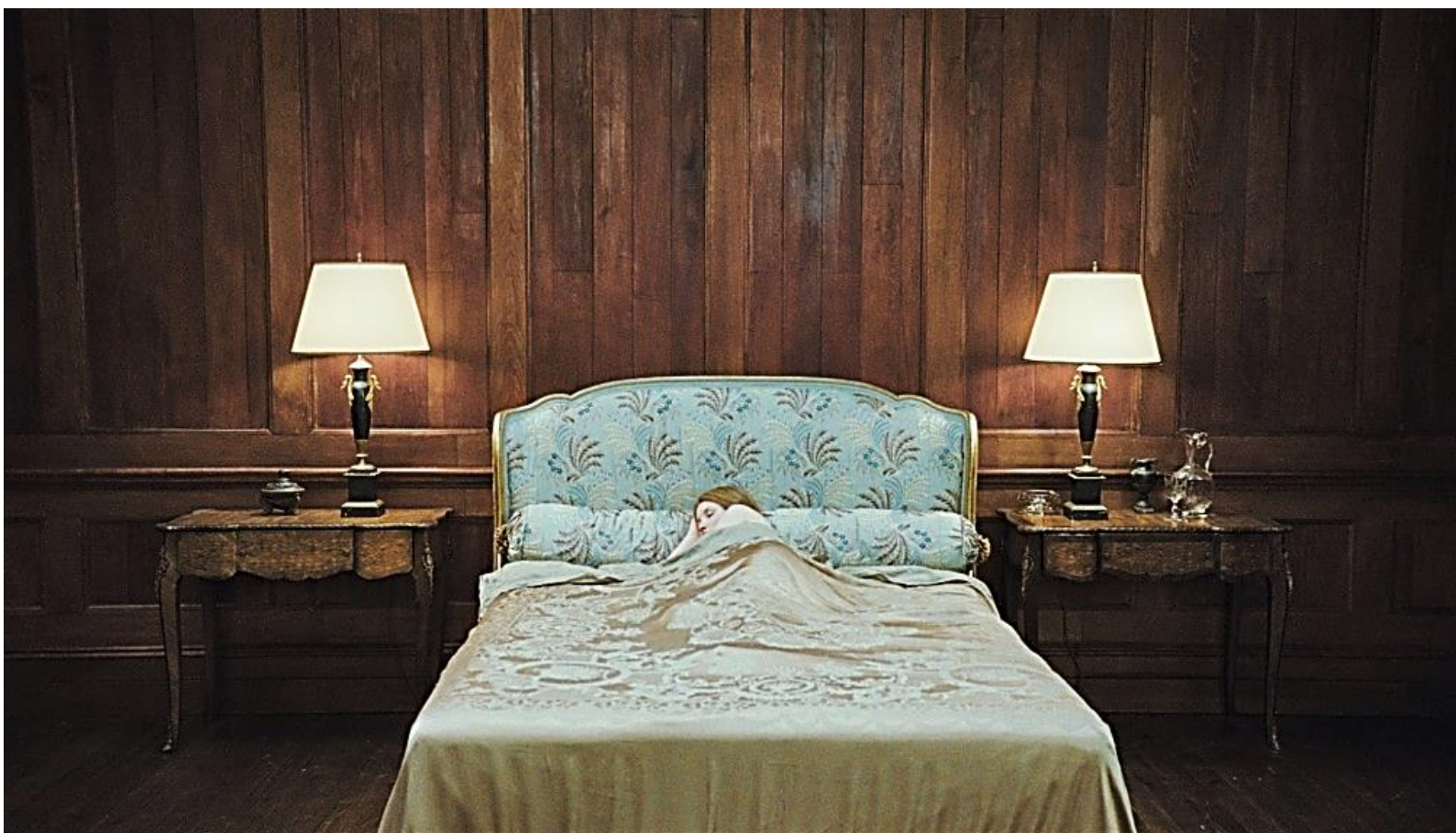


**Retelling Grimm Girlhood: Representations of Girlhood in the
Contemporary Fairy Tale Film Adaptation Cycle**



Still from: *Sleeping Beauty*. Dir. Julia Leigh. Perf. Emily Browning. IFC Films. 2011.

Submitted by Karen Ann Grobden, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Film, May 2016.

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ABSTRACT

Working within the filmic fairy tale adaptation cycle that emerged between 2005 and 2015, this thesis investigates how girlhood is cinematically constructed through the lens of fantasy, in relation to gendered representation in media. The relationship between femininity and fairy tales is well-established. By reading contemporary filmic adaptations of the tales, the thesis deconstructs gendered myth-making and reveals the extent to which fairy tale imagery and plot continue to inform cultural constructions of girlhood. It argues that by centring upon young female protagonists and often targeting a young female audience, this cycle constitutes a newly emerging young woman's cinema.

In doing so, the thesis relates the contemporary fairy tale adaptation cycle back to gendered histories of media and genres traditionally associated with female audiences (such as the Female Gothic, the Melodrama, the Costume Drama and so on). The thesis analyses their similar narrative strategies of using iconographical objects, haunted spaces and evocative settings. The cycle's cultural denigration is critiqued for its association with mainstream and primarily female audiences. The act of adapting fairy tales to construct girlhood through fantasy thus necessitates exploring the ideological implications of gendered genres, their narrative strategies as well as complex processes of adaptation, from tale to screen.

How these films, by centralising girlhood, explore female fantasies and desires, trauma, gendered violence and coming of age, is explored throughout. The thesis argues that a highly specific mode of girlhood comes to the fore in this cycle, within particular cultural (social, racial and narrative) parameters. This mode of fairy tale girlhood is imperilled, spectacular and exclusionary, generating disturbing implications of how young women are represented and addressed in popular media. As in women's films of previous eras in film history, however, the fairy tale adaptation cycle both reinforces and challenges the rigid parameters in which girlhood is cinematically imagined.

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Introduction: Girlhood and the 2005-2015 Fairy Tale Film Adaptation Cycle

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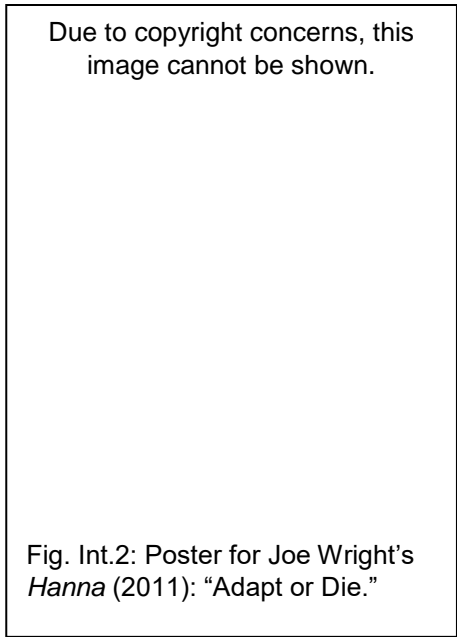
Fig. Int.1: Still from *Hanna* (2011) in which Marissa (left) and Hanna (right) face off.

In an abandoned Grimm's Fairy Tale theme park in Germany, a young girl named Hanna (Saoirse Ronan) is being hunted. Fleeing from the murderous clutches of C.I.A. agent Marissa Wiegler (Cate Blanchett), Hanna runs through eerily empty fairy tale-themed attractions. She leaps across boats shaped like seven swans and escapes a funhouse version of Grandmother's house. Deep in the woods, she comes upon an astonishing sight: defunct rollercoaster tracks lead into a tunnel down the gigantic, open mouth of a ten foot tall wolf's head, dwarfing Hanna. Suddenly, in a terrifying zoom forward, a familiar figure materialises from the tunnel's darkness. In a return to the 'Red Riding Hood' tale this film prominently references throughout, the wolf as a character comes in the guise of a seemingly trustworthy, motherly figure: Marissa Wiegler. Framed within the huge, sharp jaws of the wolf's head, however, Marissa's false warmth is a chilling parody of motherly concern. She is a wolf, dressed in grandmother's clothing and concealing a gun. In a quick series of shots and counter-shots, Hanna lets an arrow fly and Marissa shoots—both are hit.

This sequence from Joe Wright's fascinating part action film, part thriller *Hanna* (U.K., 2011) is one from a cycle of films emerging from 2005 to 2015, which mine the heart of many dark fairy tales to stage female coming of age. The monstrous yet moving final image of girlhood that this film closes on, hinges on the spectator's familiarity with fairy tale narratives. In a medium shot, Marissa succumbs at last to the arrow's wound and lies against the rollercoaster tracks, a shot of the sharp nails of her clenched, bloody hand recalling the wounded paw of a wolf. In a low-angled shot, Hanna is framed above Marissa and stares expressionlessly down the lens. Gun in hand, the young girl dominates the frame, observing quietly: "I just missed your heart." She aims

Marissa's handgun directly at the camera, at the spectator. As the shot rings out, the screen goes blood red and in huge white script, the name 'HANNA' fills the screen. This ending is particularly significant within an adaptation of 'Red Riding Hood'. The text affirms Hanna's 'wolfishness' and cold-bloodedness as not only narratively satisfying, but as necessary for her survival as a heroine. Ronan's feral yet emotionally vulnerable performance as Hanna provides the spectator with a striking re-visioning of Red, and by extension, of girlhood itself. The young heroine comes of age when she occupies the role of both Wolf *and* Red, and this reconfiguring of fairy tale roles breaks from conventional depictions of girlhood on screen.

Furthermore, audience expectations of what kind of role the girl in the fairy tale plays are diverted, by turning the fairy tale heroine-as-damsel trope on its head and rewarding Hanna's act of transgression, instead of condemning it. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's literary 'Red Riding Hood' vouchsafes the moral that little girls alone in the woods should not stray from the path, but Joe Wright's version takes the opposite view. With no intervening woodcutter or huntsman in sight, Hanna's journey into adulthood narratively necessitates that she morally 'stray' and the woods become the grim backdrop against which she saves herself. That very loss of innocence becomes a stirring, powerful emancipation in the film's final, blood-red frame. The violence with which Hanna comes of age creates a discomfiting ambiguity, however. In her unwilling strike against Marissa, Hanna initially misses, but the film's brutal conclusion



promises she will not make that mistake again. The final moments of this sequence are shot from Marissa's point of view rather than Hanna's, allowing the spectator to unexpectedly become aligned with the film's antagonist. The heroine's coming of age is cast in an unexpectedly monstrous light, when Hanna pulls the trigger. She has come of age but who, or what, has she become? Has Little Red Riding Hood turned wolf?

Promotional posters for Hanna, a generically hybrid fairy tale adaptation, interestingly include the tagline: 'adapt

or die' (see: fig. Int.2). This refers most obviously to Hanna's own survival in a hostile, modern world after being brought up in a Grimm's fairy tale-like wilderness. However, it is an apt commentary on the status of fairy tale retellings as well. The enduring cultural relevance of fairy tales lies in their adaptability and ability to reform and reshape in response to socio-cultural shifts. The sequence described above demonstrates that whether adaptations in this cycle are direct, indirect or loose adaptations, they powerfully invoke fairy tales on screen. When Hanna's heroine defies the role of little girl victim and she is ultimately formally recast as big bad aggressor in the film's final sequence, this is accomplished through a complex interaction between fairy tale spaces and set pieces (the woods, the giant wolf's head) and enchanted objects (the arrow, the gun) as well as camera movement and performance. Through close formal analyses of such narrative strategies and structures across and within genre boundaries, this thesis outlines the contemporary fairy tale film adaptation cycle and its critical relevance to wider gendered histories in media. By retelling fairy tales, this film and others like it 'tell' and narratively construct contemporary girlhood within a magical *mise-en-scène*. Fairy tale girlhood offers a rich subject of study, from which to critically analyse how these adaptations challenge and shift generic boundaries and employ fantasy as a narrative strategy to retell and reimagine female coming of age narratives. In this thesis, I closely analyse the coming of age of characters like Hanna and representations of girlhood in contemporary fairy tale film adaptations, as these relate to gendered representation in media. In doing so, I hope to evidence the problematic model of girlhood this cycle centres upon and explore the ways the young female audience this cycle targets is addressed, by these gendered representations and through fairy tale coming of age narratives.

The fairy tale emerges from a lost oral storytelling tradition. Without any clear *Urtext*¹ or known historical origin, these tales often appear to have always resounded in the imagination across countries, cultures and time, ever changing and reshaping themselves to the audience's appetite and the teller's ideological ends. In the years spanning 2005 to 2015, filmmakers have been drawn to

¹ The OED defines *Urtext* as a word of German origin in which 'ur' is understood to mean 'original' or 'primordial' and 'text' as in the English [narrative]: i.e. the original text. In the humanities, the term *Urtext* describes the seminal, first incarnation of a given narrative, genre or ideological movement. Jack Zipes observes that in fairy tale studies, there is no single, authoritative *Urtext* for any tale because the origin of fairy tales lies in a lost folk oral storytelling tradition (Zipes 8). Their unknown precise origins and variation and dissemination across cultures and languages means that all fairy tales, even canonised literary ones, are in effect already adaptations.

these “fabulous narratives” with new enthusiasm, however (Carter *Fireworks* 132-133). 2005 saw the release of David Slade’s harrowing contemporary adaptation of Red Riding Hood, *Hard Candy*, as well as *Mirrors* (U.K., David McKean) which was co-written by powerhouse fantasy author Neil Gaiman and borrows heavily from Snow White, among other tales. Both of these were closely followed by the release of dark wartime fairy tale *Pan’s Labyrinth* (Spain, Guillermo Del Toro, 2006), to considerable critical acclaim. Each bleakly adapts fairy tales to the screen to tell female coming-of-age narratives. Rather than always ending happily ever after, however, early films in this cycle often show girls coming of age in dark fairy tale worlds that problematise the very act of growing up for girls and, by extension, girlhood itself. Richard von Busack of Metroactive.com described *Hard Candy* as a “fairy tale [turned] horror movie revenge orgy” (von Busack n. page). *Mirrors* was dubbed a “demented fairy tale” set in a “fractured fairyland” by critics (Voll n. page, *Common Sense Media* n. page). *The New York Times* lauded *Pan’s Labyrinth* as a “political fable [...] a terrible fairy tale [brought] to life” (Scott n. page). In the intervening years between 2005 and 2015, the production of fairy tale film adaptations with young female protagonists has only increased with the growing recognition of young female audiences as a desirable target for commercial exploitation (Hughes 1).

The proliferation and success of these films evidence that fairy tale heroines are having a cultural ‘moment,’ with most recently, Kenneth Branagh’s *Cinderella* (U.K., 2015) and Robert Stromberg’s *Maleficent* (U.S.A., 2014) grossing 539.60 million dollars and 758.40 million dollars, respectively. Specifically, adapting fairy tale films that feature a young adult heroine and often address an adolescent female audience has formed a cinematic trend, or cycle, which shows no sign of stopping. The term ‘fairy tale reboot’ is now commonly used to describe the recent barrage of straight and refracted cinematic fairy tale adaptations and I fully acknowledge the rich history of fairy tale films, which Jack Zipes provides an encyclopaedic account of in *The Enchanted Screen* (2012). However, the term ‘reboot’ suggests a linear relationship between a single source material and its adaptation, which does not recognise that cinematic history of fairy tale films or fully evoke the complex processes of adaptation the contemporary fairy tale film engages with.

But what qualifies as a fairy tale film reboot, how do we identify a film cycle, and how can a contemporary fairy tale film adaptation be distinguished from the wider trend of cinematic reboots? First, let me clarify the terms 'reboot' and 'cycle' and their usefulness in this context. The designation 'reboot' evokes the revival of existing material through (cinematic or televisual) adaptation; most often to take advantage of an existing, commercially exploitable fan base or anticipated 'built-in audience'. However, adapting a fairy tale engages with the revival of material in popular circulation, and near constant adaptation, across different forms of media and storytelling. This complicates the idea of the fairy tale film as a straightforward 'reboot', in the way that a superhero film is. I argue that this particular cycle of contemporary fairy tale films makes use of fairy tales as a form of gendered narration, within a specific socio-historical and cultural context. What sets this specific cycle of recent films apart, is that they often specifically target a young, female audience and always centrally represent and trouble girlhood, through a fantastical lens. What I propose is that despite their generic differences and modes of adaptation, there exists a discernible commonality that groups them together as part of a cycle of films that is symptomatic of a cultural anxiety surrounding the figure of the 'girl'. This anxiety, mode of address and the common narrative strategies and structures that run through this group of films, are highly symptomatic of the contemporary moment and specific to the current cycle. Therefore, I use the term 'contemporary fairy tale film adaptation cycle.' This acknowledges the wider history and continuing practice of adapting fairy tales to the screen and across different forms of media, while recognising this cycle's specificity to the 2005-2015 period and socio-cultural context.

The term "cycle" is useful in this investigation, in that it both speaks to the relationship of audiences to the group of films in question, and exists both beyond and within generic boundaries. In *American Film Cycles: Reframing Genres, Screening Social Problems, and Defining Subcultures* (2011), Amanda Ann Klein observes that one of the reasons the film cycle has proven to be of less critical interest to film scholars than genre studies is that it is more obviously dictated by commercial forces and is therefore what is perceived to be "low culture" (Klein 9-10). Simply put, a formula gains popularity among a mass audience and the film industry rushes to adapt that formula in a series of similar

film narratives, which exist in conjunction with and in dialogue with each other, forming a cycle.

A cycle of fairy tale film adaptations is significant for its commercial exploitation of both an anticipated or 'target' audience (in the case of the fairy tale film adaptation cycle, young women and girls) and the revival of material previously adapted in cycles addressed to female audiences, like many belonging to the Classical Hollywood Women's Film Genre. More crucially, it would be significant for its existence as evidence of a cultural preoccupation with a specific narrative, plot or trope in fairy tales, that re-emerges cinematically when the filmmaker or studio anticipates a specifically female audience. Indeed, Klein asserts that a cycle renders a "cross-section of one specific moment in time, accurately revealing the state of contemporary politics, prevalent social ideologies, aesthetic trends, and popular desires and anxieties" (9). An adaptation presupposes an existing appeal or fascination to audiences with existing material that can be commercially as well as artistically exploited; thus a *cycle* of adaptations affirms that audience's *ongoing* fascination within a specific time period. By investigating such a cycle of adaptations, the factors that its films hold in common and how these evolve across the cycle's duration, reflect the stories audiences are drawn to *returning to*.

In the case of the 2005-2015 fairy tale film adaptation cycle, material is adapted that spectators have been consistently drawn to return to over centuries, to explore and inflect a highly specific mode of *contemporary* girlhood. Just as fairy tale adaptations within the Classical Hollywood Women's Film Genre emerged in response to social anxiety regarding women's societal roles, this cycle also emerges within what I contend is a period of cultural anxiety regarding young women and girls. This thesis investigates one aspect of these stories that forms the crux of that fascination and drives this return-through-adaptation, in the contemporary moment: the girl at the heart of the fairy tale. In doing so, the thesis questions how and why a cinematic narrative of enchantment is used to commercially exploit, socially critique and politically define a specific mode of contemporary girlhood.

Through adaptation studies, genre theory, and fantasy theory, my thesis takes a gendered methodological approach through which to analyse the fairy tale filmic adaptation cycle's representations of girlhood as a form of discourse.

It is a discourse which relies on the longstanding cultural association between femininity and fairy tales (which I will expand on in my discussion of feminist critical approaches in the fields of fairy tale studies). I propose that, as a discourse, this recent filmic cycle exploiting fantasy, fairy tales and girlhood is also revealing of the status of feminism and girlhood in Anglo-American culture today. In order to understand representations of girlhood in the fairy tale film adaptation as “discursive formations which testify to the ways in which society organises its meanings and shapes its system of relations,” I therefore engage with adaptation studies, genre theory, feminist criticism and girlhood studies (Casetti 82). To this end, this thesis investigates how girlhood is cinematically constructed through the lens of fantasy in the filmic fairy tale adaptation cycle of 2005 to 2015, within a feminist critical framework.

This generically diverse cycle remains identifiable as such through its use of fantasy and fairy tale to narratively centralise female coming-of-age plots and construct girl heroines. Building on Klein’s notion that the film cycle can be a “useful social document,” this thesis investigates representations of girlhood within the fairy tale film adaptation cycle as a form of narration that is revealing of contemporary attitudes toward young women (9). In other words, this adaptation cycle identifies and evidences an ongoing cultural preoccupation with girlhood and a generation of young women coming of age in the so-called post-feminist era. In “Adaptations and Mis-adaptations,” Francesco Casetti draws on Walter Benjamin’s essay, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (1936), to re-think the “parameters” of film and literature, not as separate from broader cultural discourse but as “new frames of reference for the critical assessment of other fields” (82). From this perspective, film and literature are recognised as “sites of production and the circulation of discourses; that is, as symbolic constructions that refer to a cluster of meanings that a society considers thinkable (possible) and feasible (legitimate)” (Casetti 82). The representations of girlhood in this cycle are meaningful as narration, which forms part of a larger *discourse* surrounding gender, female adolescence and feminism.

Through fantasy, representations of girlhood can bypass what is considered “feasible” for a young female protagonist and therefore legitimate, in order to visualise the outer limits of what is “possible,” at least in theory (Casetti

82). Indeed, in *Fantasy: a Literature of Subversion*, Rosemary Jackson observes that, “fantasy characteristically attempts to compensate for a *lack resulting from cultural constraints*: it is a literature of desire, which seeks that which is experienced as absence” (3) [emphasis mine]. In this thesis, I advance the argument that in the fairy tale film adaptation cycle, fantasy attempts to compensate for a “lack” in cinematic representations of young women and girls, by creating a *mise-en-scène* in which their representation can exceed the possible, the socially acceptable and conventional. This idea of fantasy as a tool for socio-political critique or subversion, contributes to my argument that fairy tale film adaptations *can* open up fantastical spaces of possibility. These spaces become a setting for subverting or critiquing gender-normative traits, roles and behaviours associated with female characters in earlier, literary fairy tale forms and conventional modes of on-screen femininity.

However, Jackson distinguishes between two ways fantasy can “operate” as a mode of expression (3). Fantasy can, “*tell of*, manifest or show desire [...] or it can *expel* desire, when this desire is a disturbing element which threatens cultural order and continuity” (Jackson 3-4). In other words, fantasy can both textually subvert and disrupt, or re-establish and reaffirm gender-normativity and disparities of power between genders, through narratives marked by nostalgia. While Jackson characterises fantasy texts as operating in one way or the other, I read fantasy as operating in both ways and often within the same text, in the fairy tale film adaptation cycle. Thus the mode of girlhood screened in this film cycle indicates a “negotiation” taking place, within the text (Gledhill 111).

Informed by feminist critic Christine Gledhill’s theory of negotiation as applied to the melodrama and study of popular feminine cultural forms more broadly, I argue that representations of girlhood in this cycle enact a textual “negotiation” between opposing socio-cultural positions (114). Methodologically, this thesis takes a gendered approach to understanding cultural representations of girlhood but is particularly reliant upon engaging with key concepts within second and third wave feminist criticism and thought, as well as feminist approaches to the fairy tale form. Gledhill’s theory of negotiation was originally applied to what Klein would term sub-generic cycles of the Classical Hollywood Women’s Film Genre, such as the Melodrama, known to both centrally

represent and address women. While her criticism is not specific to the fairy tale, Gledhill's critical approach is sensitive to both gendered representation as a form of cultural narration and the relevance of socio-cultural contexts in analysing a cycle defined by both female leads and female audience members. In order to analyse popular feminine cultural forms, Gledhill argues that a "theory of texts" is needed which can "accommodate the social existence of audiences" (113). In other words, to analyse narratives which anticipate female audiences (like the films in this cycle), femininity as both a textual position within the narrative and as a socio-historical position for the female spectator must be taken into account. For, as Gledhill observes,

"Femininity is not simply an abstract textual position; and what women's history tells us about femininity lived as a socio-culturally [...] differentiated category must have consequences for our understanding of the formation of feminine subjectivity, of the feminine textual spectator and the viewing/reading of female audiences" (113).

Gledhill observes that "negotiation implies the holding together of opposite sides in an ongoing process of give-and-take" (114). For the purposes of analysing popular feminine media forms, negotiation becomes "a model for meaning production," in which meaning "arises out of a struggle or negotiation between competing frames of reference [and] motivation" (114). In the fairy tale film adaptation cycle, representations of girlhood negotiate both feminist and more repressive, conservative discourses surrounding gender and female adolescence. Moreover, fairy tale and fantasy girlhood in this cycle represents a negotiation between the conventional socially dictated parameters within which girlhood operates in dominant socio-cultural discourses, and the desire to subvert or broaden those parameters. The cycle thus represents modes of girlhood which break from conventional, conservative characterisations of female adolescence, but also reaffirm them. By adopting an approach modelled after Gledhill's theory of negotiation, I am further able to engage with the relationship between the contemporary cycle's representations of girlhood and earlier cultural representations of female identity in the Classical Hollywood Women's Film Genre, and evidence that feminine cinematic cultural forms

arising out of two very different industrial periods, hold certain narrative strategies and structures in common.

Commonalities include the use of coded narration reliant upon space and objects to frame on screen representations of women and girls from earlier cycles, as well as a tendency to objectify female bodies and spectacularise female characters, even in narratives addressed to (young) female audiences. I draw upon Laura Mulvey's seminal "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975) to conceptualise the mode of girlhood this cycle centres upon as spectacularised, as well as exclusionary and imperilled. In order to investigate the representational politics of girlhood in the fairy tale film, my approach to analysing how girlhood is constructed on screen, is strongly informed by Mulvey's theory of the male gaze. In my discussion of magic mirrors in Chapter Three, I discuss how the enchanted object in the fantasy film can visualise the processes of looking 'through' the male gaze, as a female subject, that Mulvey describes. Like Gledhill's theory of negotiation, Mulvey's essay originally concerned classical cinema, although it has since informed the field of feminist film scholarship more broadly. Given that my focus is on the girl's coming of age, however, I apply Mulvey's theory in conjunction with criticism undertaken by third-wave feminist, girlhood studies and childhood studies scholars, to build upon how the girl becomes the subject of both a male gaze and what Ummi Khan terms a "grownup gaze" (302).

In order to investigate the breadth and complexity of this cultural fascination with fairy tale girlhood as exhibited by the fairy tale film adaptation cycle, my sample of films illustrates fertile adaptive strategies that move beyond fidelity. The privileging of a source text over an adaptation is known in adaptation studies as the fidelity model. It is problematic in the critical examination of any adaptation and in the case of fairy tales, is particularly unhelpful for exploring cinematic retellings of texts that are themselves without origin. In *The Dialogic Imagination* (1975), Mikhail Bakhtin famously argues that literature and all discourse is "dialogical," meaning that all texts exist in relationship to and in dialogue with all other texts. Thus the fairy tale film exemplifies what Robert Stam describes as Bakhtin's "dialogic," at work in adaptation, or the inevitable way adaptations are intertextually 'in dialogue' with

each other (1992: 20). Considering this, no single adaptation of a fairy tale can be considered authoritative. The fairy tale narrative adapted by the filmmaker is in transmedial, intertextual dialogue with a history of its adaptation and with all its other versions—whether these are cinematic, literary, in video game format or otherwise. Moreover, the fairy tale film cycle not only centres upon young female protagonists but primarily targets a young, and what Linda Hutcheon would refer to as a “knowing” female audience (120).

A “knowing audience” is one that is familiar with the source text or alternate versions being reworked in the adaptation (Hutcheon 120). As Hutcheon argues in *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006) the pleasure and appeal of the adapted text to the knowing audience lies in the very “palimpsestic pleasure” derived from being aware of alternate versions, “allowing [the source text] to oscillate in our memories with what we are experiencing” during the screening of the adaptation (Hutcheon 120-121). For example, in *Hanna*, the spectator constantly experiences visual cues referencing ‘Little Red Riding Hood’ and other tales, such as ‘Hansel and Gretel’. Indeed, Christine Geraghty builds on Hutcheon to point out that the pleasures in adaptation may very well lie in the film text’s ability to self-referentially indicate adaptive moments in its own narrative, drawing on paratextual sources, if not a single source text (364).

These visual cues or “adaptive moments” may manifest as an object, like a glass slipper, or a setting, like a cottage in the woods, and by thus alluding to a specific tale, become intertextual referents for the audience (Geraghty 364). As Jack Zipes observes, “we know, almost intuitively, that a particular narrative is a fairy tale” (Zipes qtd. Matrix and Greenhill 2). I propose to pinpoint what contributes to the spectator’s “intuitive” sense of what specifically makes a narrative a fairy tale narrative—namely, that enchanted objects contribute to a magical mise-en-scène that intertextually connects fairy tale filmography (2). A girl in a red hood will always recall ‘Red Riding Hood’ and even the narrative moment of a girl entering a wood echoes the fairy tale. Such fairy tale objects, settings and spaces recurrently become intertextual referents on screen for fairy tale narratives, in this cycle. The spectator becomes aware of the narrative shift into fairy tale, through adaptation of a particular fairy tale object or setting. This form of narration creates a transposable magical mise-en-scène through which the cycle remains identifiable, even in films that are not ‘named’ adaptations but

nonetheless powerfully reference or invoke fairy tales within even a single sequence. To analyse the possibilities that this form of narration offers to representations of girlhood in the fairy tale film adaptation, the chapters in this thesis each focus on an 'enchanted' object, space or setting.

In his seminal work on fantasy as a genre, Tzvetan Todorov defines fantasy as a genre to be encompassed by three elements. The first, "the uncanny" occurs when strangeness within the narrative is generated by (unconscious) forces, or the psyche. The second, "the marvellous" is identified by the presence of magical forces (or strangeness generated by supernatural elements). The third is "the fantastic," which occupies the indeterminate middle-ground between the uncanny and the marvellous, where there can be no certainty as to whether there are supernatural or psychic elements at play (Butler 18). In other words, Todorov conceptualises "the fantastic" as crucially defined by its quality of hesitancy, asserting,

"The text must oblige the reader to consider the world of the characters as a world of living persons and *to hesitate between a natural and supernatural explanation* of the events described. Second, this hesitation may also be experienced by a character; thus the reader's role is entrusted to a character. The hesitation is represented, it becomes *one of the themes of the work*" (Todorov 1975: 33) [emphasis mine].

For example, *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) is included in this thesis and by Todorov's definition, would appear to operate in the fantastic mode when Dorothy is in Oz. With her return to Kansas and discovery that it was all a dream, however, Oz is revealed as a world apparently conjured by the uncanny and her own unconscious desires. Citing similar textual examples, critics such as Kathryn Hume have objected to Todorov's definition of the fantastic, claiming few texts can remain so ambiguous for the entirety of the narrative (Hume 14; Butler 25-26). Rosemary Jackson critiques Todorov's structuralist approach to fantasy for failing to take the "cultural formation" of the text into account, asserting: "Like any other text, a literary fantasy is produced within and determined by, its social context" (Jackson 3, 6). Indeed, any examination of fantasy that is "confined to the effects of the text and the means of its operation," loses sight of its potentially "subversive" function within the

text, to question socio-political positions (Jackson 3). In Chapter One, I analyse Dorothy Gale's movement between worlds in *The Wizard of Oz* as opening up a fantastical space in which to stage the girl's fantasies of violently escaping the domestic sphere, for example.

To analyse fantasy worlds and spaces, I draw upon Vivian Sobchack's reading of Mikhail Bakhtin's conceptualisation of the chronotope. While no definitive definition has ever been agreed upon by later critics, the term 'chronotope' literally means 'time-space'. The term indicates the absolute cohesion of both time and space in the understanding of a text, where neither is foregrounded. From this perspective, there is no such thing as an incidental spatiotemporal backdrop. Rather, meaning in a text is conferred by the interlocked elements of space, time and narrative action, which in many ways conforms to the meaning of the term 'diegesis' in film studies. Michael Holquist emphasises that the "[utterly] interdependent" nature of time and space is what makes this concept theoretically 'distinct,' however (Holquist 424). Indeed, analytical readings of filmic diegeses often lose sight of the spatial in texts, which is a particular focus of this thesis.

Vivian Sobchack also reads the chronotope as "meant to emphasise not only the absolute interdependence of time and space in the constitution of narrative and its significance but also the human "relativity" of their "ratio"—or, if you will, their historical rationality" (Sobchack 149). Sobchack applies this understanding of the chronotope to film studies, and specifically to understanding filmic generic forms which have a tendency to exist outside of traditional generic boundaries. Her essay deals specifically with film noir, but the same applies to other subgenres, such as the melodrama, the Gothic and the sub-generic cycle of the fairy tale film adaptation. Like Jackson and Casetti, Sobchack advances a mode of analysis which encompasses the social context, or discursive formation, of texts. In other words, the chronotope can be understood to work past limiting categories of genre in order to better understand "discursive patterns from which artistic works take their shape" (Montgomery 125). Moreover, the artistic work or text can be understood and analysed "as a cultural artefact" or as Klein would put it, a "social document" (Montgomery 125, Klein 9.) My analysis of fantasy diegeses and spaces is thus informed by Sobchack's application of the chronotope, as a unit measuring both

temporal activity and concrete space, in order to gauge narrative (textual) as well as cultural (contextual) meaning.

In *Theorising the Fantastic* (1996), Lucie Armitt productively draws on aspects of Todorov's conceptualisation of fantasy, but critiques the limitations upon the possibilities of fantasy that his and other critics' attempts to "contain" fantasy, inevitably impose (2-3). Armitt suggests a more productive approach to fantasy would be to focus on how its quality of 'fantastic' hesitancy invokes uncertainty as a narrative strategy (Armitt 1996: 2-4). In other words, texts that might not be generically categorised as fantasy by purists can nevertheless enter the generic mode of the fantastic to disrupt and expand beyond the constraints and conventions of commonly accepted normality. Thus I include 'straight' films in my sample of films, which enter the generic mode of fantasy through the adaptation of certain fairy tale objects, settings or spaces in key sequences. These "adaptive moments" create a magical *mise-en-scène* in an otherwise 'straight' narrative, in which events on screen are temporarily no longer constrained by what is conventionally or realistically possible (Geraghty 364-365). This allows me to analyse the fantastic as a narrative strategy this corpus of films consistently employs to represent young female characters and explore why this cycle of films reaches for the fairy tale to 'tell' girlhood.

This cycle of films encompasses a generically diverse corpus of films, some with more obvious ties to the fairy tale than others. Therefore the case studies in this thesis will be identified as 'direct/named'; 'indirect/referenced' and 'loose/inflected' fairy tale adaptations. Examples of 'direct/named' adaptations would be *Cinderella* (Branagh, 2015) or *La Belle et la Bête* (Gans, France, 2014), which overtly announce the specific tale each film adapts and follow its basic plot or narrative beats. I opened this discussion with *Hanna* (Wright, 2011), which is an example of an 'indirect/referenced' fairy tale adaptation because it does not overtly declare its relationship to 'Red Riding Hood' but visually and narratively references the tale throughout. Zach Snyder's *Suckerpunch* (U.S.A., 2011) is a 'loose/inflected' example, which subtly draws on *The Wizard of Oz*, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* as well as "Donkeyskin" and "Sleeping Beauty". These terms are intended to be mutable according to individual case, however. For example, while most 'direct' adaptations of a specific tale (in which a specific fairy tale or tales is

acknowledged by the narrative) will also be 'named' adaptations (or a specific tale acknowledged in the title of the film), and vice versa, there are exceptions. Julia Leigh's *Sleeping Beauty* (Australia, 2012) is 'loose/named': the film title overtly names and therefore acknowledges 'Sleeping Beauty' but the narrative itself only very loosely adapts the tale through visual references and narratively centralising the unconscious body of its young female protagonist, Lucy (Emily Browning). Similarly, Disney's live-action *Maleficent* (2014) is 'direct/referenced' because while it directly (or closely) follows the linear plot of popular incarnations of the tale, its title does not name 'Sleeping Beauty'. Rather, the title *Maleficent* signals to the audience that this adaptation is more crucially Disney adapting itself; as the title character's name was invented in the studio's 1959 animated *Sleeping Beauty*.

Analysing the "dialogical" relationship of *Maleficent* (2014) to *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) demonstrates how, through adaptation, fairy tale narratives as we know (or expect) them, can be critiqued, and through fantasy, disrupted and called into question (Stam 20, Armit 2-4). Like *Snow White and the Huntsman* (Sanders, U.S.A., 2012), *Maleficent* was read by some critics as Disney rewriting its own animated 1959 *Sleeping Beauty*, with *The Washington Post* notably dubbing it a "feminist-revisionist" fairy tale (Hornaday 2014). The word "revisionist" is significant, as it presupposes that fairy tales in their 'original' or earlier forms are inevitably patriarchal or at least at odds with feminist adaptation (Hornaday 2014). By analysing fairy tales, one engages with a history of adaptations without source text. Yet the canonised versions of literary fairy tales are nevertheless relevant to an understanding of how their legacy has shaped discourses of girlhood and gender-normative behaviour. One such example is the 'German tales' known as *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* [Nursery and Household Tales] by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, the first edition of which was published in 1812.

Feminist approaches to fairy tale studies reveal both how fairy tale texts shape discourses surrounding girlhood and gender, as well as how socio-historical attitudes to women and girls in different periods shaped canonical fairy tale texts, like the work of the Brothers Grimm. Maria Tatar's excellent study, *The Hard Facts of the Grimm Fairy Tales* (1987) exposes the politics of erasure at work in Wilhelm Grimm's editorial practices, from the first edition of *Kinder-*

und Hausmärchen to its later increasingly altered editions, observing, “Critics have accused Wilhelm Grimm of [...] introducing messages, motivations, judgments, morals, and other often pedantic touches” (28). Tatar reveals, through archival research, how the canonisation of fairy tales in Grimm’s second edition of fairy tales (and its process of rewriting for a child-age audience) relies on the erasure of sexual content; the imposition of nationalistic ideologies, Christian morals and biblical characters into pagan folk tales, as well as exaggerating or inventing acts of violence and violent punishment for its heroes and heroines (30-39). Of its characterisation of female characters, Tatar observes that, “Briar Rose becomes more beautiful and dutiful in the second edition of the tales; the heroine of ‘Twelve Brothers’ acquires a “tender heart” by the seventh edition; and the ‘Girl without Hands’ becomes progressively more God-fearing from one edition to the next. In [...] ‘King Thrushbeard,’ the heroine’s arrogant behaviour comes under increasingly heavy fire with each new edition, just as the heroine becomes ever more contrite” (30). Thus Grimm rewrites once pagan fairy tale heroines as devout; idealises feminine beauty as obedience and therefore goodness; and punishes female vanity with increasing vehemence, to “[shape] his readers views” with “his own preconceived notions about sex, class and gender” (Tatar 30).

In another feminist study of fairy tales, *Bad Girls and Bold Boys: the Moral and Social Vision of the Tales* (1987), Ruth Bottigheimer conducts a thorough and wide-scale analysis of Grimm’s tales, focusing specifically on their treatment of gender. With archival scholarship, it is shown that oral folk tales and earlier literary versions of them were appropriated by the Brothers Grimm to reflect then-contemporary sociocultural (misogynistic) attitudes, through gendered re-telling, editorialising and omissions, which actively demonise or “silence” its female characters (181-2). In the 139 tales analysed by Bottigheimer, speech patterns “consistently show the same constraints that render good girls silent, bad girls and women loquacious, and boys and men free to speak” (Bottigheimer 182). In these volumes, Bottigheimer and Tatar reveal that the history of fairy tales is not only a history of adaptations, but a history of adapting and therefore *constructing* specific modes of young female characters through narratives re-canonised, re-edited and re-told most prominently by *male* tellers. Thus moving beyond the fidelity model and the

nostalgia for the uhr-text that underlies comparisons between these literary, and later cinematic adaptations of the tales, denaturalises the idea that fairy tales are inherently, or 'originally' patriarchal texts. The very characterisations of fairy tale heroines as 'originally' passive and beautiful, as well as morals extolling feminine obedience and vilifying feminine vanity, pride and stepmotherly cruelty, are revealed to be the result of adaptive choices themselves. In turn, a feminist fairy tale film can be identified as a retelling in its own right, with its own powers of reinvention to shape representations of young female characters to its own socio-political context and historical moment.

A recurring theme of feminist fairy tale scholarship is the recognition that fairy tales offer a lens through which to read the history of what was traditionally a female cultural form. The relationship between representations of female characters in fairy tales and access to speech, which Bottigheimer focuses on in her archival study, is crucial to Marina Warner's *From the Beast to the Blonde: on Fairy Tales and their Tellers* (1993), as well. Warner explores the implications of fairy tales being dismissed as 'old wives' tales' and analyses fairy tales as narratives with the power to 'give voice' to historically silenced women. Asserting that the appeal of fairy tales partially lies in the access they give us to untold women's histories, Warner observes that,

“The stories are not only fantastical, though their appeal arises from their enchantments and fancifulness; they also encode a great deal of experience and knowledge from among the usually unnoticed and the voiceless groups—women, children, the poor. Their 'charm'd magic casements' open onto realities—often harsh and cruel—onto nightmares as well as dreams” (Warner 2010: 329).

In her analysis of *The Arabian Nights*, Warner poses the idea that “Shahrazad's ransom tale-telling could be described as a single, prolonged act of performative utterance, by which she demonstrates the power of words to affect reality” (Warner 169). With speech acts, comes the power to shape reality through discourse. Therefore female access to speech or lack thereof in fairy tales, illustrates a disparity of power between the genders, for both Bottigheimer and Warner. Indeed, in *Cinema and the Realms of Enchantment* (1993), she

brings this feminist intervention into fairy tale scholarship to the screen and suggests that with every retelling, the reader or spectator should wonder, "Who is telling this story? [...] For who are they telling it and why?" (Warner 1993: 17).

Female access to speech and lack thereof is significant to a larger critical conversation surrounding women and representation in contemporary Hollywood, as well. In a study led by Dr. Stacy L. Smith at the University of Southern California, it was revealed that of the 100 top-grossing mainstream films released between 2007 and 2014, a mere 28 percent of characters "speaking in any capacity" were female (Smith et al 8, Oglivie 1). In 2012, *The Independent* published an article about representations of Disney's animated fairy tale princesses entitled, "How Walt Disney's Women Have Grown Up," arguing that their representations through the decades show an increasing awareness, on the company's part, of gender equality (Welikala, Dugan: Saturday 15 December 2012). Yet from 2010 to 2014, "films produced by Walt Disney Studios and Walt Disney Animation Studios combined had 157 lead or supporting roles for men, just 67 for women," (Oglivie 1). This study is important because there is a tendency within film scholarship to avoid outright comparisons between on-screen representations of women and racial difference in Classical Hollywood with contemporary cinema, the assumption being that there is considerably more diversity in recent filmmaking. However, Smith's study shows that, in comparison to the 28 percent of female speaking characters from 2007 to 2014, "25% of on screen characters were women" in a period "from 1946 to 1955" (7-8). This demonstrates that, "despite the activism and attention devoted to raising awareness on this topic in the popular press, *the prevalence of girls and women on screen has not changed in over 50 years*" (Smith et al 8) [emphasis mine]. Thus the representations of female characters in films that do centre upon a female protagonist like the fairy tale film adaptation cycle, become even more crucial as cultural texts that shape and are shaped by cultural discourses and ideologies surrounding gender and girlhood.

There is an enduring cultural relationship between women and fairy tales in popular culture at large. As early as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, female writers produced literary fairy tales, while Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar demonstrate fairy tales at play (and critiqued) in the writings of Jane Austen as well as Charlotte and Emily Brontë, in *The Madwoman in the*

Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination (1984). In this landmark work, Gilbert and Gubar re-examine nineteenth-century literary texts written by female authors, primarily in terms of their dichotomous depiction of female characters as either an 'angel' or 'monster'—the pure, moral governess or the madwoman in the attic. It calls for the cultural deconstruction or breaking up of this angel-monster binary which they astutely observe is characteristic of the fairy tale canon and that I would argue persists in representations of girlhood in visual culture today (36-38). In *The Second Sex* (1949) de Beauvoir employs fairy tales to describe the disparity of power between the sexes in cultural representations of gender roles, asserting, "he slays the dragon, he battles giants; she is locked in a tower, a palace, a garden, a cave, she is chained to a rock, a captive, sound-asleep: she waits" (de Beauvoir 41). Thus the history of fairy tales and femininity is also a history of the relationship between gender and narrative; and through feminist intervention, has been revealed as a history of how patriarchal hegemony actively constructs and constrains 'women' and 'girls' into delimited social categories. That fairy tales have come to underpin these representations and the mode of narrating contemporary girlhood, is perhaps less surprising in light of the rich relationship between feminism, femininity and fairy tales that long precedes this filmic adaptation cycle.

To analyse the complex and multivalent contemporary filmic adaptations of these narratives, this thesis also engages with girlhood studies. Girlhood studies is an interdisciplinary field which reconfigures traditional understandings of girlhood as natural and self-evident, with critics like Catherine Driscoll and Sarah Projansky revealing its mediations across cultures and its constructedness as a specific, historically constituted and culturally invested category. Given that a concept like girlhood or adolescence does not precede discourse but is shaped and produced by it, Driscoll argues that girlhood is a term describing "an idea that depends on and contributes to a range of particular but not inevitable knowledges" (4). This "idea" of girlhood is not natural, nor constant but has been "discursively determined through repetition [and] transformed through representational shifts in particular historical moments" (Driscoll 4, Projansky 19).

So what is a girl in the context of this thesis and what kind of characters do I refer to when I write about representations of girlhood on screen? Within girlhood and childhood studies, there is some debate regarding the problematic nature of terms like “girl,” “child,” and “adolescent,” and their sometimes interchangeable use in popular and even critical discourse, given both their discursive mutability and the fact that such terms are only recently historically constituted. The “invention of adolescence” is said to have occurred in “late nineteenth century America” (White 9). Indeed, early child psychologist G. Stanley Hall only coined the term ‘adolescence’ as a period of turbulent psycho-sexual development in girls and boys in this period, with the publication of *Adolescence: Its Psychology and its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education* (1904). Girlhood Studies scholar Catherine Driscoll asserts that while “it seems self-evident that girls are female children or young women, [...] that self-evident understanding raises a number of questions” (2). In this thesis, I analyse representations of characters who are female children, adolescents or young women, and who could all be described as ‘girls’ in popular discourse despite their very different ages and life experiences. The very fact that a character like Ofelia in *Pan’s Labyrinth* (2006), who reads fairy tales and implicitly believes in their indictments, belongs to the same group as Lucy, a university student and sex worker, is indicative of the complex and various meanings generated by the term “girl.” Let me begin by historicising the figure of the girl and girlhood, and how these terms relate to female adolescence, its theorisation, and the coming of age of the contemporary fairy tale film heroine of this cycle.

This thesis engages with the girl’s coming of age as a discursively determined, socially fraught narrative with a history of controversy and shifting understandings of what is meant by “coming of age,” “girlhood,” “adolescence” and the “girl.” By investigating contemporary representations of the girl’s coming of age in the filmic fairy tale, this thesis deconstructs both the parameters of the mode of girlhood shown in the fairy tale films and the implications of those parameters, for the kinds of girlhood that are celebrated, excluded, troubled, or idealised in the cinematic imagination. History shows that the idea of the girl’s coming of age in particular is charged with cultural anxiety and attempts by adults to regulate, control or otherwise surveil the girl. In the Victorian era,

Romanticist Jean-Jacques Rousseau rejected the notion of Original Sin² and reconceived childhood as a period of prelapsarian³ innocence. This innocence caused children to become socially relegated to a protected group and societies dedicated to the promotion of child welfare and protection began to form. In the ensuing widespread cultural idealisation of children and childhood, the figure of the girl became an object of interest to educators, policymakers, newly emerging child protective agencies, artists and authors alike.

In this period, the girl's coming of age was legislated as the age of sexual consent was changed for the first time in England in the nineteenth century, in 1875 when "the felony clause was raised from 10 to 12 and the misdemeanour clause from 12 to 13" (Butler 2015). Childhood Studies scholar Victoria Butler asserts, however, that "the most significant change took place [in 1885] in the wake of a newspaper exposé of the so-called 'White Slave Trade' in young girls" (2015). However, far from driven purely by altruism, Butler asserts that, "public interest in child protection drove the passage of the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act, but its finer details were concerned as much with control as protection" (2015). These anxieties regarding the character of the girl and the need to both protect and control her, were intimately tied to ideas of nationhood, and the notion of what the girl might become, as the mother of future generations. In 1899, early child psychologist William James described his concern for the character of the young American girl, based on his observation of an American adolescent girl who conveyed "an irresistible impression of bottled lightning" (108). This arguably provides a deeper insight into the anxieties of James, as an adult and then-contemporary anxieties regarding the girl, than it does into the observed girl (108). Girlhood was thus immediately associated with potentiality and crisis, even as the girl became a figure of desirability and fascination, whose possible corruption at the hands of adults was frequently juxtaposed with a perceived otherworldly innocence.

This juxtaposition arguably inspired the Victorian rise of the 'Cult of the Little Girl' among nineteenth-century artists and authors in this period. The concern for the preservation and simultaneous fetishisation of girls' innocence,

² Original Sin is a Christian theological concept, describing the supposedly innate tendency toward evil in all human beings, as a trait inherited from Adam and Eve as a result of The Fall.

³ Prelapsarian is a term which describes characteristics of the period before Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden, meaning: innocent, unspoilt and pure.

generated a dichotomous image of girlhood of erotic and fantastic possibility that soon proliferated popular culture and art. In photography, art and literature, images and representations of children, and especially girls, littered popular visual culture and discourse, from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) to Wendy Darling in J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1904). Christine Roth describes the Cult of the Little Girl in this period as borne out of a "fascination with the [perceived] dual nature of the girl [as] worldly and ethereal, scandalous and blessed" (48-49).

A fascination with the duality of girlhood and the juxtaposition of the fantastic with realism, re-emerges in the contemporary fairy tale film adaptation cycle, as well. The origins of this particular cycle can arguably be traced to the commercial success of Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* (2005). The Victorian fascination with "a titillating paradoxical construction of little girls" relying on "a tension created by the irreconcilable schism between the fantastical and the mundane," is borne out by then-contemporary representations of girlhood in texts like Carroll's 1865 *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, as well (Roth 48-49). Carroll's dreamlike text represents the little girl protagonist as caught between play and seriousness, between reality and wonderland. The appeal of both Carroll's narrative style and the heroine Alice herself lies in the slipperiness of these divisions: Alice is a little girl who often performs and parodies adult behaviours, and who has one foot in the real world and another in a fantasy realm. Unlike representations of women, who are often also subject to binary divisions in both Victorian and later contemporary texts, the girl is in a state of 'becoming', as well. The girl's in-between-ness generates anxieties and fascination for who or what she might become and textual representations of her coming of age are shaped by the mode of girlhood that is imagined, anticipated or dreaded. Carroll's literary text reflects the then-contemporary obsession with female children and childhood, while Burton's adaptation of the same text centres upon and troubles an adolescent Alice. The re-emergence of these texts through adaptation is significant and is indicative of the ages, qualities, behaviours, appearance and narratives that are culturally associated with contemporary notions of what constitutes girlhood. By focusing in particular on coming of age narratives in the contemporary cycle, this thesis questions and investigates contemporary anxieties and preoccupations with the girl's

potentiality, or what it means for the contemporary fairy tale heroine to come of age.

The Victorian Cult of the Little Girl persisted into the early twentieth-century. However, the pedagogical impact of everything from methods of upbringing, to reading novels, fashions, travel and education for the newly-recognised adolescent girl was scrutinised, in the light of adolescence as period of both vulnerability and temptation, in the early twentieth-century. Hall, “the father of adolescence”, warned of the dangerous potentiality of the adolescent, whose “natural interests are never so independent of adult influence” in 1904 (Lesko 182, Hall 7). Previously, William James had merely encouraged teachers to act as models for imitation to encourage better ‘habits’ in their students to discourage the “sultry... breathlessness” and “eagerness” of the so-called bottled-lightening girl (James 108). Hall, on the other hand, asserted that saving the adolescent from “the omnipresent dangers of precocity” necessitated active intervention on the adult’s part, in the development of the adolescent (Hall 8). Pedagogical advice literature geared toward adolescent girls was popularised in this period, alongside the publication of fantasy literature with girl protagonists, like L. Frank Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900). In Chapter One, I analyse the 1939 film adaptation, in which fantasy ‘intervenes’ and interrupts the dreary Kansas existence Dorothy longs to escape, and the experience supposedly teaches her that there is ‘no place like home.’ Thus representations of coming of age narratives, reflect both societal values and fears projected onto the girl growing up.

Girlhood Studies as a field is said to have emerged from a similar period of interest in and concern for the teenage girl in the 1990s, in part as “a response to the proliferation of girls-in-crisis tomes such as Mary Pipher’s *Reviving Ophelia* (1994) that dominated both the academic and public discourse about U.S. girls” at that time (Mazzarella ix). Driscoll asks, “When speaking to or of girls as female children or as young women, do these two understandings actually mean the same thing, and how are they defined?” (2). The terms “girl,” “adolescent” and “girlhood” continue to generate contradictory associations, while their interchangeable and changeable use in popular discourse reveals that the mutability of their meanings persist. Contemporary popular discourse frequently refers to women in their thirties, and

indeed of all ages, as 'girls'. As Driscoll observes of the blurred lines of what age constitutes the end of girlhood,

"I remain socially connected to, interested in and still sometimes strongly identify with 'girl' things, 'girl' behaviours, and experience of girlhood [as an adult]. This connection remains because girlhood seems something I have experienced, even if it is only my own experience rather than access to any essential girlhood, and even if it doesn't seem truly to have completed. I'm not sure when I stopped being a girl, if I did" (Driscoll 2).

I acknowledge that historically and culturally, the terms 'girl' 'adolescent' and 'girlhood' have shifting meanings, and that this is complicated by the fact that those meanings are shaped by discourse, but have genuine consequences in the lives of girls and young women. For the purpose of this thesis, girlhood is defined less by age, or category of age, than by coming of age. The protagonists in the filmic case studies vary between female children around ten years of age, adolescents and young women, but each features in a recognisable coming-of-age plot. By "coming of age narrative," I mean that the sequences this thesis focuses on, use enchanted objects, spaces or costuming to narrate moments of transformation, change and emancipation in the lives of girls, whether they are children, adolescents or young women.

Close analysis of key sequences within the fairy tale film adaptation cycle reveal the extent to which fairy tale imagery and plots continue to inform cultural constructions of girlhood, female adolescence and coming of age. As Projansky observes, "the very existence of human beings we understand to be "children," "teens," or "tweens," is discursively produced and historically and socially specific. Because of this, if the categories are to continue to exist, public discourse must return to the concepts again and again, producing, maintaining and sometimes transforming them in the process" (Projansky 19). Cinematic encounters with 'fantastical' girlhood textually contribute to the construction of girlhood as a socio-historically constituted and culturally invested category. By deconstructing how young female heroines are narratively represented in these films, this thesis explores this female coming of age it recurrently centres upon and what the parameters are of this 'fantasy' girlhood. How young female

protagonists are represented in cultural texts has wider ideological and political implications, considering the dominant cultural practice of “adolescent girlhoods [being] associated with white, middle-class norms of femininity” (Marshall 118). This thesis demonstrates that the textual delineation of, or negotiations between, specific ‘modes’ of girlhood within genres of fairy tale and fantasy, forms part of a larger cultural discourse and “critical conversation” that surrounds contemporary attitudes toward young women and girls (Casetti 82-83).

Though for the purposes of this thesis, I define girlhood in terms of female coming of age, this delimits my exploration of girlhood to the kind of female coming of age narratives that are popularly shown in Western mainstream contemporary cinema. This leads me to a critical enquiry of exclusionary representations of female coming of age—a critical gap that is reflected in the very field of girlhood studies. Sharon R. Mazzarella writes in the preface to *Black Girlhood Celebration: Towards a Feminist Hip-Hop Pedagogy* (2008) that girlhood studies has commonly been conceptualised as a field originating “from [the] third wave form of feminism, heeding its call for scholars, policy makers, educators and all manner of adults to listen to the voices of girls” (ix). Mazzarella points out however, that emerging scholarship critiques the “wave model” of the history of feminism, as contributing to the erasure of “Black female bodies, lived experience, history, culture and theorising” (x). Mazzarella cites critic Aisha Durham⁴’s work, which challenges the girlhood studies critic to “focus on the role cultural representations play in the identity development of Black girls,” and for the white feminist scholar to “rethink feminist history” and consider his or her own complicity in the perpetuation of a white-washed version of its development (x). This thesis is engaged with questions of girlhood and gendered representation and therefore inevitably with criticism drawn from feminist and girlhood studies scholarship. However, this pinpoints problematic aspects of critical work undertaken in the fields of both feminism and girlhood studies, namely a tendency towards exclusion.

This thesis strongly contends that the fairy tale adaptation cycle is a trend in contemporary filmmaking which contributes to this perpetuation and

⁴ Mazzarella refers here to an oral presentation given by Durham at the 2007 National Communication Association Conference in Chicago, which I am unable to quote directly (see: Works Cited.)

popularisation of a mode of an exclusionary mode of girlhood, inevitably represented (for the most part) as Caucasian, as well as heterosexual and cisgender. Given the lack of representations of girlhood in the filmic fairy tale as anything other than Caucasian, heterosexual, cisgender, Western and able-bodied, this thesis does not attempt to identify exceptions to this model of girlhood in Western contemporary adaptations. Rather, it seeks to explore the parameters of the mode of girlhood perpetuated by this cycle, to evidence its exclusionary nature. This thesis questions how the coming of age of the contemporary fairy tale heroine is constructed on screen, and the socio-political implications of this highly specific cultural representation of girlhood when it is addressed to a young female audience. In *The Gothic Child* (2013) Margarita Georgieva observes that,

“Because the nature of the child is by definition unstable (the child grows and develops), the character constantly shifts from one state (childhood) to another (adolescence, adulthood) or from one status (subordinate) to another (a leader). In the Gothic novel, one of the primary roles of the child is to grow into one of the traditional character archetypes—the Gothic hero, heroine or villain” (13).

As in Gothic texts, fairy tale film adaptations are concerned with the coming of age of girls into the heroines of their tale. This thesis investigates the mode of girlhood contemporary Western fairy tale films cast as ‘heroines’, and the implications of addressing a mode of heroic girlhood that is imperilled, spectacular and exclusionary, to young female audiences.

It is relevant that this filmic cycle emerges within a larger attempt to image, construct and problematise representations of ‘the girl’ in visual culture; in a period when (especially in Anglo-American culture) that image has become anxiously debated and politicised. This cycle’s representations of girlhood emerge as cultural texts that document a decade of high visibility of (on-campus) sexual assault and violence toward young women internationally; of reproductive rights legislation in the United States; the ubiquity of the phrase “war on women” in American mainstream media and political discourse; high reportage of crimes committed by and against young, white women and the

revival of feminist debates in mainstream popular culture (Casetti 82-83). Of course my thesis explores the imaging of girlhood in a specific cycle of films, rather than a larger scale media analysis such as Kathleen Sweeney's *Maiden USA* (2008). However, despite this cycle occurring in a period of high visibility for (on-campus) sexual assault "and increasingly contentious political conversations about women's sexual [reproductive and political] rights," historically girlhood has consistently been the subject of cultural anxiety since the 'discovery' of female adolescence (Schreiber 22-23).

Elisabeth Marshall observes that "this representation of adolescent girlhood as a period of crisis surfaces in different time periods in distinct ways in a variety of cultural texts written for or about young women. Materials for children and adolescents feature different manifestations of this character, including Disney's filmic representations of fairy tale princesses, such as *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) [...] These representations *make visible larger competing cultural lessons* about the perceived educational and/or psychological needs of adolescent girls" (Marshall 118). Fairy tale texts are thus identified as a discourse returned to "in different time periods" through adaptation, specifically in reaction to a wider cultural perception of young women being at risk (118). Crucially, Marshall implies that these texts are also shaped by opposing or "competing" ideas of what young women need, and by extension, should be (118). Thus by using feminist film analysis to deconstruct how girlhood is represented in films addressed to a young female audience in this highly popular film cycle, I hope to gain insight into how young women are being represented on film, and through that construction, are being filmically addressed as an audience.

In addition to feminist criticism and girlhood studies, genre theory and adaptation studies are intertwined in my analysis of this generically complex cycle of adaptations. Particularly relevant to fairy tale films, is Stephen Neale's conceptualisation of genre as "instances in repetition and difference" (48). Neale theorises that cinema audiences become highly familiar (if unconsciously) with genres and are 'trained' over time to recognise them and in watching them, relate films belonging to a particular genre with its generic tropes, formulas and so on (48-50). This cues different expectations in the

spectator according to different genres. The pleasure that the genre film affords is what Neale calls the “repetition in difference,” or the slight twist to the old formula, in its new incarnation (48). Audiences of fairy tale film adaptations, which belong to a sub-generic cycle, experience the pleasure of “repetition of difference” through adaptation (the familiar or expected tale, with a twist). In the case of fairy tale adaptations, of course, there is no single source text that can be considered ‘original,’ but there are versions of fairy tales the audience can be expected to be familiar with (most likely those canonised by the Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Anderson or Charles Perrault and perpetuated to some extent by Disney). Watching the fairy tale film adaptation, the ‘knowing’ audience experiences both the meta-textual pleasure of the film signalling its own “adaptive moment” that Geraghty identifies, as well as the “difference in repetition” of a familiar generic mode (Neale 50). When the expected narrative is intervened upon or a familiar plot twisted from its expected course (a Red Riding Hood who hunts down a wolf, for example or a Sleeping Beauty working out of an upscale brothel) this unexpected adaptation, its “repetition and difference” specifically addresses a “knowing audience” (Neale 50; Hutcheon 120-121).

Rosemary Jackson asserts that fantasy takes too many varied forms to be considered a coherent genre and proposes that fantasy is less a genre than a generic mode (1981: 7). Fairy tale adaptations adopt the generic ‘mode’ of fantasy to cue the audience for a particular set of expectations and conventions, such as the magical *mise-en-scène*. Certain generic markers, styles, modes and conventions have become read as feminine forms, and their re-emergence and transformation into contemporary adaptations are telling of how, as Judith Butler would put it, gendered identities are re-constituted in discourse through repetition, a repetition enacted through adaptation (Butler 520). Within the generic mode of fantasy, the magical *mise-en-scène* stages the girl’s coming-of-age narrative, while unhindered by the constraints of realism. This generates both the interpretation that fantasy subverts societal heteronormative constraints and that through fantasy, the legitimacy of those constraints are critiqued. On the basis of this ambiguity or “hesitancy” alone, the consistent prominence of girlhood and female coming of age and its negotiation of opposing socio-political positions, the contemporary fairy tale film adaptation

cycle invites critical enquiry (Todorov 1975: 33). Sub-generic styles, modes and cycles associated with femininity are more prone to critical denigration and dismissal, however.

Perhaps this is because films anticipating a female audience often belong to sub-generic film cycles that defy genre. Indeed, by dividing film cycles into the intra-generic (outside of or between established genres) or intergeneric (a cycle within an established genre); Klein argues that film cycles challenge the primacy of established generic boundaries in film studies (8). Moreover, David Butler observes that, “The reason for fantasy’s absence from most critical studies of genre is because, taken as a whole, the term embraces too many types of film to be accommodated by the prevailing theoretical approaches to genre classification” (18). The consistency with which such ‘sub’-genres associated with femininity and female audiences lie outside categories of genre, is telling, however. Gledhill asserts that the melodrama, for example, is “condemned [...] by association with a mass and, above all female, audience” (Gledhill 6). Armitz observes that fantasy “inevitably attracts two negative constants: escapism and pulp fiction. Once we have introduced these, it takes only a small step [...] to connect fantasy with ‘popular’ rather than ‘serious’ literature” (1). Thus a cycle that exploits fantasy and centres upon young female protagonists is doubly disparaged.

The fairy tale film may ‘defy’ generic classification but it inflects a variety of genres. The false assumption that canonised literary fairy tales are the sole source for filmic adaptation, has implications for how audiences perceive the fairy tale adaptation’s generic hybridity. Christine Geraghty observes that the trans-medial adaptation from prose to film often engenders a *shift into a mode of genre* that critics apprehend as a “betrayal to the source text” (363). Geraghty asserts that this “contrast between (apparently) non-generic written texts and generic screen adaptations” becomes a basis for fidelity-based comparisons which often set the literary above the cinematic (Geraghty 363). Geraghty identifies two generic modes that filmic adaptations fall into and become problematically denigrated for doing so. These are the romance and the melodrama. Both of these modes are recurrently inflected in fantasy and fairy tale films and both romance and the melodrama likewise defy straightforward generic classification (Geraghty 363-364). Klein points out that genre studies

have stymied critical efforts to come to grips with cinematic trends, modes, styles and cycles that complicate its categories (Klein 5-6). Melodrama in particular has been alternately classified as a subset of the Women's Film Genre of Classical Hollywood, or of the Hollywood Family Drama and more recently, as existing "beyond generic boundaries, as a style, mode, sensibility, aesthetic and rhetoric, crossing a range of genres, media, historical periods and cultures" (Mercer and Shingler 3).

The means by which characters, tropes and plots associated with particular styles or modes of genre are adapted trans-medially appears to complicate the notion of the stability of genre itself. In *Home is Where the Heart is: Studies in the Melodrama* (1987) Gledhill notes that the only comparatively recent critical examination of melodrama as a legitimate area of filmic study is in direct relationship to its stylistic association with femininity, narratives concerned with the interior lives of women and anticipation of a female audience (6-7). The fairy tale adaptation cycle reveals itself to be a similarly generically complex form, which centralise the interior lives of girls and target a young female audience. It therefore emerges as a new form: a young woman's cinema.

Thus the contemporary fairy tale film adaptation cycle usefully compares to sub-generic cycles belonging to the Classical Hollywood Women's Film genre, as feminine cultural forms, anticipating a female audience which defy generic classification and are associated with "low" or "mass" culture (Klein 9, Armitt 1). Stylistically, Armitt has argued that Gothic texts use fantasy as a narrative strategy to create ambiguity and therefore potentially, to create spaces of subversion. Thomas Elsaesser observes that the melodrama's "expressive code" contains "a sublimation of dramatic conflict into decor, colour, gesture and composition of frame" (51-52). The fairy tale adaptation uses objects and settings as narrative tools which, through fantasy, become 'enchanted' and often destabilise or subvert the linear narrative. This reveals that the fairy tale film adaptation cycle emerges as part of a developing young woman's cinema, with clear narrative and stylistic strategies in common with the Classical Hollywood Women's film genre. It also, however, demonstrates that then, as now, feminine cultural forms fall outside of genre and are critically dismissed and denigrated. In order to place it historically, culturally and textually, my thesis

reads the fairy tale adaptation cycle's narrative strategies, settings and tropes in relation to the women's film genre, drawing on but modifying the important feminist work on gender and genre, but reshaping questions to engage with this new cycle. This, both to examine the extent to which representational images of girlhood have evolved cinematically and to demonstrate consistent stylistic and generic markers across the cycle; and its legitimacy as a generic 'mode'.

Filmography and Structure

Included in this investigation are (with some pertinent exceptions) live-action and Anglo-American film adaptations of fairy tales. This is largely to limit the scope of the films being critically examined to those with similar industrial backgrounds and cultural influences. Most are mainstream films distributed by large studios, with contextualisation provided and comparisons drawn with a select number of independent, lesser known fairy tale film adaptations. These are shown to centre upon girlhood within fantasy and fairy tale narratives as well, demonstrating that this 'enchanted girlhood' cycle does stretch across different cinemas, though the focus of the present study is limited to a select sample. To inform the concept of the current fairy tale film adaptation cycle as an emerging young woman's cinema, comparisons are also drawn between films from women's films of the 1930s and 1940s. This, in terms of their gendered generic classification into sub-cycles and sub-genres, prominent reliance on fantasy, common narrative strategies through use of objects and space and anticipation of a female audience.

The structure this investigation follows is one through spaces and icons familiarised by fairy tales and fantasy narratives: the fantasy world, the bloody chamber, enchanted objects and the woods. Structuring my argument through fairy tale spaces and objects speaks to the methodological framework of the project. By grouping cinematic sequences according to their use of fantastical spaces, my choice of filmography is dictated by which films adapt the visual iconography of fairy tales, rather than a tale's specific plot. In other words, I take a "medium-specific" approach to exploring the singularly cinematic possibilities of retelling the fairy tale, through the on-screen adaptation of familiar objects,

settings and spaces that “knowing audiences” will perceive as emblematic of the fairy tale mode (Hutcheon 5, 120). This allows me to move beyond those films commonly referred to as fairy tale ‘reboots’ by critics or deemed legitimate fairy tale films by folklorists due to their narrative, linear resemblance to literary incarnations of the tale. Instead, close readings of sequences taking place in these spaces belonging to fairy tale, or deploying enchanted objects, are provided to explore the implications of the consistent visual association between girlhood and fairy tales.

This thesis explores the possibility of a common magical *mise-en-scène* to films in this cycle, which adapt fairy tales and centre upon girlhood, studying how these two operate in local interaction as well as in relation to a larger representational history of women on screen. In cinema, female characters and heroines have traditionally been designated to certain spaces and not others. Reading contemporary girlhood in relation to *mise-en-*

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Fig. Int.3: Gustave Doré’s Bluebeard illustration.

scène, or to spaces to which it is cinematically confined, is revealing of its parameters and of the extent to which representations of female characters have expanded into new settings, beyond the domestic sphere and stifling interiors of film cycles previously addressed to female audiences. Thus this thesis links close textual analysis to wider questions of form, representation, genre and identity.

That material and visual aspects of the narratives became emblematic of certain tales in the popular imagination is made evident by the recurrence of certain objects, settings and spaces, which re-emerge in illustrations of fairy tale collections, as well as in adaptations. Take Gustave Doré’s 1861 illustration for Charles Perrault’s “Bluebeard” [Le Barbe Bleue], first published in 1695. Doré’s illustration of the narrative reveals that the heart of the tale’s suspense revolves around an object, by taking Bluebeard’s key to the forbidden chamber as its subject. The magical key and bloody chamber re-emerge consistently in adaptations, such as what Maria Tatar refers to as the 1940s Gothic “Bluebeard Cycle” and both literary and filmic versions of

Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* and Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* (Tatar *Secrets Beyond the Door* 92). Furthermore, these illustrations demonstrate how both key and chamber are directly tied to the tale's characterisation of Bluebeard's wife. Of the first, Tatar observes, "The wife's attraction to the forbidden object is readily apparent" (see: fig. Int.3) (Tatar *The Annotated Fairy Tales* 150).

Indeed, the spectator in this illustration is put in a position to observe both what the wife sees and is evidently fascinated by, as well as the unseen danger she fails to apprehend, in the form of her ogre-like husband and his wagging finger, as he forbids her to ever use the key. While her eye-line correlates to the "forbidden object," Bluebeard's "bulging" eye-line is drawn directly to his wife's face and specifically to her eyes (150). This image overtly anticipates that the wife's curiosity and attraction to the magical key and the contents of the chamber will prove to be her undoing, at the hands of her mad and bloodthirsty husband. However, Doré also depicts Bluebeard noticing his wife's fascination with a certain murderously rapt expression of his own, implying that he is setting a trap. Doré's illustration thus places the viewer in a position of superior knowledge to the wife, whose hypnotised gaze further plays into myths of deadly feminine curiosity and casts her as a kind of Pandora, who wilfully brings about doom to satisfy her whim. The viewer is thus aligned with Bluebeard, by being made privy to superior sight alongside him and put in a position of condescension toward his wife, whose feminine curiosity is vilified. When in cinematic adaptations the magical key re-emerges in films like George Cukor's *Notorious*, which indirectly adapts the Bluebeard myth, the object operates intertextually. The "knowing audience" may be aware of both the key's

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Fig. Int.4: Vogel's illustration
of the bloody chamber.

role in the Bluebeard myth and its associations with feminine curiosity as sinful (Hutcheon 121). When, in *Notorious*, female detection and ingenuity lead to the discovery of a key, which unlocks the mystery, representations of femininity as passive and female curiosity as sinful in previous versions of 'Bluebeard' are implicitly critiqued.

The bloody chamber, where Bluebeard's wife discovers his previous six wives is depicted in Herman Vogel's 1887 illustration (see: fig. Int.4).

Again, the spectator's vantage point is significant in a close reading of this image; which is oriented from within the forbidden space itself. From this perspective, Vogel's image shows the wife entering from the immediate left side of the frame, while the centre foreground is dominated by a chopping block wet with red blood; beside which an axe lies discarded, to haunting effect. Just beyond the chopping block and axe, six wives in clean white nightgowns are visible and each has been hung upon the left and back wall, one after the other. The left and back wall are the only walls visible to the viewer, however. On the right side of the image, the body of a hanging blond wife falls partially out of frame; or off-screen, as it were. This 'off-screen' or rather, out-of-frame space creates an impression of uncertainty in an already haunted space because the boundaries of the chamber are not clearly delimited. Uncharted space and even endlessness is evoked in which bodies hanging all in a row and off-frame, give rise to the possibility of still more bodies stretching into the further space.

The viewer is positioned against the back wall, as if occupying the point of view of another former wife, hanging dead the chamber. This hair-raising image anticipates Bluebeard's wife, whose face is turned from the spectator toward the corpse nearest her, soon occupying another hook on the wall, herself. Cinematic adaptations of Bluebeard and other fairy tales play with the suspense evoked by the dangers of the unseen, off-screen space. Most notably, Gilbert and Gubar's early feminist reading of the madwoman's attic in *Jane Eyre* evokes the possibility of being subsumed and contained by husbands and the larger patriarchal hegemony, in more insidious and institutionalised ways. Therefore a number of levels of adaptation can be understood to be at play in the cinematic fairy tale. The fairy tale film adaptation cycle exists in dialogue with both canonised fairy tale adaptations in literature, like Perrault's tales, but is also in dialogue with the illustrator's adaptation of the tale and a larger socio-historical visual culture surrounding fairy tale narratives. As shown above, decoding its accompanying illustrations can destabilise the patriarchal "moral" advanced by the teller's adaptation. This thesis employs similar analytical strategies to read key sequences in fairy tale adaptations, in which spaces and objects generate meanings which contradict, subvert or otherwise call into question the film's linear narrative.

However, the visual iconography of fairy tale can advance as well as subvert conservative ideologies, as Rosemary Jackson observes (3). Considered the French father of fairy tales for his collection, titled variously as *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* or *Les Contes de ma Mère l'Oye* (1695), Perrault's version of Little Red Riding Hood ["Le Petit Chaperon Rouge"] is thought by folklorists to be the first adaptation of the tale to contain a red hood. Zipes deems the red cloak to be Perrault's invention, alongside his stated moral that little girls who wear red, invite the wolf. Zipes credits Delarue and Hanssen with collecting early folktale versions of the tale, that predate canonised versions by male tellers like Charles Perrault or the Brothers Grimm, and which are thought to bear a stronger resemblance to the tales in their lost, oral storytelling form (23). These give a version of the tale in which Red's hood isn't red at all (a detail added by Perrault) and her escape from the wolf is precipitated only by her own quick thinking. The seemingly innocuous addition of a red cloak to the tale through Perrault's adaptation supports Zipes' assertion that Red Riding Hood over time becomes a rape narrative. The addition of the red cloak allows Perrault to vouchsafe a moral in which the girl heroine is implied to be complicit with, or to blame, for being "eaten up" (read: raped) for being dressed provocatively in red.

The "straying" from the path, while not invented by Perrault, was another more recent invention within adaptations of a folk tale that in its earliest incarnations, tells the story of a girl who cunningly escapes from a wily wolf on her own. Perrault, however, gives the tale's title to the red hood and its popularity has in intervening periods since given rise to psycho-analytical readings of the cloak symbolising menstruation, for example and therefore sexual initiation. The connotations of the red cloak and its politics continue to echo into contemporary debates surrounding sexual assault and its prevention, particularly on university campuses. The "Take Back the Night" movement, in which young women and allies walk the streets at night to raise awareness of sexual violence, protests the mode of thinking that how a person is dressed can make them responsible for or deserving of assault or attack. Cinematic adaptations of Red Riding Hood are often signalled by the on-screen deployment of a red hood and its associations with menstruation, the girl's emergent sexuality, victimhood, rape, paedophilia and other transgressive

sexual behaviours, which continue to be perpetuated, invoked or critiqued, simply through the inclusion of the red hood in the mise-en-scène.

The narrative trope of a girl entering the woods is inevitably narratively

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Fig. Int.5: Arthur Rackham's "Little Red Riding Hood" illustration.

associated with suspense, if not with outright danger and violence. Angela Carter refers to the woods as symbolising “the place of rape” and such connotations are indeed still cinematically evoked in the horror film genre and the rape revenge film cycle of the late 1970s and early 1980s (Carter 1979: 39). However, the woods is used by Carter herself as a setting for change, initiation and female agency as well. Beyond ‘Red Riding Hood’, the woods frequently figure as a space which

fairy tale heroines must traverse to surmount obstacles in their path, both literally and figuratively. In ‘Donkeyskin,’ a fairy tale now out of circulation that was canonised by both Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, the woods is a place of refuge for the heroine from her father, the King’s castle, when he seeks her hand in marriage. Hansel and Gretel encounter the witch’s cottage in the woods where their father abandons them but Gretel also saves her brother and finds her way back home, through the woods. This again stresses the need for a mode of analysis which accommodates the fairy tale’s inherent ambiguities and the complex meanings they produce. By reading the fairy tale as a “negotiation” of conflicting or opposing socio-political positions, the tales’ full and contradictory meanings and narration of girlhood, come to the fore (Gledhill 111).

While I have discussed only the iconographical objects, spaces and settings of two tales in detail here, fairy tales are rife with the haunted chambers of Grandmother’s cottage, the stepmother’s de-familiarised home, or the father’s stifling castle. Enchanted objects such as Cinderella’s shoe or Snow White’s poison apple have become emblematic of their tales but their use, on the page or on-screen actively constructs girlhood and becomes part of the critical discourse surrounding contemporary women’s issues and contemporary girlhood. When a girl enters the woods, the fairy tale and its slippery history of

meanings and narratives surrounding girlhood and identity, is inevitably evoked. By focusing on films belonging to the cycle based on their use of fairy tale setting, space or object, this thesis investigates how the fairy tale ‘tells’ girlhood through the “negotiation” of these iconographical emblems of fairy tale (Gledhill 111).

Outline of Chapters

The first chapter in this thesis, “Oz and Wonderland: ‘Telling’ Anglo-American Girlhood in Filmic Fairy Tale Worlds” explores girlhood as framed by fantasy and focuses on two icons of Anglo-American girlhood in fantasy narratives, Frank L. Baum’s Dorothy Gale and Lewis Carroll’s Alice. In choosing film adaptations of these novels, this chapter analyses adaptations which richly adapt and inflect two children’s books that have come to be invested with fairy tale-like narrative status. The source texts also share similar cultural contexts. Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) was published at the end of the nineteenth century, when little girlhood captured the public imagination and gave rise to what then-contemporary critics called ‘the cult of the little girl’. Frank L. Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) was published in the early twentieth century, not long after G. Stanley Hall conceptualised adolescence as a distinct phase of development and William James began to problematise the new generation of what he called American “lightning-bottle girls”. Thus both texts emerge from a period of simultaneous cultural anxiety regarding, and fascination with, girls and both offer narratives in which the young female protagonist is caught between worlds. This chapter explores films from the fairy tale film adaptation cycle which lie at the intersection between fairy tale, Anglo-American culture and the formation of girlhood as a concept. This reveals the extent to which the latter is both constructed and only recently historically constituted.

The films included in Chapter One demonstrate that fascination and anxiety are intertwined in representations of fantasy girlhood and analyse the textual re-constitution of girlhood as a distinct and contested category, framed by fantasy and retold through fairy tales. The construction of girlhood is shown to take place in the otherworldly space of the fantasy realm, such as Oz or Wonderland. The chapter explores girl heroines leaving home to enter an inter-diegetic fantasy realm and how the girl heroine is positioned within those

opposing worlds. The analysis of the chapter deconstructs the positioning of girlhood outside the bounds of the real; posing the question: how does the fairy tale manifest itself in these films as a mode of 'telling' girlhood through the lens of fantasy? This study draws comparisons between the Women's Film Genre of Classical Hollywood and the recent fairy tale adaptation cycle, in terms of how each represents women or girls and adapts fairy tales as a mode of telling, within spaces traditionally associated with femininity. The fairy tale film adaptation cycle is part of an emerging young woman's cinema, in which narratives surrounding female coming of age are consistently displaced into fantasy realms. By analysing key sequences that stage female coming of age outside the bounds of the real, the parameters and politics of fantasy girlhood as represented in these timeless demarcated spaces, are considered.

The second chapter, "Bloody Chambers: Encountering Girlhood through Traumatic Space in the Bluebeard Adaptation" explores the representation of girlhood in relation to trauma in the fairy tale film. As in Chapter One, representations of girlhood are read in terms of how they are positioned within space and thus within the magical *mise-en-scène*. The representational relationship between young female characters and trauma is read as coded within the narrative, through the sublimation of trauma into chambers of horror. By locating trauma spatially, how girlhood is re-positioned within its bloody enclosures, is explored. Furthermore, it demonstrates how 'replaying' trauma through a fairy tale narrative like 'Bluebeard' illustrates a cultural tendency to see trauma through a gendered lens.

Trauma theory is employed to deconstruct how the haunted spaces of these bloody chambers visualise the experience of post-traumatic flashbacks for the film's heroine and, vicariously, for the audience. By re-categorising adaptations of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) as retellings of the Bluebeard tale and therefore at play with the fairy tale, the extent to which femininity and fairy tales are culturally entangled is further demonstrated. This chapter compares the contemporary filmic case studies with the woman's film genre, which included strikingly similar themes and choices of texts to adapt in the Paranoid Woman Cycle of the 1940s. Throughout, this chapter frames its discussion in relation to the Paranoid Woman Cycle; to investigate the implications of the re-emergence of such similar narrative strategies and

themes in a contemporary filmic trend. The Gothic Paranoid Woman Cycle constantly returns to marriage as a site of repressed horror and danger for its female protagonist. This chapter decodes repressed anxieties in relation to girlhood as sublimated into space and visualised through bloody chambers that occur within the otherwise safe and familiar.

As in Chapter Two, the third chapter, “Enchanted Objects: Constructing Girlhood in a Magical *Mise-en-scène*” proposes iconographical or ‘enchanted’ objects familiarised by fairy tale canon (such as Red Riding Hood’s red cloak, Bluebeard’s bloody key, or Snow White’s glass coffin) as engendering a powerfully visual cinematic language through which to adapt fairy tale narratives. Thus the concept, touched on in earlier chapters, of fairy tale as a generic mode of ‘telling,’ is more fully conceptualised as a specifically cinematic, highly visual use of objects and space operating narratively. Such enchanted objects are read as signalling a fairy tale adaptation in more traditional, direct adaptations of fairy tales and realist film narratives that merely inflect or are at play with the fairy tale. In deconstructing the vibrant and compelling use of such objects on screen, it is demonstrated that enchanted objects contribute to a magical *mise-en-scène*. As the magical *mise-en-scène* is identifiable across filmic genres, these enchanted objects frame and centralise the fairy tale heroine across this cycle and across genres. Thus this chapter argues that enchanted objects form a language of visual signs in the fairy tale film, by ‘telling’ and delimiting an incarnation of girlhood as white, passive, heterosexual, eroticised and in danger.

As in Chapter Two, this chapter is theoretically linked to a sub-generic cycle within the woman’s film genre, namely the melodrama. Beyond the fact that I contend that both make use of objects in an essential way within the *mise-en-scène*, both filmic modes are sensational and hyperbolic and both specifically target a female audience and centre upon female protagonists. In this chapter, the critical denigration of fairy tale films is similarly attributed to that cycle’s anticipated young female audience and centralisation of female adolescence and coming of age. As in the melodrama, the fairy tale adaptation cycle frames its heroine in a highly dramatic and charged setting. This chapter explores representations of girlhood as imperilled and questions whether this cycle’s use of enchanted objects contributes to, or resists that construction.

The fourth and final chapter, “The Woods: Locating Girlhood in the Fairy Tale Heroine’s Journey” explores the woods space as a setting in which heroines are shown ‘breaking character,’ and interrupting the ideological scripts shaping discourses of girlhood and gendered violence. My investigation of girlhood in the fairy tale adaptation cycle hinges upon the girl’s on-screen relationship to certain iconographical objects and spaces. In chapters one through three, I discuss Bakhtin’s conceptualisation of the chronotope, which describes the “analogical relation between space and temporality,” in relation to genre and generic worlds (Rosolowski 106). Narrative spaces like the forbidden chamber, or thresholds into other worlds, raise specific expectations for the viewer that are drawn from their familiarity with genre texts. The woods is a space charged by the expectation of violence for “knowing” audiences, familiar with the girl who encounters terror in the wilderness in the horror film genre, the Gothic and the fairy tale (Hutcheon 121). Each of the three films discussed in this chapter, however, break the script associated with the woods, and in so doing, the young female protagonist ‘breaks character’. While gendered violence is either threatened or enacted in all three films, its representation calls dominant, conservative discourses surrounding imperilled girlhood and violence into question. The cinematic ‘moment’ of the heroine entering the woods becomes a force field “of movement and transformation,” as the scripts shaping the relationship between girlhood and violence shatter within the cinematic frame (384).

Chapter One, “Oz and Wonderland: ‘Telling’ Anglo-American Girlhood in Filmic Fairy Tale Worlds.”

Introduction

The cultural investment in L. Frank Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) and Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) is such that no narrative can be introduced in which a girl is transported to a magical land and returns to her own world, the wiser for her otherworldly adventures, without one or both of these texts inevitably acting as an intertextual referent for the spectator. Though both books remain in popular print, it is the cinematic legacy of their filmic adaptations, by MGM and Disney respectively, which continue to wield such power in the Anglo-American imagination¹. This chapter will explore films that form adaptive engagements with these works; either by directly adapting them or inflecting them, through the inclusion of a girl’s coming-of-age narrative in a fantasy world.

Steen Christiansen asserts that all “fantasy becomes subversive in its representation of alternatives” and this is particularly true of alternative fantasy worlds (Christianson 111). In the films analysed in this chapter, the formation of girls’ identities are staged through compelling coming-of-age narratives that take place when the young female protagonist enters an alternate, fantasy world like Oz or Wonderland. These inter-diegetic fantasy realms both parallel and contrast with the heroine’s own ‘real’ humdrum, non-magical diegesis. Stanley Cavell observes that “Hollywood has always had a taste for contrasting worlds of the everyday with worlds of the imaginary, playing on the two primordial possibilities of film, fantasy and realism” (345). Where the line between fantasy and realism is drawn within the filmic diegesis is significant, however. Realism, like fantasy, is a mode equally constructed through formal techniques and only appears to have greater verisimilitude than fantasy. As Armitage puts it, in relation to literary realism and the literary fantastic, “the world of the literary fantastic, just like that of classical realism, only exists as a linguistic construct” (18).

¹ Though I am referring to the 1951 animated version here, I do not examine Disney’s animated Alice in this chapter in any detail, preferring to limit my discussion to Disney’s Tim Burton-directed 2010 live-action version, which centralises an adolescent rather than child-age Alice and more fully adheres to Melville’s described group of films in *Senses of Cinema*—and is more relevant to the cycle I am interested in, as a film addressed to young women in a postfeminist era.

Spaces of fantasy within an otherwise non-magical diegesis offer opportunities to subvert or challenge the non-magical diegesis and the real world that it resembles, however (Jackson 1981). Inter-diegetic fantasy realms such as Oz or Wonderland can become a setting for female agency through fantasy, but that agency is often delimited to the alternate world. This containment of the heroine's agency supports the idea that fantasy "[provides] a clue to the limits of a culture, by foregrounding problems of categorising the 'real' [and] it is the identification, the naming of otherness, which is a telling index of a society's religious and political beliefs" (Jackson 52). The young female adventure narrative taking place outside the bounds of the non-magical diegesis, outside the filmically indicated 'real', effectively contrasts the film's representations of the girl's agency and freedom of movement with the limits imposed on the heroine in the non-magical diegesis. This contrast forms an implicit critique of the non-magical diegesis and the real world culture it resembles. However, these films also delimit the girl's agency and adventure to that which is aberrant, by containing it within the literally 'other' world of the inter-diegetic fantasy realm. This points to the "limits of a culture," where its images of active, female adventure narratives remain apart, contained and spatially separate from the possibilities of the 'real world' (Jackson 52).

To investigate the intersection between diegesis, fantasy and representation of young female protagonists, the films in this chapter are analysed in relation to Mikhail Bakhtin's "particular construction of space and time in a literary text, a feature he calls the chronotope" and its application within theories of diegesis (Nikolajeva 141). Moving from a non-magical diegesis to an inter-diegetic fantasy realm presents a significant crossing of boundaries between 'chronotopes,' with levels of implication for film analysis. For example, young female protagonists crossing over into other worlds engages with representations of gender in fairy tales and myth, as female characters assume roles traditionally coded as masculine in the inter-diegetic fantasy realm, only to ultimately re-assume traditionally feminine roles in the non-magical diegesis.

Indeed, the potential subversion the female adventure narrative and agency-through-fantasy within the inter-diegetic realm offers, may appear to be frequently undercut by these narratives re-establishing the heroine's passivity

and immobility, at the end of the film. However, Carol Clover observes that in myth, “there are really only two characters (subject positions of functions): a *mobile, heroic being who crosses boundaries* and ‘penetrates’ closed spaces, and an *immobile being who personifies that dark, dank space* and constitutes that which is to be overcome. Because the latter is so obviously coded feminine, [...] the latter is perforce masculine” (13) [emphasis mine]. Thus representations of fairy tale heroines like Alice and Dorothy adapt and subvert these mythic gendered subject positions, by occupying both roles at different points in the narrative. While these heroines are ultimately relegated back to the “dank, dark” immobility of their original, non-magical diegeses, they do cross boundaries into other worlds as “mobile, heroic beings,” (Clover 13).

Theories of adaptation come into play when the narrative moves from a non-magical diegesis to an inter-diegetic fantasy realm, as well. Maria Nikolajeva classifies “non-realistic” narratives that are more commonly known as fantasy, in terms of their “spatiotemporal condition” or ‘chronotope’ (138). She distinguishes between the fairy tale chronotope and the fantasy chronotope as distinct types of “non-realistic” narrative, however, arguing that while fairy tales exist in a ‘sealed’ and endless chronotope of “once upon a time,” the fantasy narrative moves between chronotopes (141). “The initial setting of fantasy literature is reality: a riverbank in Oxford (*Alice in Wonderland*), a farm in Kansas (*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*)” she argues (141). These contrasting worlds also present a spatial boundary for the heroine to cross, however. It is this very movement from what Nikolajeva calls the “reality” of the sepia-tone Kansas chronotope to the fantasy chronotope of Oz, which so recognisably adapts fairy tale canon (141).

This is a recurring “adaptive moment” throughout fantastical female coming-of-age narratives which inflects the fairy tale and its highly charged boundaries, openings and doorways (Geraghty 364). It recalls the fairy tale heroine who leaves the path, enters the woods, or opens the door to the bloody chamber. For this reason, key sequences from fantastical female coming-of-age narratives that occupy the “chronotope of threshold” are analysed in this chapter (Bakhtin 21). By investigating the “highly charged” narrative moment of a heroine crossing over otherworldly boundaries, this chapter will demonstrate how contrasting chronotopes construct and transform representations of young

female protagonists on screen by opening up liminal spaces of possibility (Bakhtin 21).

This crossing of boundaries between chronotopes also has implications for genre and how film texts are generically classified. As Nikolajeva observes, “a feature [Bakhtin] calls ‘chronotope’ (an interdependent unity of space and time), is genre specific, that is, each genre has its own unique chronotope” (Nikolajeva 141). This describes the highly recognisable spatiotemporal ‘world’ (chronotope) of certain genres and generic modes: the Western chronotope operates by different rules and conventions than the Film Noir chronotope, and audiences understand and expect this. The recognisability of these rules and conventions arises from the on screen relationship between types of narrative and their characteristic spaces and treatment of time within them, as Vivian Sobchack demonstrates in relation to Film Noir in her essay “Lounge Time” (1998). However, Bakhtin asserts that “within the limits of a single work ... we may notice a number of different chronotopes . . . [which] may be interwoven with, replace, or oppose one another” (252). Thus identifying chronotopic features within the text, necessarily complicates easy generic classification of the text. The chronotope becomes a mode of analysis which disrupts fixed generic boundaries to apprehend “more fundamental discursive patterns from which artistic works take their shape” (Montgomery qtd by Sobchack 149). A text which encompasses multiple and contrasting chronotopes therefore overtly signals its generically hybrid status to the audience. This foregrounds how different generic ‘worlds’ contrast, disrupt and transform each other, within the same narrative.

This is relevant to female coming-of-age narratives, which inflect fairy tales through the protagonist’s entry into recognisably fantastic inter-diegetic realms, rather than adapting a fairy tale text directly. The importance and implications of this narrative moment, when the heroine crosses a boundary into another world, is further elucidated through analysis of chronotopic features. Beyond its identification of these complex formations of distinct spatiotemporal ‘worlds’ within the narrative, Sobchack argues that Bakhtin’s chronotope gives the film critic a tool for “comprehending historically the phenomenological relation between text and context” (Sobchack 149). The meanings that are narratively invested in certain cinematic spaces, speak to the reasons why

representations of young women remain confined to them. Indeed, Sobchack asserts, that the chronotope bridges the distance between “the actual world as a source of representation and the world represented in the work” and becomes “a spatiotemporal structure of meaning which links both worlds” (149). Analysing these adaptations, in relation to chronotopic features, “[regards] audio-visual and literary texts as [...] discursive formations that testify to the way in which society organises its meanings and shapes its system of relations” (Casetti 82). The worlds between which girl heroines continue to be caught, and how these are negotiated, speak to how girlhood is socially defined and its place in a broader network of relations.

By adapting fairy tales, challenging generic boundaries and telling female-driven narratives, fantasy female coming-of-age films bear a thematic and narrative resemblance to films belonging to the Classical Hollywood Women’s Film Genre. Walsh observes, “Common to most women’s films is the predominance of interior sets, whether homes or workplaces. And often, even if a scene is located outside, it occurs within an enclosed space” (27). The narrative and socio-political implications of heroines ‘trapped’ within the stifling frames of domestic spheres of the melodrama or the haunted interiors of the female Gothic have already been richly mined by feminist critics, in relation to World War II, Second Wave Feminism, genre studies and psycho-analytical theory, among other subjects². Walsh asserts that “woman, unlike man, was not often associated in the popular consciousness with Frontier, the conquering of open space. Although woman was often metaphorically linked to nature, she was usually portrayed in familial and community settings” (27-28). Through the syntax of genre, such familial settings were de-familiarised and became highly charged dramatic narrative spaces, which were argued to be symptomatic of repressed female fears, desires and frustrations. Hanson describes the “domestic space of the female gothics’ settings [...] mapped as fraught with secrets [and] subject to a battle for control between the gothic heroine and her husband” (118). Be it the dreary domestic sphere of Auntie Em’s Kansas farm or the uncanny Pale Man’s dining hall in *Pan’s Labyrinth* (dir. Guillermo Del Toro, 2006), each fantasy film in this chapter effects a sense of movement and

² Critics of the field like Mary Ann Doane, Christine Gledhill, Diane Waldman, Annette Kuhn, Andrea Walsh and Helen Hanson have written extensively about the sense of spatial enclosure in the woman’s film and its social, cultural, historical and textual implications.

crossing of boundaries without ever visualising its heroine outside of spaces that female characters have been confined to in these traditionally feminine generic 'modes' or sub-genres.

Thus this chapter argues that fantasy female coming-of-age films emerging in the contemporary cycle continue the coded narrative strategies familiarised by the woman's film to stage the girl's fears, desires and fantasies; and to some extent, likewise re-establish gender-normative, passive modes of femininity and the acceptance of socio-cultural barriers, as necessary to 'come of age'. Each film included in this chapter, from *The Wizard of Oz*, made in the Classical Hollywood era, to the contemporary cycle, may show heroines transported to fabulous and wondrous realms, but not one is shown outside of the enclosures of spaces traditionally associated with femininity in Classical Hollywood Cinema. The fact that the girl's desires in contemporary mainstream film continue to be coded, and spaces that stage the girl's emancipation and adventures must exist in parallel fantasy worlds, is a testament to the continuing unequal representation of women and girls on screen. While alternately classified as modes, sub-genres or styles by critics, women's cultural forms like the Costume Drama, the Gothic and the Melodrama and their highly recognisable worlds, can also be read as chronotopic.

Therefore, in order to understand these multi-valent and complex contemporary representations of girlhood across chronotopes and in fantasy worlds, I engage with diegesis theory, including Bakhtin's conceptualisation of the chronotope, adaptation studies and girlhood studies, within a feminist critical framework. The "chronotope of the threshold" common to the melodrama, the female gothic and the costume drama, and theories of the spatial will be used to analyse key sequences. These representations of girlhood within fantasy realms are rich and productive forms for the same reason films belonging to the women's film genre are. While by positioning girlhood in a fantasy realm, these films evade positioning them outside traditionally 'feminine' spaces (claustrophobic interiors, nature, and the domestic sphere), they are paradoxically also able to express a tangible frustration with being confined to such stereotypical environs. In doing so, the consistently reiterated images of heroines leaping into the unknown and into danger, visualise the girl's agency and adventure narrative in a spectacular mise-en-scène, challenge and de-

familiarise stereotypical constructs of the girl, traditionally 'feminine' space and historically constituted myths of femininity.

I examine two types of films that form adaptive engagements with *Alice in Wonderland* or *The Wizard of Oz*: 1) films that concern a female young adult protagonist, an inter-diegetic fantasy realm and commercially 'target' or address a young female audience, and 2) films that also centre upon a young (adolescent or pre-teen) female protagonist and an alternate fantasy diegesis, but based on the MPAA's³ rating, anticipate an adult audience. Each depicts heroines coming of age in a stylised fantasy mise-en-scène that seems to problematise the very act of growing up for the heroine, by representing female adolescence as dangerous or at-risk. Through this magical mise-en-scène, both types of film offer the viewer a "wish-space" of possibility in which to represent female adolescence and the female adventure narrative (Butler 96). However, films with a young female heroine that anticipate an adult audience frequently play into the adult practice of 'Othering' children and reveal that when a film anticipates an adult audience, the young female protagonist becomes herself subject to an interrupting, adult 'gaze'.

***The Wizard of Oz* (MGM, 1939, U.S.A.)**

Alice and Dorothy have made such frequent "reappearances" through adaptation in female coming-of-age narratives that they have become icons of a nostalgic mode of Anglo-American girlhood (Casetti 82). Therefore it is useful to consider the "communicative situation" of their original literary texts and the socio-cultural contexts these characters emerge from (Casetti 82). Both heroines originate from a period "between 1860 to 1911" that shaped early notions of girlhood, as a stage separating female childhood and adulthood (Roth 48). As previously discussed in the Introduction, cultural manifestations in literature and art of what nineteenth century writers and artists referred to as the "Cult of the Little Girl" became a larger "force of culture in late nineteenth century and early twentieth century England" (Roth 48, 52). In the mid to late nineteenth century, texts like Carroll's *Alice* and Henry James' *Daisy Miller*

³ The Motion Picture Association of America is a U.S. censoring body that regulates the American motion picture, home video and television industry, through a ratings system devised to inform viewers of potentially harmful or 'mature' content.

(1879) evoke the image of the girl as “simultaneously worldly and ethereal,” a dichotomous and often erotically charged representation which cannot be divorced from a problematic adult gaze (Roth 48).

In 1899, one year preceding the release of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) American early psychologist William James describes the American girl as giving “an irresistible impression of bottled lightning,” that “cannot be wholly good” (108). In the period immediately following the publication *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, adolescence was conceptualised as a distinct and turbulent stage of psychological development by fellow American psychologist G. Stanley Hall. Famously, Hall describes adolescence as a period of “ Sturm und Drang” [storm and stress] which puts young people, and particularly girls, at risk, due to their less well developed moral sense (Hall 1904 8). Thus these two formative movements, the Cult of the Little Girl and the psychological conceptualisation of the adolescent as at-risk, produces an understanding of girlhood as at once innocent, worldly and in danger of being morally compromised.

That notions of dichotomous, at-risk girlhood persist into the twentieth century is made clear in 1930s adaptations of these canonical girlhood texts. In the pre-code, 1933 *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice (Charlotte Henry) gives her age as “twelve years and four months,” to which Humpty Dumpty (W.C. Fields) replies ominously: “An uncomfortable age.” Charlotte Henry was an adult when she played the twelve-year-old Alice, however. Similarly, the role of Dorothy was enacted by nineteen-year-old Dorothy Dwan in Larry Semon’s 1925 *The Wizard of Oz*. It was common in the 1920s and early 1930s for adult actresses like Mary Pickford to play the roles of little girls and “one of the distinct pleasures in such impersonations” was “the woman’s ability to be simultaneously adult and child” (Hatch 44). The liminality of such performances suggests that the “impending womanhood in every little girl [and] the very ambiguity that the Victorian Cult of the Little Girl found so titillating” re-emerges in this period, in a new form (Roth 51). While an adult woman playing a little girl effects a kind of reversal of the ‘innocent but womanly little girl’ trope, it demonstrates that the same ‘innocent – knowing’ binary continues to inform 1920s and early 1930s idealisations of girlhood.

By 1939, however, in Fleming’s seminal adaptation of *The Wizard of Oz* (MGM, U.S.A., 1939), sixteen-year-old Judy Garland’s adolescent body is

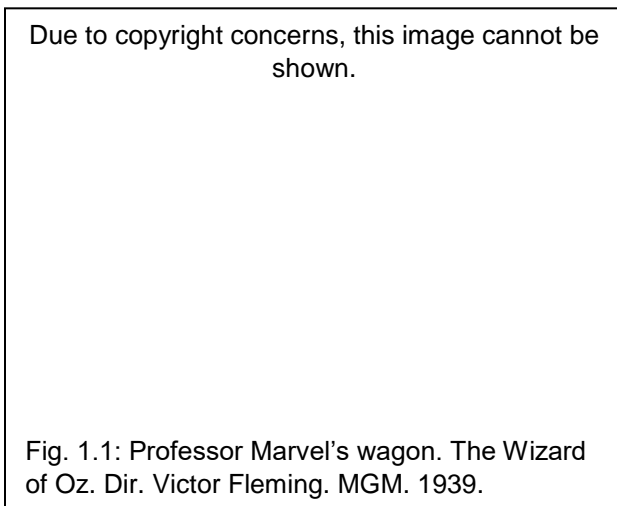
reshaped and “constricted” by “binding undergarments” to make her appear closer to the age of her character (Hatch 44). Dorothy’s age had been raised to twelve in the screenplay, but the anxiety that Garland was too ‘adult’ for the role is demonstrated by what Garland herself explains was “a corset of steel [...] I looked like a male Mary Pickford by the time they got through with me!” (Garland qtd by Hatch). These extreme efforts to sanitise Garland’s adolescent body and physically ‘reshape’ her, demonstrate how particular a mould of girlhood the studio sought to create and testify to the level of constructed-ness of the image of girlhood she embodies on screen.

The narrative’s insistence that Dorothy must recognise that there is ‘no place like home’ and reconcile herself to the drudgeries of Kansas to come of age at the conclusion of the film, is telling of the passive and obedient mode of girlhood MGM hoped Garland would embody. Now considered the definitive “American fairy tale,” Dorothy’s disempowerment, as she accepts she must “never look further than [her] own backyard,” is further suggestive of what kind of female coming-of-age narratives become iconic in Anglo-American culture (O’Rourke 1). This film is a direct/named adaptation that follows the main narrative beats of Baum’s literary text with some crucial differences, only one of which was raising Dorothy’s age to twelve, in part to justify casting Garland. Considering the convention throughout the decade of adult actresses playing children, the anxiety with which the studio manipulated Garland’s adolescent body is telling, however. MGM raising Dorothy’s age to twelve narratively re-contextualises her dissatisfaction with her rural Kansas home as something more serious, as well: an adolescent realisation and resistance toward “proper enactments of femininity and sexuality” (Marshall 2002: 208). Marshall observes:

“The 1930s was a time of gender confusion in general. First-wave feminism had disrupted previously-held assumptions about gender roles and opened up new opportunities, especially for middle-class white women. The single modern girl, who moved away from her parents to work or attend college, had become a familiar figure around the turn of the century. The increased visibility of young unmarried women outside of the home resulted in attempts to regulate their sexual behaviours” (208).

The threat of the “young unmarried woman outside of the home” is raised when, in the act of running away from home, Dorothy comes upon Professor Marvel (Marshall 208). While Marvel (Frank Morgan) doubles as the fraudulent and bumbling Wizard in the inter-diegetic fantasy realm of Oz, he is sharply insightful in this Kansas scene and immediately intuits Dorothy’s reasons for leaving home, “Now why are you running away? No, no, now, don’t tell me! They don’t understand you at home; they don’t appreciate you. You want to see other lands, big cities, big mountains, big oceans!” This Dorothy confirms, when she replies, “Why, it’s just like you could read what’s inside of me!” The desire to leave home and quit the domestic sphere would play into “a generalised anxiety about changing gender roles” for then-contemporary audiences, and indeed, Marvel persuading Dorothy to return to the farm reflects the “regulation of the adolescent girl” in this period, through adult intervention (Marshall 208-209).

The text implicates itself in this scene, through the methods of deception this “regulation of the adolescent” evidently requires, however (Marshall 208). A vaudevillian and minor con artist, Professor Marvel’s wagon reads, *“Acclaimed by the crowned heads of Europe. Let him read your past, present and future in*



his crystal” (see: fig. 1.1). With comically theatrical care, Marvel goes through the contents of Dorothy’s basket, while cheerfully insisting she keep her eyes closed, and soon finds a photograph of Auntie Em. Despite the actor’s twinkling performance and comic timing, the situation cannot fail to suggest fairy tale

warnings: what happens when a young girl carrying a basket, meets a man in the woods, who tells her of a better path to take? Later referred to as “the man behind the curtain,” which connotes both disguise and an unseen power, Marvel resembles a sly Wolf in this scene, plundering Red Riding Hood’s basket and tricking her into taking the path that leads to her undoing.

Indeed, using the photograph from the basket for reference, Marvel pretends to have a vision of Auntie Em “sick with worry,” and quickly persuades Dorothy to go back to the farm. (The spectator, meanwhile, learns in the scene immediately following that Dorothy’s family shuts the doors to the storm shelter without waiting for her return.) Meanwhile, though the viewer assumes Professor Marvel to be a fraud, the “careworn” woman standing in front of the “house with a picket fence” he claims to see in the crystal, is a disturbing vision, when linked back to the promise on the side of his wagon. Significantly, Marvel does not name the woman in his vision. Is a “white picket fence” to be Dorothy’s careworn “past, present and future”? Despite the film’s conservative overtones and final moral, by reading against the grain, the narrative forms implicit critiques of the domestic sphere as the ultimate feminine destination that the American girl must accept to ‘grow up’. The desire to leave home, as conveyed by the narrative, is far more persuasive than the urge to remain. Close analysis of Dorothy’s journey to Oz and the events leading up to it in the Kansas scenes, reveal that the emergence of the inter-diegetic fantasy realm expresses the heroine’s repressed anger and stages a fantasy of rejecting a domestic fate, in favour of venturing down her own yellow brick road.

Kathleen Sweeney, a feminist critic working in the field of girlhood studies, describes the inter-diegetic realm as a “yes realm of possibility” and asserts that, “Fantasy allows viewers access to the power of their own creative imaginations to traverse and transcend *the mundane world of limitations*” (171) [emphasis mine]. In *The Wizard of Oz*, the inter-diegetic fantasy realm emerges when Dorothy’s frustrations with her lonely existence in Kansas become manifest as a storm, which not only becomes her means of escape to Oz, but becomes an extension of her will. Clearly Kansas and specifically the farmhouse make up “the mundane world of limitations” Dorothy dreams of transcending, when she sings ‘Somewhere over the Rainbow’ (Sweeney 171). Elisabeth Bronfen acknowledges the Depression Era sense of hopelessness that pervades Auntie Em and Uncle Henry’s Kansas farm but nevertheless describes their farmhouse, “once it becomes unhinged, emerging literally as the instrument of her omnipotence” (52). I agree that “Dorothy’s frustration with the powerlessness she feels” is indeed “transformed into a destructive power,” but

argue that her power takes the shape of the cyclone, which destroys the farmhouse and the domestic sphere it symbolises (Bronfen 52).

In many ways, *The Wizard of Oz* and its dramatisation of the search for home conforms to tropes characteristic of the melodrama, a sub-genre of the Classical Hollywood Woman's Film. Like "the fairy tale's preoccupation with space and place," the melodrama imbues certain spaces with a highly charged, emotive importance (Armitt 28). In melodrama "gardens and rural homes are the stereotypical locuses for [...] innocence. [...] The narrative ends happily if the protagonist can, in some way, return to this space of innocence, unhappily if they do not. Often the ideal space of innocence is posited in the American stage melodrama as the rural 'Old Kentucky Home'—the maternal place of origin" (Williams 65). Superficially, the Kansas farm seems like an example of melodrama's bucolic, rustic vision of home. Even Dorothy's quest to kill the wicked witch, so she can return to Kansas is a "quest, not for the new but for the old space of innocence," that is familiar to melodrama (Williams 65). Linda Williams identifies the melodrama's "profound conservatism" in this quest to recover the old and this too, is reflected in *The Wizard of Oz* with its conservative final moral, which re-establishes Dorothy's 'place' in the domestic sphere, and sees her take on the role of "the angel of the house" (Williams 65, Rohrer Paige 152). The reason that the moral "there's no place like home" sits so uncomfortably with the viewer at the film's end, however, is that orphaned Dorothy is on a quest to return to "rural and maternal origins that are forever lost" (65).

From our introductory shot of Dorothy onward, the Kansas scenes constantly return to the image of Dorothy walking a lonely road. While in the film's introductory shot of the heroine, Dorothy's staccato movements on the road to home could be mistaken for play, "this assumption evaporates with the movement to close-up [and] we realise that her energy was borne not out of delight, but out of anxiety [...] Dorothy was not just running, but running away," (Walters 59). In a later scene, Dorothy's shoulders are hunched and she walks slowly along the road, when she leaves home intending never to return. The path is seen to stretch out behind her, indicating a long and arduous journey, and when her figure is positioned nearly at the horizon, the path ahead of her appears both endless and like a dead end. It is significant that in the preceding

scene, the only other scene where Dorothy is shown in the house, other than when she is hiding from the cyclone, is when Auntie Em and Uncle Henry allow Toto to be taken by Miss Gulch. The domestic sphere, far from the idealised 'home' trope Hollywood so often visualised in melodrama, is consistently the scene of frustration, unsafety and betrayal.

This stylised, hyperbolic impression of Depression Era Kansas is less melodrama's "ideal space of innocence" than Bakhtin's description of the negative aspects of the "idyll chronotope," which operates on "commonplace, philistine cyclical everyday time," where "a day is just a day, a year is just a year—a life is just a life" (Bakhtin 20). Bakhtin describes the idyll's bleak sense of timelessness as "moving in narrow circles," where "day in day out, the same round of activities are repeated" (20). Scenes in which Dorothy attempts to speak to or gain the attention of any of the adults on the farm, and is ignored in favour of working on the land, exemplify this description of the idyll. The work of the farm "revolves around order and repetition, putting everything in the right place to protect their livelihood" and "Dorothy threatens to break the efficiency of this production line" (Walters 60). While the melodrama idealises the "rural Old Kentucky Home" locale as the "maternal place of origin," the Kansas scenes include no scenes of familial affection (Williams 65). Rather than her "place of origin," Dorothy's emotive characterisation and playful relationship with Toto draw consistent attention to her displacement at the grim farm (Williams 65). The young protagonist is repeatedly banished from activities where she is "in the way," reminding the spectator that Dorothy is an orphan and that this is not, in fact, home.

Hogan writes, "When the film was put into general theatrical re-release in 1949, MGM saved processing cost by striking prints with the Kansas sequences printed in black-and-white instead of the original sepia" (58). The original sepia was eventually re-introduced in VHS and later DVD releases of *The Wizard of Oz* as of 1989. The standard black-and-white versions of the Kansas scenes released before that time, have allowed versions of the film to circulate and enter the public imagination, which visually undercut and downplay the level of stylisation at work in MGM's Kansas. Part of what makes the juxtaposition between Kansas and Oz so impactful, is the rapid transition from the comparatively colourless farm scenes to Technicolor Oz. However, the use of

sepia tone in the original, theatrical release very clearly separates the spatiotemporal world of Kansas from the then-standard black-and-white films. The sepia tone, its still, painterly clouds and blank empty horizons of the plains, signal to the viewer that this is not a representation of Kansas during the Depression in the 'realist' mode, but a folkloric, fabular space from the viewpoint of the young protagonist. Rather than the fully realised nostalgic dream of melodrama's "Old Kentucky Home," which the spectator is invited to believe in, the Kansas farmhouse continually signals itself as parody, an empty approximation of homeliness instead of home. Katherine Fowkes points out that, "Although Dorothy's experience in Oz is permeated by song and dance, [...] she bursts into spontaneous song even before she arrives in Oz" (66). Dorothy's highly emotive and vibrant characterisations are far more 'at home' on the yellow brick road, than in colourless Kansas.

Far from "the maternal place of origin," in Oz's Kansas and for orphaned Dorothy, there is a conspicuous lack of mothers and only two modes of femininity for Dorothy to model herself after (Williams 62). There is Miss Gulch, a stereotypical spinster who "owns half the county" but is monstrous and malicious, and Auntie Em, who is a married woman but apathetic, careworn and powerless. As in nineteenth-century women's fiction, characterisations of women in Kansas are subject to the "extreme images of 'angel' or 'monster' that male authors generate" (Gilbert and Gubar 17). As in the women's film genre, these roles are spatially indicated within the *mise-en-scène*, where freedom of movement is equated with 'monstrous' femininity and confinement to the domestic sphere, with 'angelic' femininity. Good, careworn Auntie Em is confined to the farm and the interiors of the farmhouse throughout the film, while the villainous Miss Gulch rides freely up and down the landscape on her bicycle and the Wicked Witch flies across Oz on her broomstick. With this limiting binary, the vision of a careworn woman in front of a house with a picket-fence, posed as Dorothy's "past, present and future," ominously predicts her future confinement. And no sooner does Professor Marvel trick her into running back to the loveless domestic sphere to which the crystal claims she is doomed, than the winds pick up.

In her reading of this sequence, Cvetkovic claims that it is "through the *agency of the house* [that] Dorothy is successful in conjuring Oz" [emphasis

mine] (67). However, I would argue that it is in fact only through fantasy that Dorothy attains the agency to *escape* the house. When Dorothy seeks shelter from the cyclone, she finds the storm shelter doors are shut to her, where the rest of the family are hiding. When she hides in the farmhouse, it provides no protection but attacks when the window comes off its hinges and knocks Dorothy unconscious. One last time, she cries, "Auntie Em--!" when behind her, the white frame of the window suddenly rattles, then lifts clear off its hinges into the howling wind and knocks Dorothy in the back of the head. The girl screams, then sinks to the floor against the side of her bed, as Toto climbs up her chest and barks loudly at her now motionless face. The wind howls louder than ever, the storm has entered the house itself. But where before there was only the sound of the wind, threatening violin music now rises to a hysterical pitch as Dorothy slumps backwards against the bed, until her head lies still against the coverlet. Here the sequence overlaps into "the chronotope of the threshold," which Bakhtin associates with "the breaking point of a life, the moment of crisis, the decision that changes a life" (21). When Dorothy loses consciousness and we transition to the dream-like shot of the tornado projected onto her blurring features, the visual link being made is between Dorothy and the storm; not Dorothy and the house. If anything is the agent of her desires and the means of her escape, it is the cyclone that rips the house from the ground, while seeking succour within the 'home' space is shown to invite disappointment.

Linda Rohrer Paige identifies Auntie Em as embodying a Victorian ideal of passive and submissive femininity known as "the angel of the house," a domestic role exhibiting "proper femininity" that Dorothy, who dreams of seeing "other lands" and "big cities," rebels against (Paige 152, Marshall 208). This sequence occupies the "chronotope of the threshold" and therefore of the in-between, which collapses the boundaries between dreaming and waking, as Dorothy's face undergoes a visual doubling (Bakhtin 20). From the moment the window frame knocks her unconscious, the action cuts to a strange, tilting close-up of Dorothy's unconscious face, in profile. The outline of Dorothy's face dominates the frame as it blurs and doubles, until a ghostly second, identical face merges and separates from Dorothy, merges again, as the camerawork continues to mystify the viewer; shifting and swaying back and forth. This 'doubling' recalls Gilbert and Gubar's conceptualisation of the angel's 'twin' or

'double' in nineteenth century literature, the madwoman or monster who evokes the docile heroine's repressed feelings of rage, "the docile [...] heroine and her mad double" (xxxviii). Dorothy's face, now tilting back and forth in the frame, screens a projected semi-transparent image of the tornado, its winds whirling visibly against the contours of her sleeping face; as though Dorothy lay in the very eye of the cyclone or as if the cyclone itself were conjured out of her own whirling, panicked thoughts. This shot also marks a clear shift in perspective, in which the spectator is made privy to the moment at which the tornado becomes an inward expression of Dorothy's emotional turmoil. The storm and cyclone become visually aligned with Dorothy's distress and internal self.

Because "the relationship between personal identity and social role is so problematic for women, the emerging self can only survive with a sustained double vision," and in this sequence, that double vision operates through a fantastical lens (Gilbert and Gubar 162). The cyclone projected onto Dorothy's doubling face in this intimately close shot, conveys the emergence of the repressed second self, or double. The tornado manifests as Dorothy's internal rage, as the sequence visually shrinks the Kansas farmhouse and the domestic sphere it symbolises, down to size. From the bottom left of the frame, the farmhouse in miniature rises disquietingly upward up onto the screen and into the tornado projected onto Dorothy's visage; the house in which Dorothy received no succour or comfort is now made toy-like and tiny in comparison to her face. The house positioned in the centre of the frame and careening wildly through the air, appears by its size and fragility suddenly inconsequential and vulnerable when contextualised by these otherworldly elements. Dorothy's face taking up nearly the entire frame becomes a moment of wish-fulfilment that superimposes the young heroine's subjectivity onto the screen and visually undercuts the centrality of the 'home'. In a sudden reversal of power through fantasy, the domestic sphere is cast out and away (as Dorothy has been cast out and away by her Aunt and Uncle).

When the house lands and goes still, the ominous music comes to an abrupt halt and Dorothy emits a soft "Oh!" as if she too is surprised by the sudden absence of score. Even the wind fluttering the sepia curtain makes no sound, nor do Dorothy's footsteps as she moves through the farmhouse to its front door. As she opens it, the camera precedes her and the spectator is given

a split-second image of a sepia-toned doorway framing the lush, brightly Technicoloured Oz before Dorothy steps into shot and moves forward, as sound returns with soft trilling voices swelling, into colour. Anahid Kassabian asserts that “The distinction between diegetic and non-diegetic music [...] obscures music’s role in producing the diegesis itself” (Kassabian 42). Indeed, each transitional movement further away from the non-magical diegesis—from the howling summoned storm, to Dorothy’s unconsciousness, to the house appearing in the eye of the cyclone, to the house crashing and Dorothy opening the door into Oz—is aurally signalled with distinct changes in score and use of both ‘non-diegetic’ and ‘diegetic’ sound.

Burch suggests that the spectatorial pleasure afforded by the cinematic experience and the “hegemonic tendency in motion pictures” both rely upon film’s “achievement of the full diegetic effect” (18). He argues that sound plays a vital role in world-building and historically situates this “achievement of the full diegetic effect” alongside the “dawn of synchronised sound” (18). When Dorothy crash-lands in Oz, all diegetic and non-diegetic sound suddenly ceases before she opens the door to discover the magical land outside. The eerie silence builds suspense but also, combined with the sepia-toned interior of the farmhouse, seems to express a lifelessness, even a sense of the unreal, within the stifled space. The Kansas farmhouse fails to achieve “the full diegetic effect” in the absence of score and becomes de-familiarised again, as only the stale imitation of melodrama’s idealised familial home (18). When Dorothy opens the door into Oz, however, the first shot of a world in Technicolor combines with the sudden return of non-diegetic sound—distant voices swelling and a welcome return of emotive score. The juxtaposition between the soundless farmhouse interior and the colourful, music-filled Oz in this sequence re-orders our sense of what is authentic and what is not—the diegetic effect of Oz becoming so persuasive (through non-diegetic sound), that Kansas appears unrealised, and inferior, by comparison.

In stepping into Oz and into colour, Dorothy is escaping not just Kansas, but the domestic sphere and the domestic fate Professor Marvel predicted of one day becoming Auntie Em. Though the film re-establishes Dorothy as an “angel of the house” in its final sepia-tone Kansas scenes, the heroine’s initial journey to the inter-diegetic realm in *The Wizard of Oz* stages a powerful

fantasy of destroying the domestic sphere (Rohrer Paige 152). Once Dorothy crosses over the boundary, or “threshold chronotope,” the narrative never fully recovers from its “crisis and break” (Bakhtin 21). Cracks have been revealed in melodrama’s idealised “Old Kentucky Home” and Dorothy’s place within it (Williams 62).

***Alice in Wonderland* (Dir. Tim Burton, U.S.A., 2010)**

With an initial gross of \$334,191,110 and ranking 37 in a list of the highest ever grossing films at the North-American Box Office, Tim Burton’s *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) is by far his most commercially successful film, but has received little critical attention (*Boxofficemojo.com*). This is perhaps due to its adaptive strategies, which received mixed critical reception following its theatrical release. *Alice in Wonderland* is a named/loose adaptation of its literary predecessor, for although it uses the shorthand title for Carroll’s 1865 work and populates the narrative with familiar Wonderland characters, it also adapts from other sources and imposes a linear ‘quest’ narrative. Reviewer Lisa Mullen opines that, “the imposition of a fairy tale quest structure turns the surrealist wanderings (and wonderings) of a free-associating dreamer into a brusque crash-zoom, as Alice hurtles towards her appointment on the good-versus-evil battlefield” (Mullen *Sight and Sound*). What Mullen identifies as a “fairy tale quest structure,” adapted into the narrative of Burton’s *Alice in Wonderland* is an example of Joseph Campbell’s “monomyth” (Campbell 1). Campbell’s monomyth has been commonly identified in a range of “fairy tales, myths and religious narratives” and describes “a single plot outline that includes a call to adventure, a threshold crossing (into another realm that represents the unconscious as well as the supernatural), various tests and helpers, a climactic confrontation, a boon, a return crossing, and a reincorporation of the protagonist back into society” (Swann Jones 132).

Just as de Lauretis and Clover identify Lotman’s “mobile, boundary-crossing hero” as “perforce masculine,” the term monomyth is commonly

referred to as the hero's journey, thereby casting the protagonist's role as inevitably male (Clover 13, de Lauretis 45). It is satisfying therefore to encounter female characters occupying a role that in myth and fairy tales is traditionally coded as exclusively masculine. However, as in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), when a "mobile, boundary-crossing" *heroine* is introduced into female coming-of-age narratives, the "reincorporation of the protagonist back into society" when she returns home, often requires her to accept the bounds of socially acceptable, gender-normative behaviour for her sex/gender (Clover 13, Swann Jones 132). Here "the implications of fantasy" would conventionally come into play by contrasting the non-magical diegesis negatively with the comparatively more vibrant inter-diegetic fantasy realm, as in *The Wizard of Oz* (Butler 96). However, here "the implications of fantasy" lie in how the existence of the inter-diegetic fantasy realm throws limitations commonly imposed upon women and girls in the costume drama into sharp relief through the hyperbolic syntax of fantasy. In Burton's adaptation, social barriers for young women are challenged by drawing consistent attention to similarities between the mad reasoning and rules that govern the Underlands and those that rule the utterly regimented upper echelons of Victorian society, throughout the film. As Alice whimsically puts it, "To me, a corset is like a codfish."

In the non-magical costume drama diegesis, the "threshold" Alice faces "crossing," is not into another world, but into the bonds of an arranged marriage (Swann-Jones 132). At her engagement party, Alice joins Hamish on the dance floor in a highly stylised deep focus shot that shows an intricately structured and symmetrical *mise-en-scène*. The absolute orderliness of the scene conveys the stifling sphere Alice will be initiated into through her marriage. Hamish and Alice stand in the centre foreground, facing each other in anticipation of the dance and just beyond them, another couple stands in an identical attitude. Beyond that couple, two women are visible at the edge of the dance floor with their arms crossed in the exact same pose. They, in turn, frame a female figure in the distance, whose entrapment within the scene mirrors Alice's. The couples thus form a perfect 'V' shape, pointing like an arrow at what the viewer can just make out are Alice and Hamish's parents, the authors of their intended marriage. The oppressiveness of this shot and the clockwork-like dance which immediately follows, robs the scene of any potential to convey an emotive break from

conventional societal restraints, which a lively dance sequence might otherwise offer in the costume drama. Thus the sense of confinement projected even in outdoor sequences, spatially conveys the level of heroism required to escape the structures of power mobilising in this sequence to entrap Alice within the enclosures of marriage.

The fairy tale quest structure in Burton's *Alice* closely resembles Dorothy's journey in *The Wizard of Oz*. Alice (Mia Wasikowska) is charged with "slaying the Jabberwocky" to end the Queen of Hearts' reign of terror, which mirrors Dorothy's role as the Munchkins' liberator and her task to kill the Wicked Witch of the West. Moreover, while the literary characters they are based on are both children, both MGM's Dorothy and Burton's Alice are recast as adolescents. Like MGM's Dorothy, Alice's journey in Burton's adaptation is likewise seen through the lens of adolescence, as a linear coming-of-age narrative. The inter-diegetic fantasy realm in both films takes on different connotations than in their literary forms, becoming liminal spaces of development and 'becoming', between childhood and adulthood. Wonderland is therefore inevitably weightier and less dreamlike, when it becomes an escape from a marriage of convenience in Burton's adaptation⁴. Thus Burton's film forms adaptive engagements with both Carroll's novel and Baum's, and more specifically with MGM's *The Wizard of Oz*. As in *The Wizard of Oz*, these changes foreground female adolescence and coming-of-age in fairy tale quest narrative against a fantasy backdrop. Both characters are caught between adulthood and childhood and frustrated by the limits of their 'world', or social sphere. But where the 1939 Oz adaptation re-establishes the domestic sphere as the ultimate feminine destination, Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* poses a problematic solution to Alice's desire to escape, which dismisses feminist concerns.

Julianne Pidduck astutely observes that a convention of the costume drama uses nature exteriors "to create a sense of spatial and emotional

⁴ In Woolverton's screenplay, this new journey to Wonderland (or the Underlands) is a sequel to the events of Lewis Carroll's 1865 novel, in which a young adult Alice has forgotten the Underlands until she accidentally falls back down the rabbit hole while escaping a very public proposal of marriage. It transpires she was lured back there by Rabbit and she is soon charged with the task of slaying the Jabberwocky and ending the Queen of Hearts' reign of terror, as predicted by an ancient prophecy. The screenplay also adapts characters from Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871).

expansiveness” in contrast to the “formal, cluttered and mannered treatment of interiors” (Pidduck 382). Thus the confined, highly structured and well-ordered gardens where Alice is slowly bullied into getting engaged appear all the more striking; it is a *jardin à la française* (or: garden done in the French manner). This style of gardening, which seeks to shape nature into ordered and symmetrical patterns, thus essentially imposing the “mannered treatment of interiors” onto the exterior grounds, perfectly exemplifies the overbearing Hamish and his interfering mother and the extent to which Alice, as Hamish’s bride, will be reshaped and imposed on (Pidduck 123). In the strictly controlled space of both interior and exterior, freedom of movement is severely limited. The “gendered spatial play” Pidduck reads as characteristic of the Costume Drama, comes to the fore, as the *mise-en-scène* consistently reiterates the image of Alice led and directed through the landscape by repressive figures, propelling her toward the scene of the proposal (123).

Thus the rabbit’s rapid movement in the previously static Costume Drama *mise-en-scène* accompanies a sudden and welcome change in camerawork, which tracks quickly alongside the rabbit’s progress. The costume drama’s “gendered spatial play” is interrupted as Alice excuses herself from the party to pursue the rabbit in the waistcoat and is precipitated through the first in a series of ‘doorways’ in the labyrinthine garden. Within the straight-edged, manicured hedges, “windows and doors [...] provide focal points of narrative interest,” within an otherwise enclosed landscape (Pidduck 123). Doorways, or thresholds, represent distinct spaces of possibility and with each boundary crossed, Alice comes upon narrative tableaux, arranged as if for her benefit. Bakhtin observes that the threshold is “highly charged with emotion and value [...] whose fundamental instance is as the chronotope of crisis and break in a life” and these repetitions of Alice crossing them, foreshadow her larger break with the society that seeks to confine and corset her (Bakhtin 20). Just outside this first doorway, the rabbit is nowhere in sight but Alice finds her maiden aunt Imogen sitting alone, staring into space. When asked if she has seen the rabbit, Aunt Imogen claims she is waiting for her fiancé, who is a prince, “Isn’t it tragic?” Alice agrees, “Very,” and backs away warily. Mad maiden Aunt Imogen, said to be a burden to Alice’s mother, presents a discomfiting alternative fate to

marrying the odious Hamish, as the 'angel of the house' – 'madwoman' binary division asserts itself (Gilbert and Gubar 1984).

The following doorway opens onto a scene that reveals marriage to be a

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Fig. 1.2: Alice 'framed' by the trellis doors, when she discovers her brother-in-law's infidelity.

risky proposition, as well, however.

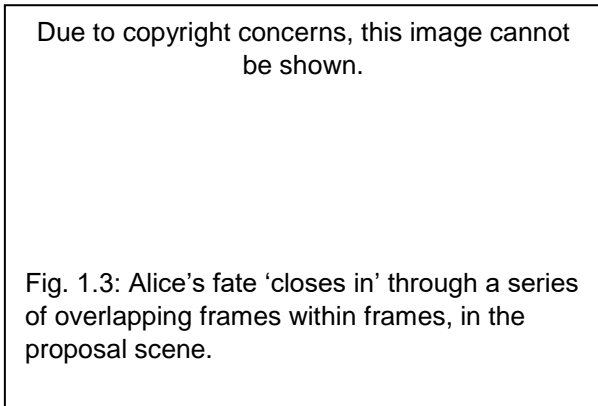
When Alice sights the rabbit again and chases it through yet another threshold in the form of a trellis door, she discovers her brother-in-law passionately kissing a woman who is not Alice's sister (see: fig. 1.2).

Adjusting their clothing, he and the woman separate at the sight of Alice. Her brother-in-law reaches to patronisingly touch Alice's cheek, "You wouldn't want to ruin your sister's marriage?" The trellis door is made of filigreed iron, its bars framing Alice on either side and as her sister's husband asks Alice "not to ruin her sister's marriage," they resemble prison bars. While mad maiden Aunt Imogen is to be pitied, marriage is presented as an equally fraught alternative, another enclosure. Soon the action cuts to another, almost comically ominous deep-focus shot in which every guest at the party has been assembled, with Alice's mother pictured in the very centre of the first row. As each guest stares raptly at the camera, the crowd gives the spectator an impression of an infinite, expectant gaze. A reverse cut reveals Alice and Hamish standing in the gazebo opposite each other. The two statues posed on either side of the gazebo, as if standing sentinel, again visually stress symmetry and order, but also confinement.

Alice traversing a series of doorways parallels her navigation of the new 'world' of adulthood, and sets the mounting tension within the sequences firmly within the "chronotope of the threshold" (Bakhtin 21). Campbell links the monomythic hero's journey to Arnold van Gennep's theory of separation, initiation and return which characterises rituals (23). This pattern in rituals "facilitates transition between various social roles" which Swann Jones argues, "could also be part of its function in fairy tales" (132). As a modern fairy tale that centres upon female adolescence, Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* "draws connections to [...] social issues" in play in the transition from female childhood

to adulthood (Swann Jones 132). Given how narrowly Alice is framed in this series of ever-tightening enclosures, these thresholds symbolise the limitations placed upon her, on the basis of her gender and the limited roles available to her as a young woman in the Victorian period.

The spatial confinement of the costume drama is heightened and hyperbolically rendered through Burton's highly stylised set pieces and the series of thresholds leading up to the proposal. Bakhtin connects the threshold



chronotope with “the moment of crisis [and] the decision that changes a life,” which is powerfully visualised by a shot of Alice ‘caught’ in the doorway of the gazebo, as Hamish kneels down before her (see: fig. 1.3). The bars of the gazebo visible behind Alice’s

small body are again suggestive of being caged. “Alice Kingsleigh, will you marry me?” Even as Hamish kneels to propose, the action cuts to a portraitist already immortalising the moment in watercolour. The double image of the same moment side by side, one in life and one on the canvas, is uncanny. The frame of the canvas within the frame of the shot combined with the doubling of Alice’s image within twin sets of bars, evokes “the frame that bends and turns inward into the field of the picture to compress to compress or entangle” she it pictures (228). Already, as if the moment had passed and the choice made, Alice is being painted into place as Hamish’s wife and contained within the borders of that frame.

Alice escapes to the woods, the estate already far behind her, when a large rabbit hole is easily recognisable as yet another doorway and a threshold to further knowledge, pleasant or otherwise (see: fig. 1.4). Leaning down to look inside the dark hole, Alice loses her footing and drops, down, down, down to wonderland. Appearing more elated than frightened, Alice plummeting down the rabbit hole becomes visually associated with both flying and falling. Sweeney observes that “it is in the image of flying that the possibilities of escape (from the past, from tradition) are most clearly realised” (Sweeney 171). Though Alice initially screams in surprise as she falls, any “knowing” audience member with

foreknowledge of the literary source material or previous adaptations (and who among us, is unfamiliar with *Alice in Wonderland*?) experiences the fall as an entry into a new world (Hutcheon 120). The sense of crossing over into a new chronotope is immediately apparent, through the temporal shift that accompanies an exhilarating and welcome move into a new generic mode from costume drama to a vibrant, fast-paced fantasy sequence. Impossible and enchanted objects, falling pianos and sudden beds Alice bounces off as though they were trampolines, appear and disappear as Alice continues her flight downward. The freedom of movement the fall presents is emphasised by Alice's hair coming free of its stiff, tightly rolled ringlets. Immediately following the increasingly confining set of frames in the previous scenes and the highly regulated placement of bodies, the contrasting sense of disorder in this sequence evokes a pleasurable release from "a series of spatial frames of representational power relations from gender to class" (Pidduck 382).

However, the choice to inflect *The Wizard of Oz* in an adaptation of *Alice in Wonderland* presents issues of narrative coherence, which problematise the positive possibilities of agency through fantasy. As Chaston asserts, the "Ozification" of children's fantasy films is commonly used to adapt children's literature film and this sometimes "[results] in schizophrenic productions with *competing and contradictory subtexts*. In borrowing specific elements and conventions from *The Wizard of Oz*, the producers of these films have necessarily overlaid the narrative features of Hollywood motion pictures onto disparate children's texts" (Chaston 13) [emphasis mine]. Through the deployment of the monomythic fairy tale quest structure, Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* inflects MGM's *The Wizard of Oz*. The text thus contains competing and contradictory subtexts and moves between contradictory positions by rendering pleasurable representations of the girl's agency through the mode of fantasy, while also using the non-magical Costume Drama chronotope as a space of displacement and erasure of feminist concerns. Chaston asserts that when children's fantasy narratives are filmically adapted to parallel the narrative beats of MGM's *The Wizard of Oz*, "those aspects of the original stories that empower child protagonists, *especially girls*, and that seem to critique the adult world, are transformed into a sentimental message" (13) [emphasis mine].

On the one hand, the narrative champions an active, boundary-crossing heroine who exhibits agency through fantasy, and on the other, raises social and political inequalities experienced by women and girls in the period, only to dismiss these with a wink. Initially presented with becoming a spinster or becoming a wife, Alice breaks through this social binary and ‘frame,’ by becoming neither. The film’s denouement presents a postfeminist fantasy, in which such gender inequalities are easily overcome with simple pluck and assertiveness, when Alice returns to the garden party and declares her intention to take over her late father’s business. Rosolowski notes that “Bakhtin uses the chronotope as a tool in distinguishing genres” (135). Indeed, the film’s movement through diegeses plays with shifts in generic mode that evoke different spatiotemporal worlds, from Costume Drama to fantasy epic and back again. Through this movement between chronotopes and generic modes, the narrative attempts the postfeminist feat of lightly narratively raising feminist concerns and also ultimately dismissing these as easily surmounted and

belonging to the past, by narratively ‘containing’ them within the historicised Costume Drama mode.

The moment Alice is faced with the opening of the rabbit hole and unknowingly faces a boundary into another world, the “knowing

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Fig. 1.4: Framed by the rabbit hole, Alice faces a threshold into another world.

audience” eagerly anticipates the removal of the restrictions imposed upon the heroine in the Costume Drama *mise-en-scène* (Hutcheon 121, see: fig. 1.4). However, commonalities, as well as differences, in how young female characters are represented in different genres and worlds are brought to the fore, when multiple chronotopes are in play in a single film text. When Alice falls down the rabbit hole from a static Costume Drama *mise-en-scène* to the inter-diegetic realm of high-paced Wonderland, Wonderland seems initially less constrained and restrictive for the heroine, by comparison. This effect is merely produced by the superficial contrasts between chronotopes, however. Stylistically, madcap Wonderland lacks the rigidity and Victorian stiffness of manner of the Victorian chronotope, but in Burton’s adaptation, Alice’s

movements and choices are all equally as directed and regulated by outside forces in the inter-diegetic fantasy realm, as in the non-magical diegesis. Before Alice falls down the rabbit hole, the tightly regulated figures and “mannered interiors” of the costume drama chronotope are continually interrupted by the white rabbit of fantasy lurking along its edges (Pidduck 382). In the inter-diegetic fantasy realm, however, Alice’s movements and choices are dictated by outside forces just as they are in the costume drama chronotope. Thus through overlapping contrasting chronotopes and generic modes within the same narrative, each implicates the gendered tropes and conventions that arise from the other.

Equally, the pleasures of both modes are thoroughly mined, as female cultural forms which dramatise and project the internal life of the girl into its spaces, and in fantasy, onto entire worlds. The adolescent girl’s internal life and negotiations through social and culturally encoded barriers are translated within the fantasy and costume drama mises-en-scène as vibrant, larger-than-life set pieces and villains in the forms of both boring fiancés, and murderous queens. Social and psychological constriction and transformation are visualised through costuming, as Alice refuses a corset, becomes too small and then too big for her dress, before finally donning armour. Moreover, while Burton’s *Alice in Wonderland* does not fully emancipate the heroine outside of spaces traditionally associated with femininity in cinema, it does demonstrate that fantasy can act as a pleasurable disruptive force to generic stability as well as

narrative frames and closures.

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Fig. 1.5: The trellis doors make a (mangled) reappearance in the inter-diegetic fantasy realm.

Trellis doors that symbolised the threshold into adulthood and the encroaching confinement of marriage in the costume drama scenes, later

recognisably re-appear in the inter-diegetic fantasy realm (see: fig. 1.5). Now reformed and bent to open its doors upwards rather than outward, its opening has widened onto a fantastical expanse of sky, and a path that leads over a distant hill. Where before Alice faced a series of increasingly confining frames

and enclosures, now the mangled and reshaped border of the trellis frame symbolically conveys “the rule of the violated frame,” which notes that “for more playful creators, the frame is *there* to be jostled, bent or broken altogether” (330). While the text couches its feminist leanings in the hasty postfeminist conclusion and does not “break” the frame “altogether,” the basic frames within which we imagine girlhood are widened, allowing “ontological boundaries between embedded worlds [to be] transgressed” through fantasy (330). The text demonstrates the possibilities of fantasy as a mode to disrupt and re-order systems of power which confine girls and young women, as the threshold chronotope is refigured from the “place of crisis” to that of “transformation” (Bakhtin 20-21).

The Fantasy Realm as Escape from the Adult Gaze:

***Pan’s Labyrinth* (dir. Guillermo Del Toro, 2006) and *Tideland* (dir. Terry Gilliam, 2005).**

This section investigates representations of girlhood in contemporary fantasy female coming-of-age films that target adult audiences and exploit the adult viewer’s awareness and understanding of events that the young female protagonist is unaware of or does not fully comprehend. Though *Pan’s Labyrinth* forms adaptive engagements with *The Wizard of Oz* (MGM, 1939) and *Alice in Wonderland* (1865), its narratives are not only concerned with the young heroine’s movement from one world into another, but with a mode of girlhood subject to an interrupting adult gaze. While the inter-diegetic fantasy realm allows the narrative to sanitise the protagonist and foreground her innocence, fantasy also becomes the means by which the heroine attains and exhibits agency. Thus fantasy fulfils a paradoxical role within the film texts. The mode of fantasy creates both spaces of evasion within which to other girlhood as blankly innocent and makes possible a simultaneous agency-through-fantasy for the heroine, as well. This results in a mode of girlhood that exists within narrow parameters by being subject to an othering “grownup gaze,” but through fantasy, resists that gaze (Khan 302).

Pan’s Labyrinth is a loose/inflected adaptation of a number of fairy tales and myths, as well as *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Wizard of Oz*. In ‘The

Power of Myth⁵,’ Guillermo Del Toro readily acknowledges his heroine Ofelia’s similarities to both Alice and Dorothy; and the adaptive engagements *Pan’s Labyrinth* forms with both Carroll and Baum’s texts. The narrative is intimately concerned with hostile adult figures in a threatening domestic sphere from which the heroine seeks succour in the alternate fantasy in the inter-diegetic fantasy realm. Ofelia’s courage and belief in wonders form a stark contrast to the brutality of her fascist Francoist stepfather Vidal. Through the mode of fantasy, however, the girl heroine is imbued with the power to transform scenes of violence, into spaces of possibility and transformation.

Khan’s theory of the “grownup gaze,” adapted from Laura Mulvey’s theory of the cinematic “male gaze,” becomes a useful framework in which to analyse different evocations of the adult gaze at work in Guillermo Del Toro’s *Pan’s Labyrinth* (Mulvey 1975: 9). The spectator is placed in a superior position to the young heroine by having access to knowledge she does not, which distances the audience from identifying with her experiences and opens the door to a voyeuristic “grownup gaze” (Khan 302). This allows the narrative to show graphic or distressing events surrounding the protagonist, while evading her knowledge of them, through the intervention of a fantasy world, in order to preserve and reinforce “the ideal of childhood innocence” (Gateward 164).

Thus “innocence and corruption are juxtaposed [...] to appeal to the voyeuristic curiosity of the grownup gaze” (Khan 302). However, in the very evocation of the “grownup gaze” within the *mise-en-scène*, both texts also implicate and subvert its power, through fantastical means. The inter-diegetic fantasy realm intervenes in brutal, adult non-magical diegeses to preserve the young heroine’s innocence and the idealised girlhood her characterisation represents, in which the audience is unduly invested. However, the fantasy realm also functions as an internal space, through which the viewer gains vicarious access to the heroine’s fantastical “double-vision,” through which her world offers “insights [which] alter our vision of circumstances beyond their control, and our control” (Zipes 2008: 239).

Del Toro insists that *Pan’s Labyrinth* is a “female film” that focuses on Ofelia’s (Ivana Baquero) experience, despite the presence of a male narrator

⁵ This refers to an excerpt from extended interviews with Guillermo Del Toro included on the film’s DVD Extras, in a special feature entitled ‘The Power of Myth’.

mediating the spectatorial relationship between audience and the young female protagonist on screen. This, combined with frequent shifts away from the heroine's perspective in favour of her fascist stepfather, Captain Vidal's viewpoint creates a consistent tension between competing modes of seeing, and perceptions of the world, which translates into two separate diegeses. That these two worlds exist in violent opposition to each other is clear, with Jennifer Orme observing, "*Pan's Labyrinth* actively pits the monologic monovocality of Captain Vidal and fascism against the dialogic multi-vocality of Ofelia [...] and the fairy tale" (223). While in both the inter-diegetic realm and the non-magical diegesis, Ofelia is subject to an interrogating adult gaze, she is also the only (human) character afforded the ability to 'see' and cross boundaries between worlds. Zipes astutely observes that this revisits a theme in Del Toro's filmography of associating "sight with insight" (236). Indeed, Del Toro's more recent heroine in his neo-gothic masterpiece *Crimson Peak* (2015) has the power to see the dead and as a result, has access to crucial and forbidden knowledge, while in *Pan's Labyrinth*, Ofelia's ability to see what others cannot, is immediately foregrounded in the first scene, through a dizzying transitional zoom into Ofelia's eye. Thus fantasy frequently becomes a force of intervention in Del Toro's texts, affording the heroine magical powers of sight, which allow her to resist the controlling male, or in this case, "grownup" gaze (Khan 302).

Luke Goodsell of *Empire Magazine* describes *Pan's Labyrinth* as a "both magical and brutal [...] fairy tale" while Joe Lozito of *Big Picture Big Sound* calls it "[a] beautiful but relentlessly bleak fairy tale," but fairy tales in their earliest forms are themselves often brutal and bleak. While fairy tale films such as Guillermo del Toro's acclaimed *Pan's Labyrinth* that marry fantastic imagery with disturbing content are often dubbed 'dark' or 'brutal' revisions of fairy tales, they in fact present a return to themes of "cannibalism", and "dismemberment" well-known in earlier, literary versions of the tales (Wilson 278). One need only think of the Grimms' Stepmother who demands the heart of her step-daughter be cut out by a reluctant huntsman; the decapitated bodies of Bluebeard's wives in Perrault's tales; or Hans Christian Anderson's little mermaid, whose fins are removed, and the Wolf who tempts Red Riding Hood to eat Grandmother's flesh.

Western, Anglo-American culture tends to be more familiar with Disney's sanitised adaptations of fairy tales, which largely do away with darker allusions to childhoods marked by extreme poverty, violence, rape, incest and murder in the fairy tale canon. However, *Pan's Labyrinth* returns to the image of the trials of girlhood as dangerous and bloody in the fairy tale; and conveys the necessity of *straying* from the path, in order to negotiate life's inevitable perils. Indeed, Jennifer Orme argues that "disobedience is a primary theme that is coded as positive, and even essential to survival" in *Pan's Labyrinth*, reflected in its generic hybridity, which itself "constitutes a form of disobedience to audience expectations of each of these genres, by combining genres that are normally distinct" (220). Indeed, the notion of resistance toward generic conventions is relevant to the mode of girlhood Ofelia embodies, as she frequently steps outside of expected notions of how a child, or a fairy tale heroine, behaves by "interrupting and intervening in the scripts she finds herself written into" (Bacchilega 83-84).

Guillermo del Toro's *Pan's Labyrinth* [*El Laberinto del Fauno*] tells the story of ten-year-old Ofelia in Francoist Spain, 1944, who comes to believe she is the reincarnation of Moana, an underworld fairy tale princess, after encountering a magical faun. The faun sets Ofelia three tasks—the first two are the acquisition of enchanted objects and the third is a sacrifice—to prove her worthiness. The film presents two parallel realities. In one, Ofelia inhabits a realist world in the Spanish countryside where Vidal, her new stepfather and a fascist Franco-supporter is revealed to be a violent sociopath hunting anti-Francoist rebels while her pregnant mother, Carmen, is in deteriorating health. In the other, Ofelia may or may not be the reincarnated spirit of Princess Moana, who must prove herself worthy in order to re-enter her rightful kingdom in the underworld, where her 'real' father waits for her.

Though rife with graphic depictions of violence, no scene in *Pan's Labyrinth* is perhaps as disturbing as when Ofelia must venture into the lair of the child-eating Pale Man, to acquire an ornate dagger as part of one of the three fairy tale tasks. Ofelia, surrounded by three buzzing fairies, walks along a long wooden table laden with food. The camera pans along a feast of stomach-turning, blood red jellies, ruby red fruits rotting in bowls and numerous, oddly-shaped bottles filled with murky, wine-coloured drink, until it abruptly reveals the

seemingly blind, terrifying creature sitting at its head. This sequence powerfully demonstrates what Jackson describes as fantasy's capacity to "[scrutinise] the category of the real" and confront what reality "refuses to encounter" (12). This morbid feast in the inter-diegetic realms forms a clear visual parallel to an earlier scene in the non-magical diegesis, at a dinner held at the house,

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Fig. 1.6: Visual parallels between the Pale Man's table and Captain Vidal's dinner party (1)

celebrating the victory of the Francoists (see: fig. 1.6, fig 1.7).

This sequence wholly disavows the conventional understanding of the adult as the "proverbial woodcutter who slays the wolf and rescues Red Riding Hood," and the home as idealised

space, and instead casts Vidal as a wolf and the home as uncanny (Khan 310). Captain Vidal imperiously dominates the space in a centre-shot, where he is seated at the head of the dinner table. The flames of the fireplace are just visible, flickering in the background of the shot and surrounding Vidal's head. The flames parody the warmth of hearth and home, recalling hellfire and the demonic, instead. His position at the head of the table reflects his role as titular head of the family, to terrifying effect (fig. 1.6). Vidal's icy gaze is projected across the table at the viewer in a disquieting deep-focus shot, lending an added weight to the atmosphere of paranoia and tension permeating the dinner party scene. There is no sense of the familiar or the familial here.

This gaze and the control Vidal constantly exercises, even in conversation among guests at his dinner table, is chilling in this earlier scene, but its full implications are only visualised through the fantastic, in the later 'Pale Man' sequence.

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Fig. 1.7: Visual parallels between the Pale Man's table and Captain Vidal's dinner party (2)

The near-identical shot in the Pale Man's Lair powerfully echoes the earlier dinner party scene and clearly casts the Pale Man as Vidal's counterpart, sitting

at the head of a table covered with food. The feast, however, is transfigured into swollen red fruits, dark meats and wines the colour of blood, into foods that unnaturally connote death. The dinner table heavily laid with death, translates the Francoist dinner party through the lens of fantasy and arrives at a more truthful portrait of fascism and Vidal, himself. Far from the trusted father and head of the family, Vidal is more authentically personified as the Pale Man, who feeds off death and is blind to all that he cannot grasp, consume or subjugate.

Image, blindness, sight and the violence of the “grownup gaze” figure strongly in this sequence, through a complex handling of space and perspective (Khan 302). So transfixed is Ofelia by the unwholesome, uncanny food that she does not immediately perceive the creature, only to start back in horror at the sight of the eyeless, hairless Pale Man, bent over his silver plate. That the scene does not operate from Ofelia’s point of view, is therefore clearly signalled, as the spectator is made privy to the presence of the Pale Man before she is. This allows suspense to build, as the spectator anticipates Ofelia’s discovery of him. The possibility that the Pale Man may suddenly spring, hangs in the air. When he doesn’t move, however, Ofelia reaches for the plate and examines two filmy orbs that appear to be the eyeballs entirely missing from his white face, which though skull-like, is slack with excess skin, pooling down to his neck. As Vidal’s monstrous counterpart, the extreme signs of age the Pale Man shows furthers the contrast between Ofelia, as vital, innocent and youthful, and her stepfather, as deathly, corrupt and adult. His still face shows only two holes in place of nostrils and a gaping mouth; the enormous hands resting on the table are tipped with pointed black claws. His potential for violence is staged, as if for her benefit, but unrealised by any action.

The static sense of time in the space and the motionlessness of the figures combines unsettlingly, until at last, the tension is aurally broken within the chamber. At the hair-raising sound of a chorus of infants distantly wailing, Ofelia replaces the silver plate and looks fearfully upward, where the action cuts to a monstrous ceiling fresco of images of little children being eaten by the Pale Man. The change in perspective, as the spectator’s vision combines with Ofelia, is all the more hair-raising: Ofelia’s smallness is foregrounded as the camera tilts upward upon the image of the infants being eaten by the Pale Man. As the distant wailing grows louder, Ofelia begins to breathe unsteadily and then her

eyes widen, as the viewer is given a low-angled shot of a huge pile of tiny white children's shoes.

The cannibalistic, child-eating Pale Man is a figure designed to mine the anxieties that surround the idea of innocent girlhood corrupted by a monstrous adult. *Pan's Labyrinth* plays upon those familiar cultural anxieties by staging the Pale Man's lair with haunting objects. The pile of children's shoes pictured within the same space as the blood-red jellies, horribly poses the act of literally consuming the girl's body as a metaphor for this predatory, hungry gaze. Without overtly threatening sexual violence, the pile of virginally white, doll-like children's shoes cast aside in a heap, juxtaposed with the grossly aged and wrinkled creature, bespeaks the horror of youth and innocence destroyed at the hands of a greedy, barbaric appetite. Indeed, when Ofelia retrieves the sword from behind its locked safe in the Pale Man's wall, its phallic overtones bespeak a brutal capacity for violation.

Still, with the Pale Man seemingly frozen, there initially appears to be no immediate threat of violence to Ofelia until, in a true fairy tale turn that also again recalls the Persephone myth, the hungry girl is tempted to eat a grape from the Pale Man's table. Immediately, the Pale Man's long fingers with their sharp nails begin moving against the table's surface; then, lifting his hands, the creature sticks his eyeballs into eye-sockets apparently located in his palms. Consumption, touch and gaze are conspicuously aligned, as raising his hands to his face, the Pale Man stares at oblivious Ofelia before blundering towards her. The competing perspectives in this scene shift anxiously back and forth, as once again the spectator is aware of the threat, while Ofelia eats, oblivious. Unwillingly involved in a voyeuristic position, the spectator watches as Ofelia, mediated through the Pale Man's gaze, becomes "the bearer of the look," an object to be consumed (Mulvey 12). The fairies twitter about Ofelia's head but she, still eating grapes, waves them away until she hears the Pale Man behind her, who promptly plucks two of the three fairies out of the air and eats them, blood dripping from his wrinkled mouth.

As Ofelia rushes to escape the lair of the Pale Man, the chalk doorway between the underworld-like inter-diegetic fantasy realm and the non-magical diegesis above begins to disappear, heightening the urgency of her escape. Bakhtin observes that "time is essentially instantaneous" in the chronotope of

the threshold (21). Indeed, as this chronotopic threshold between worlds begins to close, the slow, drawn-out suspense of the previous scene gives suddenly way to high-speed action as Ofelia flees for the exit back to her own world (Bakhtin 21). Just behind, the Pale Man reaches for Ofelia with his nightmarish 'seeing' hands, equipped with eyeballs, which are already devouring her image. Khan delineates the "grownup gaze" and the power it exerts through 'looking,' observing, "the adult [...] is endowed with the authority to create knowledge, while the child is the object and bearer of that knowledge" (302). The child as unwilling bearer of knowledge and the monstrous adult as its creator is horribly realised through the loaded images of children being eaten, inlaid into the walls of the Pale Man's chamber. Recreated as images, the dead children whose shoes number hundreds, haunt the space and illustrate the terror of the Pale Man's hungry gaze. Almost imperceptibly, what Khan describes as "fairy-tale conventions" shift the meaning of the scene (Khan 303). The spectator sees and anticipates the Pale Man's approach long before Ofelia, which invites the judgment that accompanies the power of the look. Literary fairy tale canon is rife with "texts [that] implicitly warn naive females to quell their adventurous spirits and suppress their feminine desires, lest they be devoured by the proverbial wolf" (Khan 303). Ofelia's "adventurous spirit" has led her into a chamber of horror, and watching the Pale Man's 'unseen' approach, the spectator unwillingly perceives the girl as an interloper, who should never have entered the forbidden space (Khan 303).

This sequence effectively foreshadows that Ofelia's inter-diegetic fantasy realm of fairy tale tasks, monsters and heroines, cannot coexist with the non-magical diegesis for long as the opening separating them begins to close. By the time Ofelia reaches the magical doorway, it has vanished altogether and she must frantically draw another 'window' with white chalk onto the ceiling, which forms a gateway to her 'real-world' bedroom. The window, like "the staircase, the front hall, and corridor," spatially connotes the liminal, and belongs to the order of "places where crisis events occur, the falls and resurrections" (Bakhtin 21). The Pale Man comes ever closer as Ofelia begins to clamber through this exit of her own making. There is a frantic moment while her legs dangle within reach of the Pale Man's nightmarish, staring, grasping hands. But then she is safely through, having successfully acquired the sword.

While she escapes unscathed, however, Ofelia is nevertheless 'consumed' in this sequence in a manner as visually monstrous to the spectator as the Pale Man's frescoes of eaten children. The Pale Man, whose eyes reside in his hands, embodies not only the physical threat of Ofelia being captured and eaten but a threatening, hungry 'gaze', as well. Instead of rendering these threats as separate (that is, the threat of being consumed physically and of being consumed as image) the two are made into an apparently mutual or enjoined act of ferocious consumption. On the one hand, when the Pale Man consumes Ofelia's fairy attendants, he is momentarily blinded because he must grasp their bodies to shove them into his mouth. Then again, his eyes actually pressing against the bodies of the fairies as they are eaten visualises 'eating' and 'seeing' as a simultaneous action. The Pale Man's hands/eyes reaching toward Ofelia as she desperately clammers through the window back home, are made still more visually threatening by 'their' ability to see. It is as if the act of looking were rendered physical and given the violating aspect of physical sensation. The 'gaze' then, itself, becomes revealed as consumption; and as a means by which the Pale Man devours Ofelia without ever touching her.

Though Ofelia has a traditional (realist, masculine) weapon in the form of the sword when the first magical doorway closes, she does not use it to defend herself against the Pale Man. Instead, using her chalk, she creates a doorway and removes herself from this underworld altogether, and back up to her own. Thus, instead of grasping the sword, a phallic object already visually associated with the violence and consumption inherent in the adult gaze, Ofelia turns not to the wall where the doorway disappeared, but rather to the ceiling above. The ceiling in the Pale Man's nightmarish dining room, painted with images of children at his mercy, transforms the space into a chamber of horror. On this ceiling, Ofelia creates her own image (the chalk magical window) which becomes a literal means of escape. In this nightmarish inter-diegetic fantasy realm, then, Ofelia both confronts a devouring patriarchal monstrosity and literally re-inscribes its underworld-like space. This crossing of the chronotopic threshold reflects the fairy tale "protagonist's journey outward beyond the limen, or threshold, of her hearth and home, outside geographical, emotional, and cognitive boundaries" (Renfroe 83). However, the young heroine's *creation* of a threshold, ascribes powers to her beyond those conventionally given to fantasy

girl heroines. Wrestling the power of the look back from the Pale Man, Ofelia sees the ceiling not as a barrier, or as the canvas upon which the Pale Man paints his victims, but as a doorway ‘through’ it, to another world. By thus taking control of the fantasy realm, the narrative allows Ofelia a magical agency she lacks in the non-magical above-ground diegesis.

In her conceptualisation of the “grownup gaze,” Khan argues that “fairy-tale conventions” and “archetypes” inform its gratification (303, 302). The adult or “grownup gaze” in *Pan’s Labyrinth* relies on characterisations of girlhood as innocent and therefore passive and vulnerable to victimisation (Khan 303). While the ideal of girlhood innocence is upheld in spite of Ofelia’s encounters with malevolent adults and the terrifying Pale Man, the notion of innocence as *inevitably* imperilled is disrupted through fantasy. Ofelia’s innocence and belief in magic become her only means of rescue and agency and this agency is exhibited through her refusal to be contained by the Pale Man’s chamber of horror. In the absence of any intervening adults, Ofelia draws a magical window to safety, and resists the Pale Man’s monstrously “grownup gaze” (302).

Pan’s Labyrinth makes consistent intertextual reference to “the alignment of its heroine with well-known fairy-tale heroines like Snow White, Lewis Carroll’s Alice and Dorothy of MGM’s *The Wizard of Oz*” (Orme 220). Indeed, like Alice, she has travelled through wondrous ‘underlands’ or an underworld-like fantasy space to overcome its dangers and master its confounding rules. Like Dorothy, Ofelia wears red shoes at the end of the film and even taps them, though her return to the inter-diegetic fantasy realm requires more than just a click of her heels. Like the anti-Francoist resistance that hides in the fairy tale wilderness surrounding their home, Ofelia must enter the woods to discover a realm in which she can enact her resistance against her stepfather and the nightmarish reality his presence in her life creates. Just as early folktale versions of ‘Red Riding Hood’ describe its heroine outwitting and so escaping the Wolf, it is through Ofelia’s fairy tales that Vidal’s vision of the world as linear, coherent and patriarchal is ultimately disrupted and overcome. Ofelia’s ability to see, through fantasy, all that “which has been silenced, made invisible and covered over” in the fascist mode of control Vidal imposes on the house and its surrounding village, exposes the thinly veiled fictions it depends upon to function (Jackson 4). The fairy tale emerges as a dynamic mode of telling, “that,

far from being soothing fiction, provides different ways of telling and different ways of reading” (Orme 232). Through the intervention of the fairy tale and inter-diegetic fantasy realm, the narrative interrupts and implicates “the grownup gaze,” and while the notion of idealised girlhood as innocent and ‘other’ is upheld, innocent girlhood is also reconfigured as an agent of change and resistance in the text.

Conclusion

In 1904, to combat ‘precocity’ and ‘immorality’ from developing in the adolescent girl, Hall promotes “the use of fiction” among other methods of intervention, to act as a vicarious means through which the adolescent can access its pleasures through fantasy, without acting them out (8). This idea of pedagogical intervention through fantasy is relevant to my reading of Dorothy’s journey to Oz, earlier in this chapter. If read in relation to the melodrama and its conservative quest to recover “the old space of innocence,” intervention implies that the fantasy inter-diegetic realm of Oz ‘intervenes’ in Dorothy’s desire to quit the domestic sphere, and teaches her to value Kansas as her true home (Williams 62). Thus, the conservative moral: “There’s no place like home.” However, the intervention of Oz into the non-magical diegesis also opens up a fantastical space, which becomes a ‘safe’ setting for staging Dorothy’s resistance to the domestic sphere. Though such coded strategies are perhaps not surprising in a Classical Hollywood film in that era, the concept of fictional fantasy as interventative re-emerges in the contemporary postfeminist moment.

Writing in 2005, David Melville refers to the host of films in which a young heroine is transported from a non-magical diegesis to another, fantastical realm, as “a tradition of films about troubled adolescent girls who take refuge in a world of fantasy and dreams” (Melville n. page). This telling description identifies such films as not only concerned with the inter-diegetic movement of the protagonist from one chronotope to another, but with the idea of the fantasy world as a form of intervention, in the lives of the “troubled” female adolescent. In other words, the heroine’s “troubled” state is, according to Melville, mitigated or ‘solved’ by the act of traversing the boundary into the inter-diegetic fantasy realm. The concept of the “troubled” and psychologically at-risk female adolescent is not new but in fact originates with the conceptualisation of adolescence itself as a

term and stage of development, as discussed earlier in the chapter (Hall 8, Nathanson 1991).

However, the nature of what 'troubles' girlhood and what the girl heroine must accept or change to attain normalcy and develop into a (gender) heteronormative adult, is itself dictated by discursively constructed socio-political positions. When Melville discusses *The Company of Wolves* (dir. Neil Jordan, U.K. 1987), which adapts Angela Carter's feminist retelling of fairy tales, he touches on both the necessity of "coming to terms" with one's sexuality and certain "social or biological" realities, that are specific to adolescent girls (n. page):

"Crucially, the dream universes [...] do not, finally, alienate the heroine from contact with the real world. They enable her, rather, to come to grips with reality (whether social or biological) in ways that eluded her before. On waking, both Valerie and Rosaleen in *The Company of Wolves* are ready to embrace their budding sexuality, not shrink from it in fear," (Melville n. page.)

While Melville asserts that these films see their heroines come to grips with what he significantly identifies as "social or biological" reality, this narrative trajectory (the girl, troubled by what her reality imposes, enters the fantasy world and re-emerges ready to embrace that reality's limitations) itself problematises girlhood as inevitably 'troubled', otherworldly (in opposition to reality) and ultimately, in need of intervention. Melville's oblique reference to "social and biological" realities, describes a gendered reality that is defined by socially, politically and biologically constricted roles and rights. The implication is that, in order to come of age, the girl must come to terms with gender inequalities. Fantasy thus becomes a useful mode through which to cinematically express the frustrating limitations of such realities while simultaneously re-establishing them as inevitable, at the film's conclusion. When the girl heroine enters the inter-diegetic fantasy realm, her representation reveals the desires, anxieties and fantasies that are culturally projected onto the figure of the girl. While containing girlhood within tightly conscribed social and cultural parameters, the fantasy realm simultaneously stages female fantasies of agency and escape, within those limits.

For while the films discussed above demonstrate that fantasy worlds open up spaces of possibility for a young feminine agency articulated through fantasy, fantasy girlhood remains constructed within very particular parameters. That the iconic status of Dorothy and Alice as cultural emblems of idealised, heroic girlhood, persist in contemporary adaptations, speaks to the fact that popular representations of girlhood in this cycle are exclusionary, spectacular and imperilled. Alice and Dorothy and their cinematic counterparts are almost exclusively Caucasian, cisgender, heterosexual, slim and conventionally pretty. Fantasy girlhood continues to be subject to a shifting binary that has its roots in the Victorian 'angel of the house' – 'madwoman' dichotomy; alternately ethereal or hyper-sexualised, either at risk of falling victim to predatory 'wolves' or themselves 'wolfish' examples of the monstrous feminine. Race and identity politics at large become an issue evaded by entering the inter-diegetic fantasy realm, which both resists and challenges uncomplicated, delimited representations of girlhood and reinforces them, upon her return home.

In these female coming-of-age narratives, the young female adventure narrative is often delimited to and contained within the inter-diegetic fantasy realm, which limits its effects in the non-magical diegesis, to which the narrative inevitably returns. In *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) the narrative concludes by returning the young female protagonist to her initial constricted environment and role within the domestic sphere, family and home. This handily places the female adventure narrative outside of what is possible within the non-magical diegesis. The film narrative stages female agency and heroism within the fantasy realm, only to re-establish the young female protagonist's docile role in the non-magical world, within the family home and in her 'real' life. Dorothy's passivity in Kansas, if not in Oz, is ultimately underscored and even championed by representing the end of the dream, or the return home, as a resolving and ultimate rejection of a fantasy of empowerment. Like Wendy leaving Neverland in J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan, or the Boy who Wouldn't Grow Up* (1904), this is understood by the audience to be a necessary stage of specifically *female* development: that the possibility of adventure, mobility and agency is not only fantastically staged, but a fantasy. Conversely, a return to traditionally gender-normative feminine behaviours and barriers commonly placed on young women and girls, is represented as 'growing up'. In other

words, the spectre of “young unmarried women outside of the home” is raised in *The Wizard of Oz* and then ultimately vanquished (Marshall 2002: 208).

However, “the young unmarried [woman] outside of the home” re-emerges through adaptation (Marshall 2002: 208). Inflecting *The Wizard of Oz* and *Alice in Wonderland* in contemporary female coming-of-age narratives allows adaptation and fantasy to become modes of critique and more crucially, of dialogue. Fantasy is a disruptive force, and when spaces that were traditionally associated with female confinement in genres like the Classical Hollywood Woman’s Film are revisited in the fantasy mode, the delimited boundaries of those spaces come to the fore. Juxtaposing chronotopic spaces and generic worlds, implicates their conventions and limitations. Blurring those boundaries through the transformative act of traversing worlds otherwise separated by fixed generic frameworks, which legitimise male fantasies and relegate female fantasies to the sub-generic, demonstrates the importance of the female coming-of-age fantasy film.

More than an escapist or idealistic “wish-space of possibility,” the subversive potential invoked through fantasy within spaces traditionally associated with women on screen in classical Hollywood and mainstream films, offers the opportunity to revisit and reframe (Butler 96). Images of girl heroines breaking fairy tale edicts, running away from home, chasing rabbits into other lands and shirking decorum, widen the frames within which girlhood is cinematically imagined. The contrast between the realms of fantasy and the non-magical diegesis implicates the conventions of each. Their contrast demonstrates that “narrative structure and subjects are like the working apparatuses of ideology, factories for the ‘natural’ and the ‘fantastic’ meanings by which we live” (DuPlessis 283). By exploiting the “threshold chronotopes” within those narrative structures, key sequences in these films question “the assumptions [and] the patterns [in the text] that create fictional boundaries for [young, female] experience” (Bakhtin 21, DuPlessis 283). Finally, by shifting the boundaries of “what is felt to be narratable by both [textual] and social conventions,” through fantasy and adaptation, representations of girlhood in new textual worlds open the door to a larger ideological shift in cultural narratives surrounding female coming of age.

Chapter Two, “Bloody Chambers: Encountering Girlhood through Traumatic Space in the Bluebeard Adaptation.”

‘Bluebeard’ is a fairy tale uniquely devoid of enchantment, that begins where most end; namely, with the marriage of a beautiful young girl to a lord.¹ Far from living ‘happily ever after,’ this marital horror story of a mysterious man, his curious wife and a forbidden chamber gives a chilling account of a heroine whose husband threatens to murder her when she discovers his previous seven wives in a secret, bloody chamber. In the previous chapter, I demonstrated that diegesis functions as a form of gendered narration in films about girls journeying to a fantasy world. In this chapter, I will analyse contemporary ‘Bluebeard’ adaptations, in which the space of the forbidden chamber becomes a crucial narrative place for positioning girlhood in relation to trauma. What are the implications of girls confronting trauma that is sublimated into haunted chambers or spaces? What motivates the cinematic return-through-adaptation to ‘Bluebeard’, when representing trauma in relationship to the girl’s subjectivity?

While more contemporary cinema has seen a revival of the fairy tale in the recent cycle of filmic adaptations, some tales are easier to adapt than others and only one of the four filmic case studies in this chapter is a direct/named adaptation of ‘Bluebeard’: Catherine Breillat’s *Barbe Bleue* (France, 2009). Perhaps it is due to the unpalatable themes and gruesome nature of the chamber itself, that there are few direct/named adaptations of the Bluebeard myth. Yet there are many which indirectly replay and adapt the traumatic revelation of the bloody chamber. Like trauma itself, ‘Bluebeard’ appears to be a forgotten fairy tale that has passed out of popular circulation but is merely ‘suppressed’: its features recognisably re-appear in indirect adaptations that anticipate a female audience.

¹ The most commonly cited ‘source’ or literary version of ‘Bluebeard’ is Charles Perrault’s “Barbe Bleue” in his 1697 publication of *Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passé*, in which he adapted and canonised fairy tales from oral storytelling for an adult, French audience. For a fairy tale, there is a curious lack of fantastical elements in ‘Bluebeard’. Only the key that turns the lock and once stained cannot be washed clean, shows any trace of dark magic. Its presence drives the narrative, however; first as means by which Bluebeard tests his bride and tempts her toward transgression when he gives her the key to a secret chamber but asks her never to unlock the door. Then the key is used to draw out the sadomasochistic suspense of whether the heroine can hide the bloody key that proves she has entered the forbidden chamber—or if she will be forced to join the collection of dead wives she finds hidden inside.

In cinema, many of these indirect adaptations of Bluebeard belong to what Mary Ann Doane, a feminist critic whose work on the critically neglected Classical Hollywood Woman's Film genre is seminal in the field, has called the 'paranoid woman's film' of the 1940s (1987). While Doane does not read these films as adaptations of 'Bluebeard', what fairy tale scholar Maria Tatar identifies as a 1940s 'Bluebeard Cycle' overlaps with many of the same titles (Tatar 90-91). While discussing indirect Bluebeard film adaptations of the 1940s, Tatar notes an "extraordinarily intricate cinematic network" interconnecting these films, less concerned with a foundational text (the 'Bluebeard' tale) than with each other: "revising, adapting and reimagining the story embedded in previous films" (Tatar 91). The 'interconnectedness' of these films forms what Klein would identify as a filmic cycle and "useful social document" (Klein 10). Thus this chapter will engage with scholarship devoted to the 1940s 'Bluebeard' Cycle or 'paranoid woman film', to understand the use of space as a setting for trauma in Bluebeard adaptations belonging to the more contemporary fairy tale film adaptation cycle. By making comparisons between these two filmic cycles emerging from fairy tales but separated by decades, this chapter will analyse the implications of their similarities.

Cary Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre* (2011) functions as an adaptation of the original 1884 novel by Charlotte Brontë, which is itself a Bluebeard retelling, as well. However, many of these films are subject to competing claims of adaptation. George Cukor's *Gaslight* (1944) is an American remake of Thorold Dickinson's *Gaslight* (U.K., 1940). Indeed, while Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre* and Catherine Breillat's *Barbe Bleue* (France, 2009) confront similar themes and even settings to that of *Gaslight*, by operating within an opposing concept of the 'Gothic' genre, they are rendered very stylistically disparate. Just as *Gaslight* belongs to the Paranoid Gothic, *Jane Eyre* is an example of posttraumatic cinema. Posttraumatic cinema makes use of narrative techniques such as flashback, aural distortions and rapid editing to mimic symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, and the return of posttraumatic memory. *Jane Eyre* combines elements of posttraumatic cinema with the Female Gothic and thus belongs to what I call the 'Post-Traumatic Female Gothic,' anticipating a female audience as surely as Cukor's *Gaslight*. For, like the Bluebeard myth itself, the women's film genre hasn't so much died out but rather, gone

underground as a 'named category'. All of the films considered in this chapter replay 'Bluebeard' and—whether as 'costume drama', 'melodrama' or 'feminist reworking'—are engaged with a “female Gothic tradition” that anticipates a female audience (Barefoot 11). Thus this chapter will analyse how different Gothic modes of 'telling' in these adaptations of the Bluebeard myth, narrate girlhood. An exploration of cinematic Bluebeards must be an investigation of these films not only as adaptations of fairy tales but also as re-workings of the Gothic, which arise in two separate eras in filmmaking. The present chapter analyses Cukor's *Gaslight* (1944), as an example of the Paranoid Woman film cycle, in relation to Fukunga's *Jane Eyre* (2011) and *Barbe Bleue* (2009) as fairy tales retold in different incarnations of the 'Gothic' mode.

A focus of this chapter is on gendered representations of trauma in these Gothic adaptations of Bluebeard. The wider questions of the chapter emerge from a complex intersection between gendered traumas, processes of adaptation, feminist fairy tale studies and female traditions of the Gothic. To engage with trauma and its representation on screen in relation to girlhood and coming of age, this chapter makes use of trauma theory. Griselda Pollock, who has also written extensively on 'Bluebeard' in adaptation, has made considerable contributions to the field of studying trauma cinema. Her work in conceptualising trauma on film, and the work of other critics within the field of trauma theory, will inform my analysis of how trauma impacts on girlhood on screen, re-orders narrative chronology and is disseminated into the space of the forbidden chamber in these films. The haunted space of the bloody chamber emerges as a chronotopic construction of space within the *mise-en-scène*, which stages a gendered representation of trauma and fairy tale girlhood. Thus by engaging with trauma theory and Mikhail Bakhtin's conceptualisation of the chronotope, I will investigate how narrative traditions associated with femininity, such as the fairy tale and the female Gothic, represent the relationship between trauma and girlhood on screen.

***Gaslight* (1944): 'Bluebeard' and the Gothic "Paranoid Woman's Film"**

Many critics of the Classical Hollywood Woman's Film genre have noted that George Cukor's *Gaslight* (1944), is one manifestation of an “extraordinarily intricate cinematic network” of films nervously revolving around a wife's fear that her husband is plotting to kill her, known alternately as the 'Bluebeard Cycle' or

the “Paranoid Woman’s Film” (Tatar 91, Doane 16). This inter-generic film cycle emerging from the Classical Hollywood Woman’s Film genre is thought to emerge from a period of crisis surrounding the post-WWII role of women in American society. In the previous chapter, the societal anxieties provoked by the increased visibility of young women outside the home in the 1930s was discussed as contextual ‘frame’ for Dorothy’s journey to Oz. In the 1940s, women working outside the home became the norm as the government ‘Rosie the Riveter’ campaign urged them to fill the jobs left vacant by men deployed overseas, during the Second World War. Diane Waldman observes that “as women joined or gained access to higher-paying positions within the labour market during the war,” they entered the once-forbidden sphere of the workplace and thrived, only to be “re-routed back to the home,” and re-confined to the domestic sphere, when American soldiers returned home (30). This illuminates a motif Michael Walker traces across the female gothic, in which the “return to [the] family mansion,” stages an “arrival [...] which is traumatic” (18). Thus this motif is shaped by a period in which women faced a similar traumatic “return” to the familial home (Walker 18).

Waldman suggests that the “marrying a stranger” motif common to this cycle can be usefully contextualised by “the rash of hasty pre-war marriages [and] subsequent all-time high divorce rate of 1946” in the United States, as well (30-31). Indeed, in what Waldman astutely observes is a probable nod to the many hastily married couples leading up to WWII who, once the War ended, realised they barely knew each other, the husband-as-stranger trope is common to the Gothic “Paranoid Woman’s Film” Cycle (Waldman 30-31, Doane 19). In *The Secret beyond the Door* (Lang, U.S.A. 1947) Celia (Joan Bennett) comments, “I’m marrying a stranger,” just as Paula in *Gaslight* initially responds to George Anton’s proposal with the playful words, “But I don’t know you!” While portraying this impulsivity as romantic and desirable initially, the stranger-husband almost always reveals himself to be murderous or a scoundrel of the Bluebeard variety. In films including *Rebecca* (Hitchcock, U.S.A., 1940), *Suspicion* (Hitchcock, U.S.A., 1941), and *Jane Eyre* (Stevenson, U.S.A., 1944),

the husband's true state of mind, circumstances and intentions are often only revealed after the marriage ceremony².

The husband's state of mind was of particular concern. Indeed, beyond women's widespread dissatisfaction with being relegated back to the domestic sphere following the Armistice, there existed a real social anxiety regarding the recently demobilised 'neuropsychiatric soldier' husband, turned violent and murderous by war, as well. David Gerber asserts that "as many as 500,000 men were said to have been hospitalised for neuropsychiatric causes in the last year of the war alone [and] the Veterans Administration Director of Social Work predicted that the release of men from the military would occasion a psychiatric problem of a dimension never before experienced in any country" (Gerber 549). The stranger-husband figure observed to be so endemic to this cycle can therefore be interpreted as a projection of the anxiety that the husband returning home was not merely a stranger, but a "mental case" (Walker 19, Gerber 549). No wonder, then, that "the institution of marriage is haunted by murder" in this cycle (Doane 123).

While its socio-historical context is indispensably illuminating, the means by which the tropes of this sub-genre recall the mythos of Bluebeard and localise these anxieties within its adaptation is unmistakable. Beyond its specific socio-cultural context and characteristic generic articulation of fear, the "Paranoid Woman's Film" communicates a growing female dissatisfaction with marriage, suitably veiled by its displacement into the "remote setting" of the highly stylised Gothic film diegesis reminiscent of Bluebeard's castle (Modleski 20, Doane 19). Tania Modleski demonstrates in her study of popular women's fiction that this emerges from a larger trend of 'masking' female fear, desire and discontent within de-familiarising Gothic frames, originating from as far back as the early nineteenth century. For this reason, *Gaslight* is a seminal example of the Bluebeard Cycle. As Doane, Barefoot, Waldman and Hanson observe, this cycle combines 'Bluebeard' tropes (the forbidden chamber; murderous husband and house haunted by a dead woman) with a stylised Gothic setting (gaslights and flickering candles; secretive, malevolent servants who may or may not be colluding with the husband) to illustrate the fears and discontent of women

² In the case of *Jane Eyre*, Rochester's circumstances are only revealed following the interrupted marriage ceremony.

within the bounds of marriage and the domestic sphere, both within and ranging beyond the specificity of its time period. *Gaslight* belongs to the paradoxical 1940s woman's film genre, however, which addresses female concerns, and even covert feminist ones, but inevitably operates within and is dictated by misogynistic hegemony. Thus *Gaslight* not only resists but simultaneously re-establishes the disparity of power between husband and wife in the traditional marriage and her 'place' within the haunted confines of the domestic sphere. Below, I will examine how Cukor achieves this and the implications thereof, mainly focusing on three key scenes in *Gaslight* that frame marriage within the traumatic space of the forbidden chamber.

Just as in 'classical' literary adaptations of fairy tales, cinematic adaptations often narrate moments of change, transition and transformation, as in "the transformation of girls into women: the onset of puberty, the change in social status from daughters to wives, with all the excitement and dangers this entails. In other words, the integration of psychosexual and social transformations" (Petrie 5). The film opens with just such a moment of transition, as orphaned Paula Alquist (Ingrid Bergman) is taken in a carriage from the house where she grew up and her guardian, Aunt Alice, has just been murdered. The scene is suffused with gloomy London fog and darkness, the atmosphere unbearably grim as Paula is urged, "Don't look back. You must forget everything that happened here. That's why you're going to Italy." Though Paula's white, expressionless face indicates that she is in shock, she apparently takes this advice to heart, with terrible consequences. Flash-forward a few years and Paula is a young music student in Italy, passionately in love with Gregory Anton (Charles Boyer) a pianist she barely knows and who she has 'forgotten,' or repressed, seeing in her childhood home the night Aunt Alice was killed. Though this information is not yet intimated to the viewer, it is foreshadowed and hinted at throughout the narrative, beginning with Paula's encounter with the elderly Miss Thwaites (Dame May Whitty) on the train journey to Lake Como, where she plans to marry Anton.

In a close-up of her face, Paula looks dreamily out of the window of the train compartment when, off-screen, we suddenly hear small female cries of alarm, increasing in volume and intensity. Paula glances over in alarm and in a wider shot comic reveal, little Mrs Thwaites is crying out in mounting excitement

in response to her “rather gruesome” book. With obvious pleasure, Miss Thwaites (who claims she “loves a good murder” and is nicknamed ‘bloodthirsty Bessie’ by family members) tells Paula the plot of her book: “This girl marries a man—and what do you think? He has six other wives buried in the cellar!” While Paula seems merely amused by the description of this obvious Bluebeard adaptation in which the cellar apparently functions as a forbidden chamber, she soon goes pale when the conversation turns to Thornton Square. Not registering Paula’s discomfort, Miss Thwaites excitedly relates the story of a murder, years ago, in Thornton Square and her own desire to see inside the house where it happened, “I mean, just to see: all is just as it used to be; nothing was to be changed...” Thus in the space of a few sentences, the cellar filled with the dead wives in Miss Thwaites’ Bluebeard-inspired novel is directly related to the house where Alice Alquist was murdered and that Paula, in her hurry to forget or in memoriam, has left unchanged. The comparison is later reiterated for emphasis, when a policeman claims Anton looks as though he’s been “digging in a cellar.”

Though comical, Miss Thwaites’ curiosity to ‘see inside’ is initially portrayed as gossipy and gauche. She exhibits the loathed feminine trait of curiosity and fascination with the bloody chamber Charles Perrault warns against in his 1697 “Barbe Bleue” (Perrault 1697: 107). In a reversal of Perrault’s fairy tale moral, however, the danger of denying knowledge and of *not* satisfying curiosity is soon visually established, to disquieting effect. Paula leaves the carriage and steps onto the platform, visibly shrinking from Miss Thwaites’ curiosity. When Paula is detained by Miss Thwaites, who eagerly claims she can see “that house” from her own dining room window, the visibly discomfited heroine becomes framed by the compartment window. The borders of the window are always charged with potential within the *mise-en-scène* of the woman’s film, evoking both the seen within its frame and the unseen beyond it. Within the paradigm of Bakhtin’s chronotope, the window is situated as a “threshold,” an in-between setting that “extends” the spatial field (21). In this scene, Miss Thwaites sits in the immediate foreground, with her back to the viewer. Thus situated, Miss Thwaites becomes a natural surrogate for the spectator, as she watches Paula through the compartment window, which in turn becomes a screen projecting the young woman’s turmoil.

Due to copyright concerns, this image cannot be shown.

Fig. 2.1: A strange hand appears from out of frame to grasp Bergman's arm.

When a disembodied hand appears from off-screen space, beyond the window frame, and reaches for Paula's arm, the "threshold" of the window becomes "charged" with crisis (fig. 2.1). Miss Thwaites falls immediately silent at the sight and with the loss of her

comforting chattering speech, comes an ominous silence in which all action ceases except the movement of the hand ominously closing on Paula's arm. For a moment oddly dislocated in time, Paula is framed, frozen in the carriage window, a look of trepidation on her face and stares blankly forward, instead of down, at the hand tightly grasping her arm (fig. 2.1). In a sensitive performative choice on Bergman's part, Paula's expression exactly mirrors the blank look of shock she wore in the film's introductory shot of the character, when the younger Paula leaves Thornton Square and is told she must never "look back." Paula's unwillingness to look, to see and locate the source of the threat, is visually linked to the return of that blank facial expression, and the suppression of the memory of Thornton Square. Then an arm comes into shot in the window frame, from the off-screen space; a shoulder, and then, the familiar figure is revealed, after all—it's only Anton (fig. 2.2).

With visible relief, Paula embraces him passionately and the window that looked out on a picture of suspicion, fear and the return of traumatic memory, a moment before, becomes a portrait of the happy newlyweds. They hurry away from Miss Thwaites but the ominous atmosphere lingers. By reviling the old woman's curiosity and denying the knowledge of her own repressed memory, Paula unknowingly puts herself in the power of a Bluebeard.

Due to copyright concerns, this image cannot be shown.

Fig. 2.2: A moment later, it is revealed to be her husband but the atmosphere of anxiety remains.

Like the fairy tale, marriage in *Gaslight* is presented as a site of "social and psycho-sexual transformation", in which an unhappy orphan with a repressed, traumatic past can briefly gain status, happiness, family and a new

identity as a wife (Petrie 5). Yet marriage is also shown to be a site of trauma, domestic violence, sadomasochism and monstrosity. When considered outside of the diegesis of the film, Anton's machinations against his wife are made transparently obvious to the viewer, but within their narrative context *Gaslight* presents a truly hideous reanimation of Bluebeard, as a husband who teaches a wife to persecute herself and to lead herself into the dread chamber. The film does preserve what Zipes calls Bluebeard's "original sin" in that Alice was murdered by Gregory Anton and evidence of it lies in the boarded-up upstairs room he forbids Paula to enter (Zipes 159). However, the murder of Alice Alquist becomes a secondary crime in comparison to the slow insidiousness with which Anton drives Paula mad. Through use of Svengali-like theatrical effects, Anton 'stages' the hallucinations Paula believes herself to be experiencing, when the couple takes up residence at Thornton Square. Waldman observes that in the 1940s female gothic film cycle, "the husbands are systematically attempting to drive their wives insane, through manipulation of visual and auditory perception" (34). *Gaslight's* title refers to Anton's specific manipulation of the gaslights in their home to "dim and flare unpredictably as [Anton] moves about in the attic above," effects which he convinces his wife are the product of her unhinged mind (Hanson 125).

Though the gaslights dimming is described and referred to by Paula many times, the viewer does not see the full effect of Anton's aural and visual manipulations until the last half hour of the film and even then, only in an instance of subjective narration by the heroine. At the flickering of the gaslight, Paula breathes faster, visibly trying to remain calm as slowly, the flame in the gaslight goes down. Doubt is cast on the veracity of images shown, however, as Paula's subjective narration is signalled through a shift into a point of view shot circling the ceiling, then hesitating in shadowy corners before veering sharply; now pausing briefly over Paula's shadow projected surreally onto the ceiling. Bakhtin identifies the "castle," or ancestral home, to be a characteristic space of the gothic mode, where "constant reminders of the past [...] animate every corner" (18-19). Through Paula's subjective narration, the space becomes imbued with unbearable markers of the past and repressed memory. In disorienting close-up, Paula's wide eyes swivel about the ceiling, searching. Above her, the floorboards groan; something scrapes against wood. The off-

screen space of the forbidden upstairs room suggests itself through the phantasmal sounds, and is projected into Paula's surroundings. The actual visual and auditory 'effects' of Anton's machinations are nothing more than gaslights dimming and the sounds of a man rummaging in the room above hers. However, Anton's constant persecution of Paula and challenges to her ability to perceive reality correctly, have led to the narrative "invalidation of feminine perception and interpretation, equating feminine subjectivity with some kind of false consciousness, as the male character 'corrects' the heroine's false impressions" (Waldman 33).

The "ambiguity" this creates within the narrative, is identified by Waldman as a "central feature of the Gothic" in which there is "hesitation between two possible interpretations of events by the protagonist and often, in these filmic presentations, by the spectator as well" (31). Thus the sequence, shown through Paula's subjective narration, occupies the suspenseful "indeterminacy" of Todorov's conceptualisation of "the fantastic," where "space functions as another character" (Todorov 33, Rosolowski 28). The spectator, as well as Paula, cannot be entirely sure if she is going mad or not. Bakhtin observes that within the chronotopic space of the gothic, "the orientation is towards the past" and, within the fantastic space of the room, Paula's fearful past re-emerges uncannily in the voice of her husband, Anton (19). As above her, her husband secretly searches the forbidden upstairs room, Paula rocks back and forth in a chair and tries to read aloud but her voice shakes, indicating the instability of the self, as her ability to speak falters audibly. Suddenly, Paula's voice is drowned out by the memory of her husband's internalised voice, distorted and echoing, to disturbing effect: "You're mad! Your mother was mad! She died in a madhouse..." In a perversion of the "transfer of hereditary rights" Bakhtin describes as being traced through "architecture [and] in furnishings" of the gothic, the madness of Paula's mother threatens to manifest itself at last, in the haunted space of the domestic sphere (19).

In "Investigative Pleasures," Tatar observes that the role of Bluebeard's curious wife, who unlocks the forbidden chamber, is reimagined through adaptation in the woman's film genre as a female detective figure, searching for the metaphorical 'key' to her husband's secret; "without it, she remains menaced by murder" (Tatar 93). Described by Cowie as "active,

adventurous and driven by sexual desire,” the Bluebeard’s-wife-turned-detective in this cycle reimagines the wife damned for her Pandora-like curiosity and mercenary marriage in many early literary adaptations, as an agent of her own fate, however menaced (Cowie 135.) The Bluebeard’s-wife-turned-detective character trope exemplified in such genre-foundational texts as *Secret beyond the Door* (1948), *Suspicion* (1941), *The Two Mrs Carrolls* (1947) and *Notorious* (1946) is notably lacking in *Gaslight*. Just as the curiosity that traditionally characterises Bluebeard’s wife is displaced onto little Miss Thwaites, the role of detective and the pleasures of investigation are transferred to a policeman, Brian Cameron (Joseph Cotton). Having known Alice Alquist as a child, Cameron takes an interest in Paula and soon intuits that something is amiss between husband and wife at Thornton Square.

The combined power of Miss Thwaites and Cameron ultimately rescues Paula from her husband’s clutches. However, despite Miss Thwaites’ intuitive nature and narrative usefulness (her prophetic pronouncements, worries over Paula and frequent attempts to contact her when she becomes confined to the house) she is consistently mocked by the film-text as an interfering old woman. The role of the hero is entirely Cameron’s. His powers of perception are almost absurd; a mere glimpse of Paula in the park causes Cameron to notice her resemblance to Alice Alquist and apparently instinctively, he re-opens the Alice Alquist murder case. While the mystery of Alice Alquist’s death and Cameron’s detective work move the plot forward, *Gaslight* is more crucially a film illustrating the powerfully isolating and traumatic effects of spousal abuse, masquerading as Gothic mystery. The gaslight dimming each time Anton searches the upstairs room perfectly illuminates its narrative strategy as a whole. By localising the terror of domestic abuse within an outdated Victorian object like the gaslight, it becomes visually dislocated from then-contemporary relevance. The traumatic effects of domestic abuse are only able to be cinematically articulated once de-familiarised within the Gothic setting, in this period. Indeed, as Waldman notes, the invalidation of Paula’s subjective narration is gendered and reflects strategies of invalidation perpetrated in intimate partner abuse (34). Indeed, the only scene in which Paula exhibits a potential narrative agency occurs in the upstairs room, after Cameron confirms Paula’s version of events. This, in turn,

allows Paula to retrieve the childhood memory of seeing Anton at Thornton Square, the night her aunt died, so many years ago.

The knowledge releases her from the confinement of stifling interiors and encroaching frames, and soon that psychological freedom translates into a freedom of movement within the house. Hanson observes that when Paula crosses over the threshold into the forbidden space of the attic, she “traverses the boundary that has so emphatically divided the spaces of the house” (125). Having been tied to a chair by Cameron, Anton begs his wife to get a knife from the drawer and cut him free. Paula, eyes bright, looks in the drawer, but cries, “There is no knife!” Anton protests he put it there only yesterday when Paula’s hand emerges from the drawer grasping the knife. “No,” she murmurs, holding the knife before her, “You must’ve dreamed it,” which sharply echoes earlier instances when Anton invalidated and challenged Paula’s memory and perception of events. Thus by parodying and performing the madness attributed to her, Paula embodies the figure of “the madwoman in the attic” (Gilbert and Gubar 1984). Through parodic gestures and performance, however, she simultaneously undercuts the role’s validity, as a legitimate female characterisation. Moving towards him, hunched, she baits him with the blade, before tossing it aside: “I lost it!” Desperately, he tries to convince her to help him, while she mockingly proclaims her inability to. Instead of a space of imprisonment and death, the forbidden ‘chamber’ in the attic is re-configured as a stage for transformation. “How can I help you if I’m mad?” Paula asks. Once Anton has admitted that she is not, in fact, mad, Paula towers over him victoriously and cries, “If I were not mad, I could’ve helped you. [...] But because I am mad, I hate you! [...] Because I am mad I am rejoicing in my heart without a shred of pity, without a shred of regret, watching you go with glory in my heart!”

However quickly resolved, the justified rage Paula performs is highly satisfying as the ‘forbidden chamber’ becomes a space in which the wife can menace her husband and re-appropriate the madness he imposed on her, for her own ends (though only when preceded by being menaced herself the length of the film). The viewer’s opportunity to partake in the delayed pleasure of Anton’s punishment is one of the most climactic moments of the film. This indicates perhaps, both the fervent desire of the viewer to see ‘Bluebeard’

punished and the lengths to which a 'Bluebeard's wife' must be driven, before the filmic diegesis will allow her to do so. Yet there is somehow a sense that *this* is what the narrative has been working towards; for, after all, Anton's guilt as both abusive husband and Alice's murderer have been transparently obvious to the viewer from the beginning. Strangely, in a reversal of all the gendered qualities of the Bluebeard fairy tale—curiosity as female; sadism as male—there is a potent desire at work in this scene, to see Bluebeard's wife transform at last into Bluebeard and wreak violent revenge, even as the scene stops short of it.

Despite the pleasure taken in the 'revenge scene' in the forbidden room and the viewer's sympathy with Paula, there is a tendency, while watching, to "pathologise the wife" rather than the husband (Tatar 95). If read pedagogically, as one reads fairy tales, the moral of *Gaslight* is imparted by way of the heroine's poor example, which is typical of the works of Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, when it comes to female protagonists. The use of "narration that is restricted as well as repressive," imparts only partial information to the spectator, by following "the trajectory traced by one or more protagonists" and not others (Bettinson 177). While "melodramatic narration" conventionally "provides omniscient access to a cross-section of characters," *Gaslight* moves between competing primary narrative viewpoints (Bettinson 177). The narrative foregrounds moments in which Paula chooses wrongly, again and again: she 'forgets' or represses vital knowledge; she marries a stranger; she believes when she should not and fails to take heed to the warnings of others. By privileging the viewer with information inaccessible to the heroine, such as the progress of Cameron's investigation, the narrative appears to foster the viewer's condescension towards Paula. The text initially restricts the narration of events experienced by Paula to the off-screen space and then makes use of subjective narration, when the spectator does at last see the gaslights dim and flicker. This form of gendered restricted narration is what "pathologises" Paula, rather than Anton (Tatar 95).

While Anton is an almost cartoonishly evil villain (if Charles Boyer had a moustache in the film, he would twirl it) Cameron, as the valiant policeman who rescues Paula, upholds and re-establishes heroic maleness as well as the site of marriage. Indeed, Paula and Cameron's marriage becomes naturally anticipated as not only desired, but necessary to the heroine's recovery. "This

night will be a long night,” Paula sighs after Anton has been taken away by the police. Cameron replies soothingly, “But it will end. In the morning when the sun rises, sometimes it’s hard to believe there ever was a night. You will find that too. Let me come here and see you and talk to you...” Cameron is cast as her rescuer and Paula as his prize, which re-establishes the male hero as active boundary-crossing hero and femininity as ultimately passive (Clover 13). However, the re-establishment of this mode of male-female dynamics is inevitably structured through generic expectations of gender in the 1940s gothic romance, which “repeats sets of recognisable tropes [to negotiate] a set of expectations in the viewer” (Collins 55). “Genre, as a negotiated repetitious space” is characterised by the fulfilment of certain conventions and even within the uniquely unromantic narrative of *Gaslight*, the gothic romance genre demands some form of romantic resolution (Collins 55).

The moment Paula’s role momentarily shifts from ‘Bluebeard’s wife’ to ‘Bluebeard’ is without doubt the emotional climax of the film, however, while the implied romantic resolution between Paula and Cameron is largely anticlimactic. Indeed, Waldman suggests that “the heroic male character may be representative of [a] more modern ‘semi-patriarchal’ type, blunting the subversive edge of Gothic film, a narrative strategy for containing feminine discontent” (38). This notion of narrative strategies of ‘containment’ is highly relevant to my reading of *Gaslight* as a female trauma narrative replayed through an adaptation of ‘Bluebeard.’ Trauma is consistently visually associated with images of the heroine confined by haunted spaces and enclosing frames, whether Paula is seen menaced through the train compartment window, or trapped within the confining space of the domestic sphere. Once she crosses the boundary into the forbidden space of the upstairs attic room, however, and confronts its traumatic revelations, the highly charged, yet contained, space stages a powerful critique of marriage, as a site of horror. Paula embodies “the madwoman in the attic,” whose rage expresses all that has been repressed (Gilbert and Gubar 425).

Defining Posttraumatic Cinema and Conceptualising the Posttraumatic Gothic

In order to contrast the Gothic mode evoked by films of the 1940s Gothic “Paranoid Woman’s Film” Cycle with what I will demonstrate is a form of

posttraumatic Gothic in Cary Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre* (2011) and Catherine Breillat's *Barbe Bleue* (2009), I must first contextualise it within posttraumatic cinema and provide a brief critical overview of its development (Doane 19). The term posttraumatic cinema describes films which attempt to translate or visualise that which resists representation: trauma. Specifically, it describes cinema which mimics the symptoms associated with posttraumatic stress disorder, through certain visual and formal techniques, in order to evoke the resurfacing of traumatic memory. While *Jane Eyre* employs formal techniques that recall those defined in posttraumatic cinematic discourse such as the flashback and hallucinatory aural effects, posttraumatic cinema itself originates in the move to theorise and cinematically address historical rather than 'personal' trauma. Alain Resnais' seminal Holocaust documentary *Night and Fog* (France, 1955) has been identified as a foundational or 'originary' text of posttraumatic cinema by Griselda Pollock and Joshua Hirsch³ (Pollock 31, Hirsch 2002: 13). Posttraumatic cinema is widely considered to have emerged in response to the Holocaust and the "crisis of representation" it presents (Sayal 156).

While of course newsreels and fiction films surrounding the Second World War had previously entered the public arena (though it would be some time before fiction filmography surrounding the Holocaust itself would emerge), *Night and Fog* employs a combination of realist and modernist film techniques to allow the viewer to access the "vicarious trauma" of the Holocaust through "the content of its form" (Hirsch *After-Image* 31). Through the use of 'shock' techniques and experimenting with modernist and reflexive filmmaking, *Night and Fog* resists the sometimes observed "numbing effect" of regular exposure to media images of trauma and through use of voice-over narration, for example, contextualises visual trauma as first-hand testimonial (Hartman 155-156). While E. Ann Kaplan warns against the "empty empathy" vicarious trauma can induce when "elicited by images of suffering provided without a context or background knowledge," *Night and Fog* both contextualises and documents the memory of the Holocaust while formally deploying its horror, making the viewer a vicarious 'witness' to its trauma (Kaplan *Trauma Culture* 91).

³ Hirsch also identifies *Night and Fog* as anticipating the French New Wave or *Cinema Verité* (Hirsch *After-Image* 41).

The use of these formal techniques soon proliferated into films made in other countries as well and eventually, into a fictional posttraumatic cinema in which the 'shock' aesthetic of *Night and Fog* became, for example, the vivid representation of memory in Sidney Lumet's *The Pawnbroker* (U.S.A., 1964) or the sudden 'flashback' in Resnais' own later *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* (France, 1965), to great effect. Hirsch lauds such films, while noting that the shock value of the now-familiar posttraumatic flashback (in which the return of traumatic memory in the diegetic present is cinematically visualised) has nevertheless lessened since it has "entered the narrative repertoire of mainstream film" (110). By formally imitating and engaging with the experience of psychologically processing trauma through memory, imagination, dream or mental images through such techniques, however, Hirsch asserts that this type of cinema does constitute an important means by which to access the internal and external concept of 'bearing witness.' In other words even when approaching a historical trauma through fiction, posttraumatic cinema may both narrate its outer, historical and physical realities while representing its psychological aftermath on those affected by the event (Hirsch *After-Image* 7)⁴. Indeed, Kaplan asserts that posttraumatic cinema plays upon "the match between the visuality common to traumatic symptoms [...]and the ways in which visual media like cinema become the means through which a culture can unconsciously address its traumatic hauntings" (Kaplan *Trauma Culture* 69).

Posttraumatic cinema is no longer limited to representing historical and wartime trauma, however. This cinematic shift is a reflection of a parallel shift in the field of psychology, in which the diagnosis of posttraumatic stress was broadened to include a variety of stress-inducing events. A 2009 study states that, "whereas 25 years ago the diagnosis of PTSD was quite narrowly applied—mostly to male combat veterans—today the realisation that PTSD may occur following a broader range of traumatic events is better appreciated. [...] The number of so-called PTSD qualifying events increased by 59%" (Wittchen, Gloster et al 6). This includes the recognition of sexual, physical or domestic abuse, extreme violence, rape and incest, among other events, as traumatic

⁴ It's important to note, however, that while Hirsch proposes trauma theory as a productive way to address the crisis of representation the Holocaust presents, it by no means resolves it and acknowledges at length the on-going critical debates and controversies regarding how to ever 'adequately' or 'sufficiently' bear cinematic witness to the unimaginable trauma of the Shoah (Hirsch "Posttraumatic Cinema" 13; Hirsch *After-image* 11).

events that may (or may not) result in the development of posttraumatic stress disorder. Only once the definition of what constituted a traumatic event was diagnostically broadened to include a “wider spectrum of ‘traumatic stressor’ situations,” did research reveal “females [are] affected by trauma and PTSD about twice as often as males” in gender cohort studies (Wittchen, Gloster et al 5, 6). Cinematically, traumatic events occurring in the lives of girls and women have traditionally been ‘repressed’ or veiled within the stylised mises-en-scène of feminine cultural forms, as in George Cukor’s *Gaslight*. However, the diagnostic recognition that women and girls experience high incidences of trauma in comparison to their male counterparts and can also develop posttraumatic stress disorder, has accompanied a parallel movement toward centrally depicting women and girls in films belonging to posttraumatic cinema.

Film critics acknowledge that on-screen depictions of trauma that formally re-appropriate posttraumatic symptoms as visual effects are as often reductive as they are effective. Moreover, representations of trauma remain gendered, especially in mainstream cinema. Claire Sisco King’s *Washed in Blood: Male Sacrifice, Trauma, and the Cinema* traces the prominence of the largely American cinematic sacrificial male hero narrative (in which a male hero sacrifices his life so that others may live) to periods in which nationhood and masculinity are in crisis (2011). King argues that this narrative reconstitutes nation and the importance and universality of the (white) male subject in two ways: by allowing the PTSD symptom-exhibiting male hero to ‘bear’ the symbolic traumatic wound of the nation and by firmly repositioning the heterosexual, white American male as the most essential and noble of its citizens. By uncovering a cinematic tendency of reconstitution of and over-prioritisation of the white male subject, King’s work also highlights the extent to which trauma nobly borne, often through physical sacrifice or in battle for ‘the greater good’, is conventionally associated with the male subject.

The sacrificial hero narrative King describes frequently recurs in fantasy superhero films. *Precious* (Lee Daniels, 2009) is a female coming-of-age film that lies outside of the fairy tale film adaptation cycle and the neo-Gothic but which powerfully visualises the relationship between fantasy (as a state) and trauma. Régine Michelle Jean-Charles asserts that PTSD-like flashbacks to incestuous rape trauma in *Precious* are problematically framed by immediately-

following fantasies of 'Hollywood' red carpet fame. By "[drawing] the spectator away from rape, replacing the abject spectacle of incest with glamour, celebration and celebrity," Jean-Charles argues that the emergence of the fantasy scene disrupts the spectator's "affective reaction" to the rape trauma (Jean-Charles x). In other words, while the spectator is invited to admire the male hero in King's reading of the action film genre, which itself centres on fantasy narratives, Jean-Charles posits that fantasy emerges to undercut the reality, validity and audience affect of the traumatic flashback in the young female trauma narrative in *Precious*.

While sometimes problematic, however, the use of fantasy in accompaniment with the posttraumatic cinematic form is not always reductive in young female trauma narratives. Indeed, as a strand of representing trauma theory, posttraumatic cinema may be said to arise in response to the "gaps and absences" left by psychoanalytical theory (Jameson 186). Such posttraumatic formal techniques as the flashback may reflect a new theoretical understanding of trauma that replaces the Freudian term 'repression' with the phrase 'inherent latency,' to emphasise the temporal delay in processing traumatic experience. As Cathy Caruth observes, "Since the traumatic event is not experienced as it occurs, it is fully evident only in connection with another place, and in another time" (Caruth 8). This understanding of trauma illuminates Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre*, in which the return of traumatic memory is imbued with the fantastic to actually order the chronology of the film narrative. In reasserting itself through disembodied voice narration or flashback imagery, the past is continually related to the diegetic present, each defining the other. Thus *Jane Eyre* combines formal posttraumatic conventions with a Gothic setting, which becomes a new form: the 'posttraumatic female gothic.'

Girlhood in the Gothic: Conceptualising the Forbidden Chamber in *Jane Eyre* (2011) within Posttraumatic Cinema

Cary Joji Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre* (U.K., 2011) begins with a movement from darkness into light, as a door creaks open. Jane stands silhouetted in its frame for a moment, as if hesitating or listening. The darkness behind her forms a stark contrast to the bright daylight ahead. As her head turns to look back, the viewer, kept in

Due to copyright concerns, this image cannot be shown.

Fig. 2.3: Still from Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre* (2011). Opening shot. Before leaving Thornfield in secret, Jane pauses in the doorway and looks back.

darkness by a camera oriented directly at Jane's back, becomes acutely aware of a sense of confinement, of something almost claustrophobic in being forced to occupy the near-pitch black darkness behind the heroine, as she silently deliberates (see: fig. 2.3). The borders of the door frame Jane's profile as she looks back, and remains frozen in this attitude, as though her likeness were being captured in a cameo portrait. The stillness of this moment and the image of the heroine 'caught' in the frame-within-the-frame, emphasises the viewer's sense of enclosure and creates a longing for movement. The encroaching frames reiterate images of "spatial confinement [in costume drama's] interiors" and form a visual parallel to Paula in *Gaslight*, who was similarly 'framed' within the train compartment window (Pidduck 1998: 385). With a sudden rush forward into daylight, she is free but when the action cuts to a close-up of her pale face, her expression is distraught. In a wider shot, Jane breaks into a run and the huge, stone edifice of Thornfield begins to disappear into the distance as she—and we—escape.

One of this adaptation's most marked characteristics is its ability to subtly force the spectator to occupy Jane's experience of (psychological) confinement. This is invoked through the film's formal structure and its portrayal of the (posttraumatic) re-emergence of memory, by literally transporting Jane back to the constricted spaces of its symbolic 'forbidden chambers' again and again. By formally associating the posttraumatic re-emergence of memory within the fantastic, however, this "concept of memory as the haunting (and hence a disturbance of) the present" opens up a space of powerful engagement, "a site of the in-between, of doublings and overlappings, of an uncanny

superimposition of the visible and the invisible, the here and the elsewhere” (Pollock 31). Through the invocation of posttraumatic memory, the narrative remains firmly oriented in Jane’s perspective. In sharp contrast to the majority of female Gothic ‘Bluebeard’ retellings which anxiously revolve around “the man’s pathology,” this adaptation of *Jane Eyre* privileges the representation of a young woman’s experience of trauma, within a fantastical reworking of Bluebeard in a stylised posttraumatic Gothic mode.

The narrative begins in *medias res*, in the moment that Jane hesitates in the doorway⁵. The image of Jane framed in the doorway is the first in a series of ‘enclosure scenes,’ which form a visual motif in the film, immediately established from this stifling opening shot. While both ‘the red room’ of Jane’s childhood and the attic at Thornfield act as versions of the ‘bloody’ or ‘forbidden’ chamber (the former as a room occupied by spirits of the dead and the latter as a literal forbidden space, in which a wife is housed), constant visual returns to Jane symbolically or actually confined by forces, frames or rooms form a spatial motif that disseminates the forbidden chamber’s presence throughout the filmic diegesis. In the previous chapter, I observed a similar spatial motif in Burton’s *Alice in Wonderland* (2010), in which the heroine is consistently framed within the charged, liminal “threshold” space of doorways, evoking both spatial boundaries as well as the navigation of social limitations (Bakhtin 21). While ostensibly belonging to different generic modes, the presence of charged, chronotopic spaces within the *mise-en-scène* demonstrates a common visual strategy through which to represent young female protagonists.

This coded narrative strategy of confinement emerges from the Classical Hollywood Woman’s Film genre. Indeed, Maria Tatar notes a similar visual thematic in Stevenson’s *Jane Eyre* (1944), which “from its opening shot to its final sequence [...] indulges in a proliferation of doors, bolts and locks, showing how the heroine is repeatedly faced with the unknown” (75). However, when adapted as a narrative strategy in films belonging to the Fairy Tale Film Adaptation Cycle, like Burton’s *Alice in Wonderland* and Fukunaga’s *Jane Eyre*,

⁵ One of the more effective and interesting means by which Fukunaga’s *Jane Eyre* is adapted, is the way it forgoes presenting the narrative chronologically, as in the novel by Charlotte Brontë (1847). Instead, Fukunaga’s film begins with Jane running away from Thornfield (an event that occurs roughly halfway through the novel) and from here, moves back and forth between past and present until it ‘catches up with itself’, as it were.

fantasy opens these frames of confinement, to create spaces of possibility. Fukunaga and screenwriter Moira Buffini appropriate this visual motif of doorways and spaces of enclosure to a very specific end. Rather than “showing [...] the heroine repeatedly faced with the unknown,” by re-ordering these moments within the context of memory—by presenting them in retrospect, through flashback—they become repeatedly framed in (posttraumatic) memory rather than mystery (Tatar 75). This becomes especially relevant to an adaptation of a text so widely known to audiences; rather than evading the audience’s familiarity with the madwoman, Fukunaga plays upon it and directly engages with the “knowing audience” (Hutcheon 120).

The sudden shifts between past and present in *Jane Eyre* allow the director to re-order time in the service of revealing trauma. Ruth Leys identifies an aspect of what she calls the ‘genealogy of trauma’, in which trauma “refuses to be represented as past, but is perpetually re-experienced in a painful, dissociated, traumatic present” (Leys 2.) This mimics the now-familiar on-screen interpretation of PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] as involuntary flashbacks and in doing so, visualises a “traumatic present” (2). Indeed, Fukunaga repeatedly employs sudden, non-contextualised aural and visual cues to indicate or signal the return of an isolated, troubled memory, which invariably heralds an on-screen transition back into the past. In doing so, the viewer is forced to fully participate in the uncanny and uncontrolled re-emergence of traumatic memories through the suddenness of an image appearing onscreen or non-contextualised sound encroaching on the normative ‘reality’ of the scene at hand. An early sequence, set in the present, foregrounds the film’s complex relationship between fantasy, trauma and subjectivity. A feverish Jane slumps weakly in her chair and looks confusedly around the room as a series of point of view shots of blurring figures and distorted voices firmly orient the viewer in Jane’s perspective⁶. She is sliding in and out of consciousness. “What is your name?” one of them asks and Jane’s head tilts to the side, as though listening for something just out of hearing. Suddenly, a perfectly audible male voice dripping with menace projects into the space and as if in answer to their

⁶ After Jane’s dramatic escape from Thornfield and days of wandering through the rain-drenched Yorkshire moors, she is found huddled in a doorway and near death by a stranger (who we later come to know as St. John Rivers, played by Jamie Bell). He carries her inside to safety, where he and his sisters, Diana (Holliday Grainger) and Mary (Tamzin Merchant) try to revive her and discover her identity.

question, replies in a sing-song, “Jane Ey-re...” Jane shifts uncomfortably back and forth, in response. This recalls a similar scene in *Gaslight*, when in an instance of subjective narration, Paula ‘hears’ Anton’s internalised voice projected uncannily and non-diegetically into the domestic space.

However, while Anton’s voice is represented as hallucination in that sequence, which in turn undercuts Paula’s reliability in scenes that are subjectively narrated, the disembodied voice in *Jane Eyre* precedes memory sequences. This is exemplified in a sudden cut to a little girl running down a hallway in dream-like slow-motion, before the action cuts abruptly back to the present, where Jane’s eyes focus on sisters Diana (Holliday Grainger) and Mary (Tamzin Merchant), who gaze back at her expectedly, clearly not having heard the voice. The menacing non-diegetic voice returns a second time in slightly higher sing-song, “Where *are* you...?” This clear indication of Jane ‘hearing’ the fantastic voice that is inaudible to others establishes that the sequence operates through subjective narration while the isolated ‘image’ of herself running as a child, establishes the first instance in which fantasy and posttraumatic form are combined. This narrative transition to her childhood ‘back-story’ also clarifies that the non-chronological ordering of time is not merely for the viewer’s benefit, but evokes the return of memory. Jane herself is subject to these sudden reversals of time, to what is indeed represented as a “painful, dissociated, traumatic present,” to which the spectator gains vicarious access (Leys 2).

Memory becomes a chronotopic space, a separate spatiotemporal world in yet another visual scene of confined ‘enclosure’. Now in the past, a young Jane hides in the curtained window-seat from her abusive older cousin John Reed. The viewer is only afforded a peek in a point of view shot, at a tall boy holding a sword and searching, through curtains that otherwise fill the entire frame. Just as in the opening, this shot conspires to heighten the viewer’s shared sense of captivity with Jane (the curtains nearly filling the screen) but also creates the illusion, by transitioning from the present immediately into P.O.V., of remembering ourselves. It compels the viewer to confront the immediacy of trauma. Doane asserts that in the female Gothic “dramas of seeing becomes invested with horror within the context of the home and sexual anxiety is projected onto the axis of suspense” (Doane 134). “Come out, rat!” John Reed whispers, “I know you’re here. If you crawl out and say ‘forgive me,

Master Reed', I might consider it." His sadistic pleasure in exacting her penance and threatening punishment—the drawn-out suspense of whether Jane will be discovered—fully activates the anxieties of 'Bluebeard'. The curtains visually dividing 'seen' and 'unseen' space anticipates the paranoid forbidden chamber and its contradictory engagement with temptation and terror (the desire to see beyond the door and the terror of being discovered). The urge to 'see' and locate the threat as Jane spies through the curtains, combines with the horror of seeing and the fear of punishment. Punishment comes when Jane dares strike back against her abusive cousin and she is confined to 'the Red Room,' a blood-red chamber supposedly haunted by the ghost of her uncle and where she is warned that "something nasty" may come down the fireplace to "fetch her away".

In the sequence set within the red room, two separate possible readings of the events shown inside, suggest themselves. Teresa De Lauretis distinguishes between two understandings of fantasy, namely fantasy as "topic or a theme and as opposed to reality" and "fantasy as a psychic process, a staging of desire" (De Lauretis 64). In the red room a howling wind begins to suddenly blow, rattling the chimney. Then, at the sound of an odd crackling, Jane turns to the fireplace. The noises—crackling, hisses, shifting of coal—grow louder in volume until an enormous gust of dark smoke erupts from the fireplace with an audible 'boom'. With a shout, Jane throws herself against the locked doorway, the threshold of which evokes "a liminal space that refers to a transitory, in-between state or space, characterised by indeterminacy, ambiguity, hybridity, and the potential for subversion and change" (Johnston 140). Pounding her fists against it and screaming without stopping, she appears completely hysterical with fear until, shaking, she rears back from the door and slams her head into it. Behind her, the smoke is dissipating but still very visible. Tilting backward, Jane collapses—she has knocked herself out—and as the camera pans upward, the entirety of the room is made visible. The smoke, however, has disappeared. The complete absence of smoke in the room, once Jane falls unconscious, is significant and appears to deliberately call into question the events as shown. We were once again 'seeing' from Jane's perspective, as we 'heard' John Reed's voice, in another instance of subjective narration, after all. Thus fantasy suddenly comes into play, visually blurring the

imagined and the real and revealing a textual meaning that resists the coherency of the linear narrative.

Thinking of fantasy as “opposed to reality” in the Red Room problematises the vision of the smoke through its ambiguity of meaning (De Lauretis 64). The source and meaning behind John Reed’s voice fantastically projecting into the present from the unseen space of memory, is made all the more ambiguous. As an aural cue signalling the return of a traumatic memory, John Reed’s voice is not necessarily intended as hallucinogenic, but might be interpreted as a stylised transition into a flashback sequence. As in the previous scene, when the smoke burst from the fireplace only to vanish completely when Jane loses consciousness, John Reed’s voice engenders an ambiguous, disorienting moment of a similar kind. Just as the source of John Reed’s voice isn’t immediately clear, events within the red room occupy the hinterland of the fantastic, as conceptualised by Todorov, in which the viewer “hesitates between a natural and a supernatural explanation of the events” shown (33). In the same moment that Jane experiences trauma, her subjective narration becomes problematically undercut and called into question through this visual ambiguity.

However, by never resolving this ambiguity of whether the red room belongs to the “uncanny,” and is therefore subject to the psychic forces of Jane’s subconscious, or “marvellous,” and therefore controlled by supernatural forces, multiple and contradictory meanings become simultaneously possible within the “fantastic” mode (Todorov 33). Without fully violating the conventions of the costume drama, fantasy as a mode intervenes within the *mise-en-scène* and evokes the possibility of other worlds, transforming the confined space into a site of the liminal. Powerless within the Reed household (Uncle Reed, the only member of which who was ever said to care for her, now dead) Jane’s anger appears overcome by despair as she slumps against the doorframe. This frame of the doorway evokes both “the spatial compression of feminine interiors,” signifying social as well as physical constraint for the heroine in the costume drama, and “the chronotope of the threshold,” suggesting the potentiality of boundaries into other spaces, other worlds (Pidduck 1998: 382, Bakhtin 21). As Jane occupies this “highly charged” threshold, the fantastic forcefully imposes itself into the diegetic space and reanimates Jane’s now-dead champion, Uncle Reed, as a booming, billow of smoke (Bakhtin 21).

If the red room operates within the parameters of fantasy as “the staging of desire,” the event being staged is one of repressed rage, in which the ‘presence’ of Uncle Reed acts as a displacement of Jane’s fury, projected monstrously into the ‘forbidden’ enclosed space of the red room. Thus in an act of deliberate resistance against the room she was banished to, Jane’s transgressive anger transforms into a fantastic being. If “marvellous,” the billowing smoke is evidence of Uncle Reed’s presence, of an adult authority like a parent (however ghostly), who recognises the injustice of Jane’s circumstances. Indeed, in the novel, Jane anticipates the spirit of Uncle Reed to be in sympathy with her and worries that her terror might “might waken a preternatural voice to comfort me, or elicit from the gloom some haloed face bending over me with strange pity” (Brontë 13-14). In a house populated by adults who condone Jane’s abuse at the hands of her cousin, or collude in it, Uncle Reed’s intervention “alleviates the insular self-blame that feeds on unmitigated silence,” and confirms that the trauma is not her fault (Harvey, Pauwels et al 205). Whether through the power of imagination and staging of desire, or the supernatural intervention of Uncle Reed, she ‘absents’ herself from the traumatic scene. As previously described, the concept of the subject being ‘absent’ from the experience of trauma relates to Caruth’s theorisation of trauma as “inherently latent,” as trauma cannot be adequately contained by the subject in real time, and is therefore only to be re-experienced as traumatic memory in the present (5). Thus within the space of the red room, Jane’s subjectivity undergoes fantastic transformation, as she both confronts and negotiates trauma through the simultaneous presence of the marvellous and the uncanny.

Such contradictory or conflicting readings of the same scene reflect symptomatic readings, in which what Fredric Jameson calls textual “gaps and absences” are re-interpreted as symptoms of an “internal criticism” taking place beyond the “apparent formal coherence” of the text (Jameson 186; Althusser 7). This is an apt means by which to read a film that, while contemporary, operates within the parameters of “paradoxically Gothic plots that end with the containment of the Gothic as a site of subversion” (Heller 8). The formal techniques of posttraumatic cinema define *Jane Eyre* but its encounters with the fantastic allow symptoms of internal tension within the text

to appear. When Jane discovers the door leading to the madwoman's attic, she again encounters forbidden space, which, in a characteristically gothic strategy, narratively 'contains' its subversive encounter. The filmic diegesis once more deploys an inherent quality of "hesitancy" through the mode of fantasy, to articulate a visual 'doubling' of female figures and forbidden rooms, which in turn, resists gothic narrative closures (Todorov 33).

The forbidden space appears haunted by an unseen presence that controls the space. As in the red room, the wind blows audibly in the interior space of the room, though there are no windows visible. Hearing two distinct raps against wood, Jane starts. Eyes wide, she turns and as the red wall hangings behind her come into focus, their fabrics drift languidly forward, as if by a gust of wind in the windowless, otherwise still room. The effect is ghostly and deliberate, as though she were being beckoned forward. By visually invoking elements of the supernatural, the sequence fosters fantastical ambiguities, an uncertainty between whether the source of the noise is "marvellous" or merely "uncanny," (Todorov 33). Standing, Jane moves slowly towards the wall. The firelight illuminates only one side of her face and leaves the other in shadow, dividing it into two, which visually foreshadows an encounter with the madwoman critics often call Jane's "dark double" (Gilbert and Gubar 198). When she reaches the curtains, she holds out both hands and reaches into them, pushes through their folds until, breathing unsteadily, she wrenches the fabric aside to find a wood-panelled door. Doane observes that in the female Gothic mode, "The door," [becomes] [a] surface which separates one space from another, activating the dialectic of concealing and revealing" (137). This dialectic of concealing and revealing once more recalls the in-between of the "chronotope of the threshold," the liminal site of which stages a fantastic encounter where, "the source of otherness, of threat, is in the self," (Bakhtin 21, Jackson 58).

The camera cuts to a close-up of her face and the wind, merely howling a moment ago, begins to form a strange melodic refrain like a horn blowing or a muffled voice, singing throatily. Breathing fast, Jane's profile in medium close-up is almost completely black, merging into the darkness of the doorway. Over the course of this sequence, in an increasing shot scale, the viewer is transitioned closer and closer to the door to forbidden space. The action cuts to

an extreme close-up of Jane's face, in which the viewer is actually oriented in the forbidden doorway, facing Jane from the imaginary perspective of the madwoman. No more than an inch away from Jane's face in a frame flooded with shadow, the sense of airless confinement, of captivity, is actively fostered. For several moments the frame remains static, unmoving. Simultaneously, the proximity of Jane's face recalls a mirror image as the two women are at last face to face with only a few inches of wood between them. Here, "the internal divisions required of women find literal shape in the fantastic" (Schanoes 117). By never visualising Mrs. Rochester and allowing her to occupy off-screen space instead, the doubling of the two women is complete. In an increasing shot scale and through a complex handling of spatial interiors, Jane comes to simultaneously occupy the double-role of curious Bluebeard's wife and wife enclosed in the chamber

The darkness beyond the door functions as an imaginary space in which Jane's suppressed anger or suppressed self is housed and. acts as a barrier to all that which she is, by virtue of birth and sex, denied. Pidduck observes that women in costume drama are actively obstructed by "constraining Victorian costumery and tangled milieux" (2004: 72). The space into which Jane is relegated by the constricted frame and barrier of darkness on the other side of the door are "scenic elements [that] themselves signify a complex series of sexual, social and economic obstacles" (Pidduck 2004: 72). These scenic elements are always struggled with in Gothic fiction but as the motif of confined spaces in this film implies, they conventionally define the frame of women's representation in the genre. Indeed, it is only by engaging with the fantastic and posttraumatic formal techniques that Fukunaga is able to move beyond such confining frames. Though Jane actually only inhabits four different places (Reed Hall, Lowood School, Thornfield, St. John's home), the narrative's movement through time sees her life in a state of constant inward transformation and change, even within frames of constrained enclosure. Fukunaga visually traces Jane's red room as a site of repression and the attic inner room as an unreliable prison for her dark twin; her traumatic 'other' self.

Jane's constant confrontations with trauma through narrative space contrast strongly with King's conceptualisation of the male sacrificial hero narrative and its encounters with trauma. Of these, she observes that, "with the

exception of occasional flashbacks, the narratives of sacrificial films are largely linear and instead of constituting the global stylistics of the film [...] visual disturbances are used sparingly to manifest the [male] protagonist's experience of drama" (36). Contrastingly, in Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre*, the inner room engages with the possibility of revisiting the (inner) site of past trauma and confronting the inmate housed there, accessing an "interior [space] in which grief can emerge" and vital knowledge can be gained, in the present (Whitehead 77). The scene in which Jane and Mrs. Rochester are divided by no more than a wall seems to at least momentarily invoke that possibility. Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre* imagines trauma as forbidden rooms that haunt both Jane's past and present, through their constant manifestations, through flashback sequences and other formal techniques, in a posttraumatic present. This conceptualisation of trauma resists the conventional (idealised, male) trauma narrative King describes in which trauma is "resolved [and the hero's] identity is stabilised and reconstituted through his ultimate sacrifice" (36). Instead the very concept of trauma as a single 'event' is resisted in *Jane Eyre* and trauma becomes contextualised within Jane's subjectivity, which dominates the narrative. Thus Fukunaga adapts Bluebeard to truly transformative effect by disseminating the 'forbidden chamber' in a motif of confining traumatised spaces, accessed through posttraumatic formal techniques and fantasy. The doors to concealed, haunted interiors as gateways to trauma are constantly employed to re-orient Jane's subjectivity as the centre of the narrative and this privileges her endurance above the sweeping Gothic romance.

BARBE BLEUE (2009) by Catherine Breillat: The Posttraumatic Gothic Takes a Postmodern Turn

As previously established in this chapter, prominent formal techniques associated with posttraumatic cinema, in addition to the flashback, are "editing, visual [and aural] distortions, and still images [which] re-enact the phenomenology of trauma," cinematically (King 35). In *Gaslight* and *Jane Eyre*, trauma emerges into the diegetic present through such formal means, as posttraumatic memory. In Catherine Breillat's *Barbe Bleue* (2009), the posttraumatic Gothic turns postmodern. Presenting itself as a straight, direct/named adaptation of the Bluebeard tale, *Barbe Bleue* is actually slyly self-reflexive in its treatment of girlhood, trauma and the forbidden chamber. Told as

a story within a story, there are two distinct narrative frames: two sisters reading a fairy tale in 1950s France and the story of the fairy tale they are reading, which is the story of Bluebeard. Without repeating all the distinctive formal techniques associated with posttraumatic cinema, Breillat's *Barbe Bleue* employs rapid editing between distinct narrative frames, to visualise the unfolding of trauma within the space of the bloody chamber and its rupturing effects across separate narrative frames. The text thus engages with "narratives that cannot contain the distressing impact of trauma," where the revelations inside the traumatic chamber reverberate across separate narrative spatiotemporal worlds, or "chronotopes", fantastically shattering the boundaries between them (Pyrhönen 25, Bakhtin 5). Thus through fantasy, liminal 'spaces' of possibility are opened within the gothic fairy tale *mise-en-scène*, in which the inexpressibility of trauma and the incoherence of the self may be covertly articulated. I will analyse the young female protagonists' encounters with trauma in the bloody chamber and how these, in turn, conceptualise the girl coming of age as a multiplicitous, fluid and uncertain figure.

Breillat's *Barbe Bleue* is told as a story within a story, in which there are two distinct narrative frames. In the primary narrative frame, set in 1950s France, two sisters explore the attic they are not allowed to play in, a forbidden space that in being entered, now represents transgression. The younger sister, Catherine, reads Perrault's 1697 'Bluebeard' aloud from a book of his fairy tales, to her older sister Marie-Anne. However, Catherine adapts the contents of the tale and soon begins to purposely terrify Marie-Anne. Catherine's Bluebeard retelling becomes a secondary narrative frame. In this secondary 1697 narrative frame, 'Bluebeard' becomes a story of sisterly rivalry and economic hardship as well as marital horror. Their father having died, sisters Marie-Catherine (Lola Créton) and Anne (Daphné Baiwir) are sent home from school, which their family can no longer afford to send them to. In the bumpy carriage ride home, the dark towers of Lord Bluebeard's castle come ominously into view. Anne tells Marie-Catherine that Lord Bluebeard is widely known to have murdered several of his wives but nothing is done because, as Anne puts it, "justice is for the rich." Anne's tone is derisive but Marie-Catherine is filled with ambition, and replies, "One day I will live in a castle."

As in Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre*, the setting of the 1697 narrative frame, with its dripping candles, long shadows and dark castle interior, clearly signals its Gothic allegiances. However, "the generic interaction of fairy tale and Gothic modes, [and] the shifting reversal of roles across the two structural traditions, together with the clash of their contrasting projects and moods allows the generic traditions to undermine each other's stable conclusions" (Tiffin 228). Locating trauma within a haunted, charged space, situates *Barbe Bleue* within a greater Gothic tradition, of coding female anxieties into paranoiac narrative space (Waldman 36, Doane 137, and Hanson 184). Doane, for example, observes that the staircase is always charged with a peculiar anxiety in the 1940s female Gothic, as a space of transition, or the ambiguous in-between (Doane 137-138.) In *Barbe Bleue*, these chronotopic "threshold" spaces re-emerge but are imbued with the fantastic, and will be read as liminal spaces of possibility (Bakhtin 21). The story within the story follows the archetypal Gothic plot of a young woman marrying a man she does not know, only to discover his murderous intentions. The popularity and proliferation of this plot in Gothic women's fiction is demonstrated by, among other critics of the Classical Hollywood Women's film genre, Waldman, who notes the common "rubric of the Gothic designation," discussed earlier in this chapter, in relation to *Gaslight* (29). In these, she observes,

"A young inexperienced woman meets a handsome older man to whom she is alternately attracted and repelled. After a whirlwind courtship (72 hours in Lang's *Secret beyond the Door*, two weeks is more typical), she marries him. After returning to the ancestral mansion of one of the pair, the heroine experiences a series of bizarre and uncanny incidents open to ambiguous interpretation, revolving around the question of whether or not the Gothic male really loves her. She begins to suspect that he may be a murderer" (Waldman 29-30.)

However, *Barbe Bleue* subverts this archetypal Gothic plot, by establishing the young wife's knowledge of Lord Bluebeard's crimes before their first meeting. Marie-Catherine braves marrying Lord Bluebeard in spite of this knowledge, in pursuit of wealth. In a vibrant instance of fantasy imagery, gold

coins rain down on Marie-Catherine's head when she marries Lord Bluebeard, as though she were newly-baptised into wealth. Indeed, Marie-Catherine's subjectivity is one continually characterised, "constrained and informed by the mode of subjectivity of modern capitalism," in which her desires are all material in nature, as demonstrated by sensuous, lingering shots of her caressing luxurious objects and feasting, following her marriage (Bould 83). Christine Griffin observes that, "Girlhood, and the bodies of girls and young women, are frequently represented both as consuming subjects and as objects of consumption, especially as objects of male heterosexual consumption and desire" (35). The "tension between these two positions" is evident and fostered in the secondary narrative frame of *Barbe Bleue*, as Marie-Catherine asserts her autonomy through consumption (Griffin 35). In a significant scene countering the later discovery of the forbidden chamber, the child-bride refuses to sleep in a child-sized bed at the foot of her husband's ("I am not a dog to lie at your feet") and instead, takes ownership of a small, beautiful room her husband will not be allowed to enter without permission. This 'room of her own' is of clear symbolic import, as beyond stressing their difference in ages ("You said we'd sleep apart until I'm older") and her virginity (the room un-entered by her husband), it acts as an assertion of Marie-Catherine's autonomy and refusal to be infantilised or sexualised as the object of "male heterosexual consumption and desire" (Griffin 35). However, it is Marie-Catherine's urge to consume, which condemns her to an ultimate position of vulnerability. Her mercenary desire and poverty make her vulnerable to Bluebeard's advances and his sadistic "desire" to entrap and punish her, and finally "consume" her within the bloody chamber (Griffin 35).

By using the more modern narrative 'frame' set in the 1950s, the secondary Bluebeard narrative frame is acknowledged to be a fairy tale adaptation *within* the text. It is retold, as much as it is read, by the mischievous little-girl-narrator. Thus represented as the product of Catherine's imagination as much as it is a literary fairy tale, the secondary, Bluebeard narrative frame need not be hampered by any fidelity to Perrault's *Barbe Bleue* (1697). It initially appears to follow the narrative beats of Perrault's version for almost the entirety of the film, however, and is even faithfully set in the period when Perrault adapted it, until the moment when trauma is encountered. Only when

the young wife, Marie-Catherine, opens the door of the forbidden chamber, does the narrative suddenly shift into fantasy and formally deviate from “the fairy tale’s narrative and ideological certainty,” in the moment of trauma (Tiffin 228). The 1950s narrative frame, in which the two sisters are reading the Bluebeard fairy tale in the attic, and the 1697 narrative frame, where Marie-Catherine opens the door to the forbidden chamber, magically overlap. Catherine, the little-girl narrator, is plunged into the bloody chamber in the story she is telling, in place of Marie-Catherine. Through this substitution, Marie-Catherine is uncannily absent from her own experience. This represents “the traumatic event [as] not experienced [while] it occurs,” but “grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence,” as its representation on screen becomes a fantastical moment of slippage between scenes, memory, imagination and narratives in the filmic diegesis (Caruth 6). Afterward, the diegesis never recovers from this traumatic narrative rupture, as the outer 1950s frame and

Due to copyright concerns, this image cannot be shown.

Fig. 2.4: Marie-Catherine receives the key, but is never shown using it, leaving a narrative gap for trauma.

inner 1697 frame become ever more closely connected through the threat of physical violence and death. The formal techniques at work in this sequence both rupture the narrative’s apparent coherence and reinvent the now-familiar conventions of posttraumatic cinema. The ‘flashback’ to traumatic events is refigured, as instead the spectator

‘flashes’ back and forth between narrative worlds.

This movement between chronotopes and narrative frames engages elements of fantasy as well as trauma theory. Jameson divides fantasy theory into attempts to find out “what it means” and attempts to find out how it “works,” using Vladimir Propp’s and Northrop Frye’s antithetical yet equally universalising readings of fantasy as examples (185). Jameson asserts that Frye and Propp’s readings of fantasy inevitably yield universalising conclusions and proposes that thinking through their critical methodologies dialectically reveals their essentially contradictory or theoretical “gaps” and “absences” (Jameson 185-186). In “Magical Narratives,” Jameson theorises the fantastic beyond symbolic meaning and cinematic technique, semiotically or

phenomenologically, in order to investigate the “absences” and “gaps” that remain (Jameson 186-187). Gaps and absences emerge centrally in trauma theory, as well. The noticeable “gap” left between Marie-Catherine unlocking the door to the forbidden chamber and the cut, to her desperately trying to wash the key clean, evokes a “tension between [the] experience [of trauma] and its narrative and textual transposition” (Pyrhönen 25). Marie-Catherine receives the key from her husband in an earlier sequence, but is never shown using it, leaving a narrative gap for trauma. In what amounts to an instance of restricted narration, the spectator can infer from the bloody key that Marie-Catherine did enter the chamber, but does not see it occur. Instead, Catherine-the-narrator takes her place within the scene and becomes her surrogate.

This substitution of characters within and movement between narrative frames, is achieved through the intervention of fantasy. The key is what Jameson would call an “inner-worldly object” of the fantasy realm, which “[transforms] into folds in space,” and makes possible a fantastical passage between narrative frames (187-188). The key becomes a “perceptual vehicle of meaning,” in which trauma is visualised through absence (Jameson 188). By replacing Marie-Catherine with Catherine-the-narrator, a complex substitution takes place in which the 1950s narrative frame imposes itself on and obscures the lived experience of trauma in the 1697 narrative frame. This fantastically visualises traumatic dissociation as “a rupture in narrative [that] is also maintained by narrative, because the shape of narrative around the dissociation is what protects (reveals and conceals) the gap” (Kirmayer 13). Through being absent, the “gap” scene in which Marie-Catherine turns the key in the lock (the scene that the spectator does not see) lingers in the mind, effectively generating meaning beyond that which it could have, if it had been played out on-screen.

This ‘absent scene’ evokes the scene of trauma, which can only ever be accessed when mediated through the “interpellated,” interrupted self (Althusser 1971: 175). In the scene of trauma, it is often reported that survivors are “automatically removed from the scene; they look at it from a distance or disappear altogether, leaving other parts of their personality to suffer and store the overwhelming experience” (Van der Kolk and Van der Hart 168). When Catherine takes Marie-Catherine’s place in the scene of trauma, she is suddenly wearing the other girl’s white nightgown. The costume implies that

Marie-Catherine and Catherine may not be separate characters, but different evocations of a fragmentary self, splitting and re-forming during the narration of trauma. The emergence of Catherine, who is a child, in the scene of trauma, in the place of Marie-Catherine, who is adolescent, emphasises her vulnerability and youth. Indeed, the image of a tiny child descending down the great, Gothic stone staircase towards the forbidden door is ominous and immediately creates an anxious juxtaposition of innocence and horror. While Doane observes the staircase to be a site of anxiety as a rule in the female gothic, its liminality in this sequence also situates Catherine in the “chronotope of the threshold,” as she occupies ‘other’ narrative space, in between narrative frames (137-138, Bakhtin 21). When the action cuts back again to the 1950s frame, Catherine-the-narrator is *also* there, ‘telling’ the traumatic discovery in the attic and describing the wives found “slaughtered.” Cutting back to the chamber, Catherine stands framed in the doorway for a moment, staring. Three corpses hang from the ceiling wearing white nightgowns identical to Catherine’s (and Marie-Catherine’s.) The floor is covered in blood. These sudden and constant formal indications that the viewer is seeing what Catherine sees and the quick cuts back and forth between ‘reading’ the event and ‘living’ the event, appear highly suggestive of subject positions in “oscillation, a charged space of movement in which identification is painstakingly worked over” and “it is this more than anything else that defines it as a fantasy space” (Nixon 58).

This fantastical transition into the interior of the chamber thus becomes a formal expression of “the inherent latency” of the traumatic experience for the subject (Caruth 8). As touched upon in the section on posttraumatic cinema and *Jane Eyre* as posttraumatic gothic, Caruth conceptualises the past trauma event as only experienced by the subject in the present. Thus by literally absenting the traumatised subject from the scene where trauma is staged, *Barbe Bleue* both addresses and exploits the idea that the subject psychologically exits at the moment trauma is encountered in real time. As little Catherine-the-narrator slowly shuffles through the blood and hears (or imagines she hears, in a fantasy-within-a-fantasy) a chorus of women’s whispers emanating from the corpses over her head and she insists, “I’m not afraid, I’m not afraid, I’m not afraid,” which echoes the moment of dissociation. The moment when she retrieves the key dropped into the blood, now permanently

stained, is grotesque. She bends down directly beneath a dead wife and, standing, emerges from between her legs, holding the stained key. This becomes a representation of trauma's permanence (the key that cannot be washed clean). The whole scene is lurid, violent and firmly set within the mode of fantasy: how, for example, could the blood still be wet? The very gore of this image indicates that the blood operates purely in a symbolic, imagined register. This is a little girl's dark, fantasised conception of trauma, not trauma itself. It is no less valid, for being so, paradoxically. Only through fantastical means could a filmmaker play upon this presence-in-absence, or the many contradictory levels of meaning at work in the reality of trauma.

In its final scenes, the interplay between Catherine-the-narrator and her sister Marie-Anne in the 1950s with Marie-Catherine and Bluebeard in 1697 comes to a heated climax, in which the filmic diegesis entirely departs from representing subjectivity as normatively coherent (which is challenged throughout) by 'disappearing' entirely into fantasy. In the bloody chamber, the now-returned Lord Bluebeard places a long blade to Marie-Catherine's throat and intones, "Time to die." The action cuts away to Catherine-the-narrator excitedly exclaiming that "this is the best part," while, horrified, her sister Marie-Anne covers her ears. In a reverse cut to the 1697 narrative frame, Lord Bluebeard slowly slices a thin cut along Marie-Catherine's throat, while she lies, seemingly docile in his arms. Cutting back to the 1950s, Catherine-the-narrator terrorises her sister by insisting on continuing to read, following when Marie-Anne walks backwards and away from her, with her hands never leaving her ears and with eyes screwed shut. Catherine-the-narrator describes musketeers sighted riding toward Bluebeard's castle, just as Marie-Anne suddenly falls screaming backwards into an open hatch in the attic, and then lies still on the floor beneath. Immediately we cut back to Lord Bluebeard, abruptly cut down by musketeers.

Zipes notes that as we cut back to the 1950s narrative frame and "the mother arrives" in the 1950s attic, she seems "strangely unaware of her older daughter's death even though she stands directly above the girl's body" (Zipes 168). While the sisters in both narrative frames seemed, most obviously by virtue of their interchangeable character names, to mirror each other throughout the narrative, now all the characters seem equally the product of fantasy and

imbued with the hesitancy of the fantastic (Todorov). Just as the 'Bluebeard' storybook narrative could function as Catherine-the-narrator's sadomasochistic fantasy, so too could her sister, Marie-Anne's death be rooted in fantasy. In the melodramatic moment when the sister's death coincides with Bluebeard's, however, the spectator is forced suddenly to rethink the 'reality' / 'fantasy' binary division. Which is which? Who of these characters, if anyone, is real? Or are these parallel narratives (and parallel selves) all equally the products of fantasy?

Breillat's resistance toward coherence in retelling Bluebeard plays upon the Althusserian model of the interpellated subject. Bould asserts that the interpellated subject can only be conceptualised within the fantastic, as "a fuzzily determined paranoid subject, shuttling between and trying to reconcile multiple simultaneous determinants, and moment-by-moment, barely [holds] together a constantly emergent self" (Bould "Modern World" 107). Cinematically, the representation of the interpellated subject is realised through the generic possibilities afforded by the fantastic fairy tale film and its intersection with the gothic. Indeed, the characters in the filmic diegesis appear not only to parallel but affect and produce one another in their separate 'worlds' of narrative, defining Althusser's subject as constituted and produced by (rather than constituting and producing) discourses. Thus Breillat, rather than offering the traditional trauma narrative in which the stability of the unified, essential self is threatened or disrupted by the encounter of trauma, represents trauma affecting an already fluid, in-flux subjectivity. This is achieved through a fantastical rendering of posttraumatic formal techniques, in which trauma is spatially located within a symbolic bloody chamber that once seen, cannot be unseen but re-emerges across worlds, narratives and fantastical landscapes of the self.

Conclusion

In Chapter One, I discussed how traditions of the costume drama and the melodrama intersect with fantasy worlds in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) and *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006). In this chapter, I explored how fantasy girlhood and trauma are represented through Gothic fairy tale adaptations, in *Gaslight* (1944), *Jane Eyre* (2011) and *Barbe Bleue* (2009). The "Gothic/fairy tale interaction" in these films "[destabilises] the fairy tale's narrative and ideological certainty with the liminal uneases of Gothic" (Tiffin

228). While I have included only a sample in this chapter, the “liminal uneases” of constricted “threshold chronotope” spaces and forbidden chambers consistently re-emerge in the filmic diegeses of the Gothic melodrama, women’s film and contemporary fairy tale film adaptation cycle (Tiffin 228, Bakhtin 21). In order to work through issues of gender, power and psychological terror, the fantastical space of the bloody chamber is repeatedly used to stage fantasy, fear and trauma. Jameson asserts that in contrast to realism, the “inner-worldly objects” that belong to the realm of fantasy,

“such as landscape, forest or mansion—mere temporary stopping places on the lumbering coach or express train itinerary of realistic representation—are somehow transformed into *folds in space*, discontinuous pockets of homogeneous time and of heightened symbolic closure, such that they become timeless analoga or perceptual vehicles of meaning” within the fantasy narrative (Jameson 187-188) [emphasis mine].

Indeed, feminist critics such as Doane and Mulvey note that while the male subject is cinematically defined by forward-moving narrative and action, the female figure is arrested by image, *space* and spectacle, speaking to a cultural association of masculinity with realism and femininity with fantasy (Doane 5; Mulvey 12). This intersection between fantasy, femininity and space is particularly relevant to these films. Each film represents a different mode of traumatised female subjectivity within the space of the forbidden chamber, a space of possibility in which covert fantasy or repressed trauma becomes articulated. Frequently these ‘spatial’ readings of the film-text produce meaning that resists the linear narrative or its ultimate reestablishment of patriarchal gender norms.

In *Gaslight*, male violence in the form of spousal abuse is staged and as Waldman suggests, ‘safely’ critiqued within the remote Gothic ‘period’ setting; while Anton’s invasion of Paula’s space (the attic room) becomes a disturbing metaphor for (psychological) intimate partner violence. The narrative ends with the reestablishment of gender norms in marriage through Paula’s anticipated union with Cameron but not before a revenge fantasy is (partially) acted out within the ‘forbidden space’ of the attic room. As Paula menaces her abusive husband, she plays out a fantasy that, in a strange reversal, sees her playing

the role of Bluebeard. She is, in effect, 'punishing' her spouse for violating the literal space of the attic room (which, identified as 'housing' her repressed trauma, symbolises the violation of his wife's mind in his attempts to drive her mad). The Gothic "paranoid woman's film", therefore stages a cinematic articulation of marital horror constrained within the space of the 'forbidden chamber'. This reconfigures the domestic sphere as traumatised space, as well as a setting in which covert female (revenge) fantasies are staged (Doane 19). In my conceptualisation of the newly emerging 'posttraumatic Gothic', the spatial possibilities of the forbidden room are less restrained by a coherent linear plot. In both, trauma formally overwhelms the narrative, ordering its chronology in *Jane Eyre* and shattering boundaries between diegetic worlds in *Barbe Bleue*. Yet both films achieve what *Gaslight* does not, by representing female subjectivity dictated by plots other than the romantic subplot, and even by running counter to romance. The movement back and forth from Jane's traumatic past to her posttraumatic present decentralises the romance with Rochester. Through being formally linked to her traumatic memory, the madwoman's attic becomes less an investigation of Rochester than a personal engagement with trauma and the repressed in childhood. *Barbe Bleue* is more a story of sisters than of marriage and marriage is more to do with calculating ambition than love. Thematically, *Barbe Bleue* takes up the kernel of revenge fantasy in *Gaslight* when Catherine-the-narrator 'plays' Bluebeard by taking sadistic pleasure in terrifying her sister or Marie-Catherine forbids her husband entry to her own private space.

In both films discussed, trauma formally overwhelms the sequence as

the chamber becomes "a door to the Other, to the Something Else," and girlhood becomes framed within the fantastic (Basinger 4). Here lies the difference between Paranoid Gothic and posttraumatic Gothic. In *Gaslight*, the transgression is not only ultimately concealed but

Due to copyright concerns, this image cannot be shown.

Fig 2.5: Marie-Catherine gazes at her husband's decapitated head.

trauma is resolved and laid to rest, through a romantic conciliation. In the posttraumatic Gothic, trauma defines or permanently ruptures the filmic diegesis by (re-)constituting subjectivity. This need not be a reductive reading of girlhood in relation to trauma and fantasy on film, however, but merely engenders a different understanding of the girl's subjectivity; as various, fluid and in dialogue with itself. In *Jane Eyre*, trauma disrupts the linearity of the narrative but in so doing, foregrounds the adolescent heroine's fragmented self, above the Gothic romance. Jackson observes that transgression in the Gothic conventionally manifests itself as "a dialogue within itself as it acts out and [simultaneously] defeats subversive desires," (96). However, while *Barbe Bleue* enacts "a dialogue within itself," across narrative frames, it never "defeats" its "subversive desires" (Jackson 96). Eschewing narrative closure, *Barbe Bleue* never resolves its blurred narrative frames but concludes with the powerful, Renaissance-like image of Marie-Catherine stroking her husband's head, which has been decapitated and elegantly arranged on a silver plate (see: fig 2.5). In an image that represents the consequences of trauma as well as a revenge fantasy, Marie-Catherine both embodies and prepares to consume the patriarchal head.

Chapter Three, “Enchanted Objects: Constructing Girlhood in the Magical Mise-en-Scène.”

Introduction

The formation of a magical mise-en-scène is a theme throughout this thesis as whole but this particular chapter deals specifically with its realisation through enchanted objects and how those objects construct representations of girlhood. The iconographical status of these objects, and their effects within the given sequences, will be explored through Bill Brown’s ‘thing theory’. This is a mode of thought which conceptualises the power manifested by material objects within visual culture and texts and the effects thereof. It allows exploration of the effect of adapting an object that exemplifies more than its materiality, and has become an icon generating profound cultural meaning and resonance as a symbol or sign in visual culture. The complex processes of narration that ensue from adapting such ‘enchanted’ objects on screen will be investigated. The effectual intrigue produced on screen by familiar yet iconic objects like the magic mirror is demonstrated by a sequence from *Mirormask* (David McKean, U.K., 2005).

Trapped in a dark, alternate-universe fantasy kingdom, Helena (Stephanie Leonidas) has been meticulously made over as the Dark Princess (her evil doppelganger) by the Black Queen (a woman who looks like but isn’t her real-world mother) and asks, “Where’s the best place to hide a mirror?”¹ For days before Helena is captured by the Black Queen, she and her eccentric, masked side-kick Valentino have been searching for the mysterious ‘mirror-mask’ to no avail. Only when she fondly remembers her own mother’s advice about lost objects, does the answer come to her: “She’d say, don’t you give up. Most of the time, it’s just staring you right in the face.” The scene takes place with the two characters locked in the Dark Princess’s bedroom, where an ornate mirror with two round holes hangs upon the wall. Slowly, Helena approaches it, her reflection appearing in the glass.

¹ *Mirormask* (2005), like many fairy tales, appears to be made up of a series of familiar cultural binaries. Following a heated argument, Helena’s mother collapses and is taken to hospital. The night of her surgery, Helena is transported to another realm. Once there, Helena discovers that to defeat the Black Queen and save the rightful White Queen from eternal sleep (both of whom resemble her real-world mother and are played by the same actress, Gina McKee), Helena must find the ‘mirror-mask’. It was used by Helena’s fantasy-doppelganger, the Dark Princess, to escape her own world and mother, the Black Queen, and has not been seen since. The mirror-mask will in turn allow Helena to return to her own reality, where the Dark Princess has taken over her life and is wreaking havoc, in her place.

Though Helena never comments upon her own resemblance to the Dark Princess, their exact likeness gives her reflected image the effect of the Dark Princess having suddenly entered the space, through the mirror. Valentino watches, in the background. The effect is uncanny: though it is Helena's own reflection, it could as easily be the Dark Princess looking back at her. As the two holes line up with her eyes, the action cuts to a shot of the reflected image alone. There are now eye-holes where her eyes should be and Helena's face (or the Dark Princess's face) disturbingly resembles a mask itself. The tension is palpable as, in a close-up of Helena bending her face more closely toward the mirror, the two faces become indistinguishable but for the border of the glass. When their noses touch, Helena's face sinks into the mirror. Girl and reflection disconcertingly meld into one, until—in a burst of light—Helena's face re-emerges from the mirror, wearing a hard, bright mirrored mask, out of which only her eyes are visible.

This sequence from *Mirromask* showcases the dynamic potency of a magical or 'enchanted object' in the fairy tale film mise-en-scène. This is in part due to the mirror's intertextual narrative significance. The mirror-mask indirectly references Snow White's magic mirror but is reimagined through adaptation. Without following the tale's specific narrative plot, this object visually and thematically renders *Mirromask* a loose/inflected adaptation of 'Snow White'. However, the wonderment of the object when cinematically rendered on screen is produced by more than its symbolic and intertextual import, or its inflection of a host of socio-cultural associations. The spectator is drawn to the mirror-mask's very materiality as an object, and to materiality itself as a mode of enchantment. Within the gendered mise-en-scène of the fantasy space, the mirror mask visualises a moment of internal transformation in the symbolic sense. Simultaneously, however, the mask costumes Helena in a way that is distinctly visually pleasurable; a pleasure which drives the languid pace of the sequence; as the viewer is invited to gaze upon its diamond-like contours and reflective glare. The rich materiality of the enchanted object, as well as its 'thingness' as a totem "in excess" of its apparent function, become a mode of enchantment, that forms its own on-screen narration (Brown 5).

These 'enchanted objects' of the recent adaptation cycle of fantasy and fairy tale films, will be charted in the present chapter and analysed as their

presence on screen and staging within key sequences contribute to a unique gendered narration, linking girlhood to a wider trope about consumption and desire. I propose that these 'enchanted objects' contribute to the construction of a 'fairy tale' or magical *mise-en-scène* which is identifiable across genres, intertextually linking a growing cycle of fairy tale films concerned with the representation of girlhood. The use of these objects as a mode and the enchanting effects of this narrative strategy, unite the wider themes of intertextuality through adaptation, desire, the commercial exploitation of the girl consumer, fantasy spaces and coming of age. More essentially, in exploring how these enchanted objects interact with young female protagonists and define the magical *mise-en-scène*, this chapter investigates the formal techniques through which girlhood and the relationship between identity, gender and *mise-en-scène* are foregrounded.

I analyse key scenes from the following films that have emerged from the contemporary fairy tale adaptation trend in film production, of 2005 to 2015: *Mirormask* (2005), *Snow White and the Huntsman* (Rupert Sanders, U.S.A., 2012), *Red Riding Hood* (Catherine Hardwicke, U.S.A., 2011), *Hard Candy* (David Slade, U.S.A., 2005), *Sleeping Beauty* (Julia Leigh, Australia, 2011) and *La Belle Endormie* (Catherin Breillat, France, 2009). In order to contextualise certain films I also refer to the classic, high-grossing and culturally significant Disney fairy tale film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (David Hand, U.S.A., 1937), in the knowledge that in many ways Disney fairy tale filmography defines Western conceptualisations of the fairy tale in visual culture. The corpus of films this chapter focuses on, again belongs to many overlapping and hybrid genres, with different modes of reimagining fairy tales through adaptation. This is an investigation through, or reading against, genre theory, in that it challenges existing categories of genre in identifying what links and makes the fairy tale film adaptation cycle identifiable as such.

Jack Zipes, for example, asserts that fairy tale films are a historically neglected area of study by film critics, but perhaps it is more accurate to say that these films have usually been described as romances, supernatural thrillers, and horror or sci-fi films. So the problem is produced by generic classification, which stymies the effort to conceive of 'fairy tale films' as a separate category that exists across and between genres, inter- and intra-

generically (Klein 9). Similarly, Pauline Greenhill and Sidney Eve Matrix “address the specific shapes of fairy tale films as a sub-genre of fairy tales—as experiments, departures and innovations in genre and intertext” (44). Thus Greenhill and Matrix emphasise the intertextuality of fairy tale films, and their generic hybridity. Equally, Zipes astutely asserts that when it comes to categorising a film as a fairy tale film, “we know, almost intuitively, that a particular narrative is a fairy tale” (Zipes qtd by Greenhill and Matrix 2). I have drawn on this notion of intertextuality rather than on a consistent genre, to identify enchanted objects that contribute to a magical *mise-en-scène*. It is this commonly identifiable, magical *mise-en-scène* which I argue gives rise to the “intuitive” sense that a film is in dialogue with or reworking a fairy tale and that, beyond their generic differences, intertextually connects fairy tale filmography (Zipes 2).

Rather than considering the whole narrative at play in films, this chapter limits itself to the way enchanted objects operate and frame girls in close readings of key sequences. *Mise-en-scène* analysis is a particularly effective means through which to approach this cycle of visually spectacular films. To engage with *mise-en-scène* criticism, in response to filmic retellings of fairy tales, is to work from “criticism sensitive to the way film works as a medium; rather than [analysing these adaptations] as merely an adjunct to” the canonical, literary versions of fairy tales (Gibbs 60). In other words, it provides a more effective medium-specific methodology when exploring the specifically cinematic possibilities of adapting fairy tale narratives. *Mise-en-scène* analysis lends itself to a critique of spectatorship and modes of filmic address. If the *mise-en-scène* is understood as encompassing “both what the audience can see, and the way in which we are invited to see it,” then its examination holds the key to deconstructing filmic narrative strategies and address (Gibbs 5). Where the spectator is ‘placed’ in relation to the imaginary space on-screen, to other characters and how those characters are mediated and produced by the spaces they inhabit and the (enchanted) objects they are surrounded by, is its own form of narration (Gibbs 5).

In order to place enchanted objects in this contemporary cycle within the context of histories of gendered representation in media however, my analysis

of these enchanted objects will be informed by criticism surrounding iconographical objects in women's films and the melodrama, as well.

Thomas Elsaesser remarks that the melodrama is identifiable by its "sublimation of dramatic conflict into décor, color, gesture, and composition of the frame," which characterises its hyperbolic *mise-en-scène*, in which décor or objects, play a large part stylistically as well as narratively (Elsaesser 51). The red cloak, glass casket and magic mirror as enchanted objects contribute to this cycle's characteristic magical *mise-en-scène*, in a similar manner. I draw upon scholarship on the melodrama and Classical Hollywood Women's Films to demonstrate how closely that sub-genre's narration of girlhood through iconographical objects resembles that of the fairy tale film adaptation and its mode of 'telling' girlhood, through the fairy tale's enchanted objects. In doing so, I will trace the implications of the fairy tale film adapting the melodrama's coded and sublimated narrative strategies. In what follows, I will identify and deconstruct the way these enchanted objects are reimagined and function within the fairy tale film adaptation cycle. Through their deconstruction, this chapter will investigate how we construct and imagine gender, genre and 'the girl'.

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

Who fails to recognize the line, "Magic mirror, on the wall, who's the fairest one of all?" One of the most recognisable and prolific enchanted objects of the fairy tale canon is surely the magic mirror. In second-wave feminist debate and criticism, the mirror was quickly apprehended to be a crucial point of contention. Nancy A. Walker asserts that, "in the work of modern feminist writers [...] the mirror of the tale must be bent and broken" (83). In their analysis of Grimm's "Schneewittchen," (1812) Gilbert and Gubar recognise both stepmother and – daughter as defined by the all-knowing judgments of the mirror, whose proclamations of who is 'fairest' reduces each woman to no more than an aesthetic object seeking its patriarchal approval (Gilbert and Gubar 36-38). More profound and crucial to this discussion, is Gilbert and Gubar's reading of the stepmother's mirror in relation to Snow White's glass coffin, in which they observe that, "The conflict between these two women is fought out largely in

transparent enclosures into which [...] *both have been locked*: a magic looking-glass, an enchanted and enchanting glass coffin” (Gilbert and Gubar 36). In other words, representations of both characters are closely related to their intimate visual association with enchanted objects, which visually ‘reflect’ their image and simultaneously confine their bodies, be it via the mirror or the glass coffin.

However, Gilbert and Gubar are analysing the Grimm’s version of the tale. As discussed in the Introduction, Ruth Bottigheimer’s archival fairy tale scholarship reveals that the Grimm’s tales show “regularly encoded gender antagonism,” and observes that “questions naturally [arise]” about Jacob and Wilhelm’s adaptive strategies, given “the abundant evidence of gender differentiation involving prohibitions, transgressions and punishments” (21, 92). While Bottigheimer’s work gives compelling evidence of Wilhelm Grimm’s efforts to impose misogynistic gender ideologies on existing folktales, it does not necessarily follow that all “contemporary fairy tales and fairy tale films reinforce narrow frameworks and oppressive ideals of gender” (Snowden 164-165). In this section, I re-examine the interplay between magic mirror-objects and heroines of filmic fairy tales, in terms of how these constitute girlhood and represent young female identity on screen. In doing so, I will consider the positive as well as the negative possibilities of representing girlhood through fantasy and the fairy tale and question “what new and old meanings and uses” the adapted fairy tale object “brings to audiences and sociocultural contexts” (Greenhill and Matrix 3).

I opened this chapter by describing a scene from *Mirrors* (2005) in which Helena gazes into a magic mirror and briefly merges with her reflected image, and then magically re-emerges, wearing the mirror-mask. “One can sum up [...] defining *mise-en-scène* [...] quite simply as the organisation of time and space,” and the mirror in this scene profoundly illustrates how, through an enchanted object, those two elements can be *re-organised* to magical effect (Wood qtd by Gibbs 56-57). In the previous two chapters, I demonstrated that chronotopic “threshold” spaces within the fairy tale *mise-en-scène* frequently become a setting for liminality, where symbolic doublings of the self, transitions and reversals, occur (Bakhtin 21). When Helena asks, “What’s the best place to hide a mirror?” the viewer is kept purposely in suspense as Helena approaches

the mirror. The action cuts to a mid-level shot of Helena facing the mirror. Half of the screen is taken up by Helena looking at her reflection and the other by the mirror showing that reflection, visually illustrating the apparent border between reality and reflection. This border and the instability of its frame again evoke the “chronotope of the threshold,” (Bakhtin 21). When Helena bends forward, she discovers two holes in the mirror that perfectly match up with her eyes (in a shot of the mirror alone, her eyeless face appearing in the glass looks uncannily like a mask) and leans into the glass until her face merges with the glass. At once, the understood relationship between time and space in the filmic diegesis, which organises the contents of the *mise-en-scène*, warps.

As the previous two chapters demonstrate, young female protagonists are consistently pictured in oppressive frames and spaces of enclosure in this cycle, and are rarely shown outside settings traditionally associated with femininity in the Classical Hollywood Woman’s Film genre. “Chronotopes of the threshold” interrupt these confined settings and stage metaphorical encounters with other selves, in symbolic ‘spaces of possibility,’ where subversive desires to escape confining frames, are answered by crossing chronotopic boundaries (Bakhtin 21). In Chapter One, I analysed girl heroines crossing thresholds into the separate chronotopes of distinct magical worlds, while in Chapter Two, I explored the young female protagonist crossing the boundary into what I identify as the haunted and enclosed chamber of trauma. In this sequence, however, the enchanted object can be read as fantastically rupturing the confined space of the locked bedroom and challenging the boundaries of the limited narrative spaces to which female characters are cinematically relegated. This represents a shift from “fantastic *themes* of duplicity and multiple selves,” to the emergence of multiple selves, visualised on screen (Jackson 48). The mirror’s enchanted frame thus becomes a doorway to liminal, magical space.

The reflection in the glass is not mere image/reflection at all, but a ‘further’ space accessible through the mirror. This on-screen transitional moment (Helena’s face merging with her reflection’s face) allows a liminal space to be articulated on-screen. Since Helena has been ‘made over’ as her ‘dark’ double, the Dark Princess who hates her mother, the two Helenas merging through the glass, is also a visual reconciliation of her multiple (and opposing) ‘selves’, coming together in a bright burst of light. Drawing on

Brown's conceptualisation of thing theory, the enchantment of a fairy tale object is defined by the "excess" its deployment generates in the *mise-en-scène* (5). The mirror "exceeds [its] mere materialisation as object [and its] mere utilisation," in this sequence, and becomes a "force" through which narrative space is reconfigured (5). The *mise-en-scène* becomes magical in the moment that it transcends the limits of its own spatiotemporal world, or *chronotope*, and makes visible a moment of psychical transformation, through an enchanted object. When Helena emerges from the mirror, she is wearing the enchanted object, the mirror-mask, proudly. The mask's hard, shining surface appears blindingly in a sudden extreme close-up of Helena's face, briefly forcing the spectator to regard its mirrored, reflective surface; where alternate selves may appear. The enchanted object becomes "a metaphysical presence," and undermines the notion of the unified subject (Brown 5).

As well as being enchanted, the mirror-mask is an adapted object which refracts the 'Snow White' narrative through its inclusion in the narrative, but in doing so, also re-appropriates its meaning. Here is a mirror that serves to obscure, mask and fragment when it reflects the fair face. It is an object that breeds discord and competition between princess and queen, as in 'Snow White,' but ultimately restores them to each other as well. Deploying this object effects the blurring of easy divisions: the self and its reflection, a face and a mask, reflection and refraction of the self, the black queen and the white, and the relationship between villainous-mother and victimised-daughter that is so often depicted in the fairy tale canon. The angel-monster dichotomy that Gilbert and Gubar identify in the Grimm's version is deconstructed through "a magic looking-glass," in this filmic refraction of the same tale.

The mirror, usually showing a reflection of the material external self, becomes a means of looking inward and coming to terms with (or becoming one with) one's darker self for Helena, as she visually inhabits the role of the princess who destroys her mother's world. Indeed, Jackson observes that in fantasy, the mirror's "reflection [...] is the subject's other [...]" suggesting the inseparability of these devices and mirror images from fantastic themes of duplicity and multiple selves" (48). There are "multiple selves" in play in *Mirrormask*, as Helena plays out a fantasy of defeating a dark, dream-version of her mother (the Black Queen), but she only finds the means to do so by taking

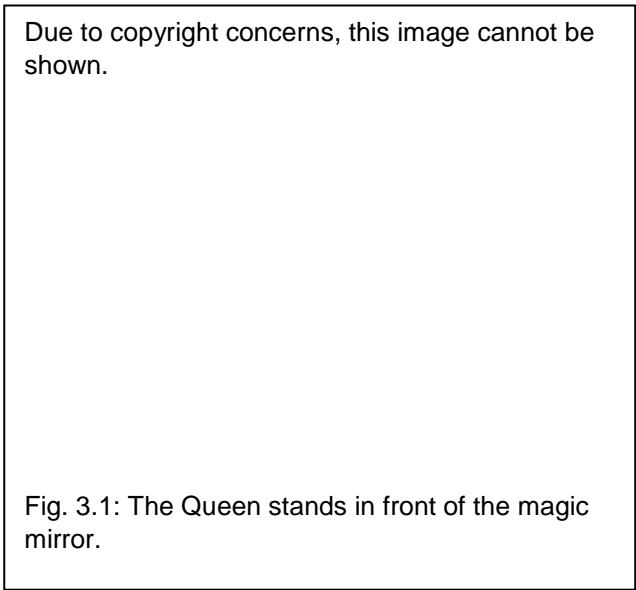
her real mother's advice (Jackson 48). In a paradoxical turn, to save her real-world mother, she must thwart and abandon this 'Other' mother. As an object in this scene, then, the mirror-mask acts as a magic mirror that subtly interrogates and critiques the apparent binaries which structure female representations in fairy tales canonised by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, or Charles Perrault.

As in 'Snow White,' the mirror forms the basis of a struggle between stepmother and –daughter, but a much more complex relationship emerges in *Mirormask*. Mother and daughter are at once allied and adversaries. Despite the apparent 'good' and 'evil' versions of mother and daughter, the image of Helena merging with her darker twin implies the fallacy of these divisions; they are at once all of these characters and none of them. *Mirormask* "examines and expresses personal disorder," through multiple fantasy worlds and selves, and the deployment of an enchanted object that "[opposes] fiction's classical unities of time, space, unified character," (Jackson 58). Helena becomes a rare representation of a young female heroine, whose "disorder" and "subversive desires" are ultimately embraced by the narrative, which fulfils both (Jackson 58). Her mother doubling as an antagonist in the fantasy realm, allows Helena to play out two opposing fantasies: of reconciling with her mother and destroying her. In fantasy, the desire to destroy and the desire to rescue need not be mutually exclusive. Only through magical intervention, and the inclusion of an enchanted object in a magical *mise-en-scène*, can two such opposing desires be fulfilled.

One of what Steven Swann Jones calls "the pitfalls of Snow White scholarship" is the literally hundreds of versions of the tale cited by folkloric scholars but, for better or worse, the version codified and adapted by the Brothers Grimm remains the most widely read—which is why it continues to be the most widely studied (Swann Jones 69-73). Equally, while critics such as Zipes, Greenhill and Matrix continue to deplore its highly traditional, revisionist patriarchal retelling, the most familiar cinematic image of the magic mirror for Western viewers remains that of Disney's 1937 animated *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (David Hand, U.S.A., 1937). I would argue that the contemporary spectator (and indeed filmmaker) simply cannot view (or recreate) the magic mirror without it inevitably being mediated through its Disney incarnation. Or as Zipes himself puts it, "it has [...] set the standard against which serious and

gifted filmmakers have reacted” (Zipes xxi). Rather than resist this “reaction against” or mediation *through* Disney object-imagery, the discussion of the key mirror sequence in *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2013) will be informed by a parallel scene in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* (1937), with which it is intertextually at play. However, more crucially, how that intertextual relationship functions through the magic mirror, as enchanted object, will be explored.

For as the brief discussion of a key sequence in *Mirrors* (2005) above shows, the presence of an enchanted object when deployed into the *mise-en-scène* is enriched by the spectator’s very awareness of its intertextuality, or adapted-ness. It is an object emerging not simply from familiarity with a Disney film but from a cultural awareness of imagery preceding, surrounding and reproduced by that film—of certain objects (or signs) that make up our conceptualisation of what ‘Snow White’ or a fairy tale *is*. Disney’s *Snow White* engages vibrantly with what Jackson calls “the notion of paraxis,” meaning the illusory impression, produced by the mirror, of a space existing between self and image (25). The film’s opening immediately renders the spectator uneasy with a sequence prominently featuring the Queen’s magic mirror, which is soon shown to contain more than reflection. Its evocation on film generates another level of anxiety, where the “screen is the projection of the film frame which it holds and grounds,” and “the urgency of the need to fix the position, to forbid the other side” is heightened by the presence of the instability of the mirror’s frame, and what off-screen ‘other space’ it contains (Heath 10).



The film opens to the strains of an ominous violin and a gradual close-up to castle on a hill reveals a latticework window, through which the spectator is transitioned into the interior of a tower, where the wicked queen approaches a large oval mirror. The liminal site of the “threshold” chronotope recurs consistently across this cycle and the window

in this sequence again emphasises charged, seemingly stable boundaries being crossed (Bakhtin 20-21). As she climbs the few steps to its platform, the Queen's reflection appears in the glass, as with any mirror, while a high-angle view fosters the sense of an omniscient narrator's perspective, as is conventional in the fairy tale canon (see: fig. 3.1). As the queen intones, "Slave in the magic mirror," however, the action abruptly cuts to the mirror itself, where the reflected image of the Queen reveals a subtle shift, into subjective narration. The Queen in the mirror spreads her arms wide and her reflection continues, "Come from *the farther space*" (see: fig. 3.2). With the words "farther space," immediately comes associations "of spaces behind the visible, behind the image," a site of the in-between through which the fantastic emerges and oscillates uncertainly between the "uncanny" and the "marvellous" (Jackson 25, Todorov 33). The queen's reflection is suddenly subject to visible winds as she cries, "Through wind and rain, I summon thee. Speak!" At this, the Queen's reflection disappears from the mirror altogether and it fills, instead, with bright flames that consume the mirror's entire surface. "Reveal your face!" she commands and the flames die down, revealing an empty, eyeless theatre mask surrounded by smoke (fig. 3.2). A low, male voice issues forth from its mouth: "What wouldst thou know, my Queen?"

Due to copyright concerns, this image cannot be shown.

Fig. 3.2: The Queen and the magic mirror.

This other space that exists just beyond one's reflection, "located in, or through, or beyond the mirror," inevitably provokes questions of identity (Jackson 25). For the first time since the beginning of the sequence, the Queen is seen outside of the mirror and the mirror itself is not shown, as she asks, "Magic mirror on the wall, who is the fairest one of all?" As it is revealed in the following exchange that there is one fairer than she, and the "lovely maid" is of course, Snow White, the viewer is restricted to an animated shot-reverse-shot between the Queen, alone, speaking to the mirror and the magic mirror itself, which speaks directly to, and gazes eyelessly at, the screen. The Queen and the slave occupy the same space but are never pictured in the same frame, as the spectator vicariously accesses the experience of looking into the mirror and seeing "the farther space," instead. The "farther space" in the mirror showing the image of an empty mask in flames, is a far cry from familiar "worlds of fantasy [...] located in the mirror," like Alice's looking-glass country (Jackson 25).

This Disney-ified magic mirror predictably couches the concerns of the theatrically 'wicked' Queen in terms of petulant, shallow vanity, but there are intriguing aspects to this scene that may be observed to anticipate adaptations of the magic mirror in more contemporary films. The eyeless theatre mask is visually revisited in *Mirrorsmask* when Helena retrieves the desired object from her own reflection, "staring her," as her real-world mother predicted, "right in the face." *Mirrorsmask*, however, revolves, not only around reconciling the combative relationship between mother and daughter, but in reconciling the concept of a darker, internal self. In *Mirrorsmask* this is visualised within the magical mise-en-scène through the mirror's "excess," as an actual extension of the mise-en-scène into "a farther space". Analysing the mise-en-scène of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* allows the opportunity to discern key aspects: the slave reflected in the Queen's magic mirror becomes suddenly significant. After all, the viewer is never given a shot of the mirror outside of the Queen's subjective narration. The image of the slave in the mirror is itself an empty theatre mask, magically speaking from her reflection, connoting costume and disguise, as well as tragedy. The farther space in the mirror introduces "dark areas" in the self, reflected back, "from which anything can emerge" (Jackson 25).

“Locked,” as Gilbert and Gubar assert, within the “transparent, glass enclosure,” the mirror-space reveals the histrionically ‘wicked’ Disney Queen to be a “slave” to its reflection (36). Enslaved in a hellish world of reflections, the Queen’s other self emerges not as an embodiment of subversive desires, but as an alternate, ‘other’ self. The Queen is a one-dimensional villain in a narrative closely adapted from Grimm’s tales, but the farther space in the mirror’s depths reveals that not to be beautiful and a queen, is to be a disempowered slave, in

this world. Whether that space is illusory and an uncanny projection of the Queen’s psyche, or marvellous and a truly supernatural realm, neither the Queen nor her counterpart, the slave, can escape the demands of the mirror’s surface.

Due to copyright concerns, this image cannot be shown.

Fig. 3.3: the golden orb transforms.

The mirror as reflective of the female subject’s internal, ‘other’ self emerges again in *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012)². An introductory shot of the mirror reveals an inanimate, partially reflective golden orb, but the object is soon shown to be magically capable of transforming into a fully-formed (reflective) male figure (Chris Obi). When Queen Ravenna (Charlize Theron) imperiously orders her subjects out of the throne room, she faces the imposingly large mirror. An unsettlingly slow zoom-in towards the object, shows distorted glimpses of the Queen’s reflection in the centre of the mirror, the flames of a hearth crackling behind her image. Ravenna, visibly anxious, paces before the golden orb, and tentatively asks, “Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who’s the fairest of them all?” In response, in a visually stunning feat of CGI, the surface of the golden orb ripples, then surges out of its round frame, as liquid (see: fig. 3.3). Ravenna watches, visibly afraid. Then, as if in an uncanny realisation of Bacchilega’s “mirror of the masculine gaze,” the golden liquid rises to become a cloaked, faceless male form or ‘mirror man’ (Bacchilega 1997:

² The synopsis of *Snow White and the Huntsman* is this: after his wife has died, the King’s lands are invaded by a phantom army. He marries a beautiful woman apparently held captive by the phantom army, named Ravenna. On their wedding night, however, Ravenna murders the King and takes the throne by force, with a real army. She orders Snow White to be locked up and holds her captive for years, until Snow White is grown up. Now a young adult, Snow White escapes to the relative safety of the woods. The Queen orders a huntsman to go and fetch her back, so that the Queen can consume the girl’s heart to stay magically young, but both he and a nobleman fall in love with Snow White, instead, and join her in a rebellion against the Queen.

184) (see: fig 3.4). The effect is intimidating when, with no visible mouth, he answers, in a distorted voice, “It is you, my Queen. Yet another kingdom falls to your glory. Is there no end to your power and beauty?” Ravenna’s eyes fill with grateful tears of relief. In the following scene, she glides into the courtyard and orders the remaining courtiers alive to be put to the sword and for Snow White to be locked in a dungeon.

Due to copyright concerns, this image cannot be shown.

Fig. 3.4: Ravenna speaks to the Mirror Man.

Like Gilbert and Gubar, Bacchilega identifies the magic mirror in fairy tales as a fantastical visualisation of ‘the male gaze’, within which “woman [is reflected] as the mirror image of male desire” (1997: 29). Just as Warner urges us to question for whom

the tale is being told, Bacchilega uses the magic-mirror-as-male-gaze metaphor to question the ideological address of the text, asking, “Who is holding the mirror and whose desires does it represent and contain?” (1993:17, 1997: 28). The mirror man in *Snow White and the Huntsman* equates Ravenna’s beauty with power and only when she is assured that she is indeed the ‘fairest,’ by *him*, does Ravenna demonstrate that power: in a show of displaced force through her all-male army. Ravenna initially cuts a compelling figure as an avenging feminist anti-heroine who observes, “Men use women [...] they ruin us and when they are finished with us, they offer us to the dogs like scraps,” and vows “to give this wretched world the queen it deserves.” However, this sequence undermines that characterisation, by showing Ravenna’s power as ultimately delimited by the judgment of the “mirror of the masculine gaze” and carried out by a male force (Bacchilega 1997: 184). When the ideological impetus behind such a seemingly ‘straight’ adaptation, appears to perpetuate a demonisation of female identity and power, questions arise about “who is holding the mirror” and for whom the tale is being told (Bacchilega 28-29, Warner 1993: 17). The idea that the mirror purely embodies the male gaze, and demonstrates female agency as only achieved through patriarchal approval and mediation, could relegate the film to being wholly subject to patriarchal values. This oversimplifies the mirror’s function, however, as another later sequence reveals.

Mary Pols asserts that, "The underlying message [...] is that focus on and insecurity over one's physical appeal to men is poison to a woman's soul" (2012). Indeed, the effects of mirror-gazing are soon shown to disturbing effect. Years after she has taken the kingdom, Ravenna stands before the golden orb of the mirror again, gazing at her haggard reflection. Her powers, Ravenna complains, are waning and it costs more than ever to restore them. Only after her henchman/brother Finn (Sam Spruell) appears in the reflection beside her to offer her the heart of young Greta (Lily Cole), does her beauty and youth magically re-manifest across her features, in a stunning feat of CGI. Notably, even her vampiric eating of young girls' hearts is achieved through the intervention of a male intermediary. Indeed, despite an otherwise fantasy-driven world in which Ravenna can conjure armies and remain forever young, the Queen's magic mirror is seemingly revealed not to be magical at all but merely an uncanny product of her own paranoiac imagination. Once alone, she confidently re-addresses the inanimate mirror, which again transforms into the mirror man. The action cuts to a shot of Finn, spying on his sister from an unseen corner, with a troubled expression. From his perspective, Ravenna is whispering hysterically to an inanimate mirror that shows only her distorted reflection and does not answer back.

No less does this denote the mirror as representing the male 'gaze', however. In seeing herself, Ravenna must see 'through' the male gaze, made fantastically and madly sentient. The interpellation of Ravenna's subjectivity, with the mirror, becomes "reflective of women's lived experiences in maintaining a dual consciousness of the self as object/other and as subject," as "the mirror undoes the simplistic dichotomy between external appearance and internal identity" (Schanoes 100). This doubling of the self through the woman's "dual [consciousness]" is powerfully visualised through Ravenna's interactions with the Mirror Man, as "multiple selves" again materialise on screen (Schanoes 100, Jackson 48). This moment resonates intertextually, as well. Ravenna is shown in the mirror's reflection surrounded by flames before it transforms into the Mirror Man, just as Disney's evil Queen gazes into a mirror-space, suffused with hellfire, until an empty (male) mask appears. The magic mirror is a visually spectacular incarnation of the male gaze in both films, as well as the feminine act of looking, which necessitates looking 'through' the male gaze.

This representation of a seemingly powerful woman remaining nevertheless subject to punishing beauty and youth ideals coheres with second wave feminist critiques of beauty practices inevitably “[oppressing] the female consumer and locking [her] into ‘false’ feminine identities,” and the call to move beyond those identities by rejecting beauty and fashion industries and standards (Hollows 140). This idea presupposed that the purpose of fashion and beauty practices is to frame women and girls as ornamental objects for male consumption. More recently, Naomi Wolf’s *The Beauty Myth* (1991) re-introduced the concept that beauty practices are inherently damaging in a third-wave feminist context, by representing women and girls as “powerless in the face of the ‘hard sell’ of the beauty industry” (Hollows 18). Unlike Pols, who attributes feminist choices to director Rupert Sanders evidenced by the “underlying message” of this film, I cannot agree that Ravenna’s characterisation is feminist, because it supposedly depicts those damaging effects on the female villain (2012).

The desire to remain young and beautiful is represented as evil, despite the sequence in which the camera pans voyeuristically up Theron’s nude body, now restored to youth, as she emerges from a milk bath. The lingering close-up shot of Ravenna’s face, as her features transform back to their former youth and beauty through CGI, is coded as highly pleasurable, and undeniably this is a “special effect of ideological expectations and unspoken norms” (Bacchilega 28-29). As the authors of the University of Southern California’s recent study on diversity in film observe, “Only 19.9% of [...] middle-aged characters were female across the 100 top films of 2014 [and] no female actors over 45 years of age performed a lead or co lead role” (Smith et al 1). Ravenna’s characterisation as perverse for wishing to remain young and beautiful while she is simultaneously fetishised by the filmmakers for being so, is symptomatic of the contradictory cultural discourses which interpellate female subjects. The audience is invited to take pleasure in Theron’s objectification and to condemn her desire to be beautiful.

However, while Theron’s body is objectified on screen, this sequence resists normative depictions of female beauty by reimagining female beauty and beauty practices as agentic, frightening and strange. Rather than ornamenting the queen, Ravenna’s beauty forms the crux of her resistance to patriarchal structures of power, allowing her to ascend to the throne. Many canonised

literary fairy tales equate natural, maiden-like beauty with passivity and youth, and demonise female agency as evil, vain and associated with the age and ugliness. Ravenna's evil queen weaponises beauty, however, and while her characterisation problematically relies on pathologising both her desire for power and for youth and beauty, this sequence resists the twin narratives that beauty practices are inherently antifeminist and that women and girls are powerless to resist the dictations of an imagined beauty ideal. Instead, the milk bath sequence offers the anticipated young female audience a gleefully over-the-top vision of beauty practices as a form of pleasurable excess and transgression, aimed purely at the promotion of the self and Ravenna's own pleasure. As Joanne Hollows observes, "recent feminist critics have highlighted not only the way fashion and beauty practices can be used as a form of resistance by women, but also the modes of feminine pleasure produces by these practices" (157). Female beauty as transgressive, self-interested, excessive and strange, arguably resists the more common narrative which holds female beauty as passive, ornamental, natural and in line with patriarchal values.

The narratives of these 'Snow White' adaptations uniquely reflect issues of gendered representation in the fairy tale film adaptation cycle, and the interplay between enchanted mirror and female character therefore becomes crucial to understanding the larger cultural imaging of young women and girls. As Bacchilega observes, the magic mirror is an ideological frame through which the female figure is visualised. However, while all three films discussed revisit the oppressive gender frameworks which structure the Grimm's tales, by reading the mirror through theories of the spatial, and positionality through fantasy, a much more complex imaging of female characters emerges. In doing so, the scopophilic processes of fetishisation and voyeurism that inform the *mise-en-scène* are effectively "interrupted," and indeed implicated by the text (Mulvey 14).

Speaking to the magic mirror's symbolic relevance to fairy tale studies as a whole, Bacchilega has observed that:

"As with all mirrors, [...] refraction and the shaping presence of a frame mediate the fairy tale's reflection. [...] Human—and thus changeable—ideas, desires, and practices frame the tale's images" (28-29).

The fairy tale is indeed a highly “changeable” form, shaped by each teller’s ideological ends (29). In *Mirrorsmask* the possibilities of positively engaging with fairy tale objects through adaptation, are evoked. Far from “imprisoning [Helena] in a superficial appearance-based identity determined by patriarchal values”, the mirror becomes a “major site [in which to] explore and express [...] inner selves and experiences,” (Schanoes 101). The adapted enchanted object revisits regressive gender ideologies, at work in versions of the tales canonised by male tellers, and reclaims these, by opening up new spaces of representation for complex, young female characters. This complex mirroring process Bacchilega describes is uniquely relevant to the fairy tale film, but arguably also highly relevant to film criticism at large. In decrying the uncritical, unquestioning audience that merely ‘receives’ a film text, Althusser asserts, that “uncriticised ideology [is] simply the “familiar”, “well-known” transparent myths in which a society or age can recognise (but not know) itself, the mirror it looks into for self-recognition, precisely the mirror it must break if it is to know itself” (Althusser 144). In deconstructing the scenes from *Snow White and the Huntsman* and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, I have attempted to ‘break’ that metaphorical mirror and see into ‘the farther space’ where the film-text, effectively implicates itself.

A Cinematic Language of Enchanted Objects: Thing Theory, Adaptation and the Enchanted Object

The way these material, enchanted objects within the magical mise-en-scène function as a form of gendered narration, told through the iconographical syntax of fairy tale signs, may be approached through ‘thing theory’. Bill Brown is understood to have both largely conceptualised and coined ‘thing theory’ in a 2001 special issue of *Critical Inquiry*, in which he proposes imagining,

“things [...] as what is excessive in objects, as what exceeds their mere materialisation as objects or their mere utilisation as objects--their force as a sensuous presence or as a metaphysical presence, the magic by which objects become values, fetishes, idols, and totems” (Brown 5).

The use of vibrant enchanted objects like the magic mirror in fairy tale adaptations plays upon this excessiveness, as the object consistently exceeds its “mere utilisation” (Brown 5). Thing Theory thus reconfigures conventional understandings and analyses of objects, and its “insistence on the unruly nature and discursive incommensurability of things,” asserts the critical misapprehension of objects as self-evident and unambiguous (Breitbach 62). Rather, the very “latency (the not yet formed or the not yet formable)” and “excess (what remains physically or metaphysically irreducible to objects)” that Brown identifies as the ‘thingness’ or iconography of the object, creates a dialogical relationship; an object/thing dialectic that bespeaks Brown’s understanding of objects as subject to a deferral of meaning (Brown 5). In other words “the all-at-once-ness, the simultaneity, of the object/thing dialectic” in which “the thing seems to name the object just as it is, even as it names something else” gives rise to an understanding of objects as resistant to any definitive meaning or ultimate referent (Brown 5, Derrida 279-299). Indeed, I hope to have demonstrated above that this is the case, in the complex, multi-faceted manner through which the magic mirror alone is deployed in the magical *mise-en-scène* in three different adaptations of ‘Snow White’.

As discussed, the complex relationship between femininity and objects on screen has been critically analysed within the melodrama, and the power of objects in fairy tales is equally relevant to representations of women and girls’ internal lives. In her study of the relationship between gender and art, *Vision and Difference*, Pollock argues that there is a tendency to think in terms of “discrete work[s] of art” created “out of [the artist’s] personal necessity” in the visual arts, rather than as arising from pre-existing discourses (4). She suggests that a productive “alternative approach is not to treat the work of art as object, but to consider art as [a] practice,” that emerges from larger cultural discourses and practices (Pollock 4). Objects on film can be treated as a cinematic practice and form of narration, as well. Objects are deployed within the filmic diegesis to create, or contribute to, a magical *mise-en-scène* that becomes a mode of narration. My analysis of magic mirrors in the fairy tale film adaptation reveals enchanted objects as a mode of ‘telling’ girlhood.

In these narratives concerning heroines in a state of transition, the enchanted object is reimagined through adaptation to revisit, and explore, how

“material objects [act] as integral elements of social practice and power” in the tales (Colloredo-Mansfield 735) How these enchanted objects are adapted on film, is therefore symptomatic of “the fragmentation of individual tales in relation to social power dynamics,” offering critiques of and reflecting shifts, in the cultural meanings of these objects “as sites of power” (Bacchilega and Rieder 26, Colloredo-Mansfield 735). In *Things* (2004), Bill Brown asks, “How does the effort to rethink *things* become an effort to reinstitute society?” (9) [emphasis mine]. The enchanted object forms part of the iconography and syntax of fairy tale, as a (traditionally women’s) cultural form of ‘telling’. Re-thinking the enchanted object through adaptation, engenders a different mode of ‘looking’ at the fairy tale and its constitutive power to narrate and represent frameworks of gender and constructs of girlhood.

***Red Riding Hood* (2011)**

As demonstrated in the beginning of this chapter, *Mirrorsmask* adapts the “mirror of the masculine gaze” in Grimm’s “Schneewittchen,” only to re-appropriate its meaning (Bacchilega 184). The enchanted magic mirror opens a space that becomes a setting for young female subjectivity to be magically explored and figured, as defined by contradictory multiplicities of the self (Jackson 48). Catherine Hardwicke’s *Red Riding Hood* (U.S.A., 2011) is an indirect/named adaptation, in which the enchanted red cloak is similarly reimagined through adaptation, when paired with an iron wolf’s mask. As Catherine Orenstein observes, these “characters exist in tandem,” but when Valerie (Amanda Seyfried) is dressed as both Red and Wolf, her double role invites questions about identity and subject position (176). Through theories of positionality through fantasy, I will investigate the red hood and wolf’s mask as enchanted objects, which collapse the boundaries of narrative space and visualise internal revelation. As in *Mirrorsmask*, *Red Riding Hood* uses these enchanted objects to fantastically stage an internal process of psychical transformation and discovery. In addition to their “excess” as enchanted objects with the power to narrate identity and reconfigure narrative space, however, I will also explore the very materiality of these objects. Their prominence within the *mise-en-scène*

contributes to the construction of the girl heroine as a desiring subject and is suggestive of the film's mode of address, to a young female audience.

These objects also contribute to an “uncanny quality [of] self-referential intertextuality” at work in Hardwicke's film (Priest 281). Hannah Priest notes that Hardwicke, who also directed *Twilight* (2008), recasts “Billy Burke, who plays [the female protagonist's father] Charlie Swan in the *Twilight* films, [...] as the lycanthropic father in *Red Riding Hood*” (281). Moreover, key themes and aspects of *Twilight*'s narrative are adapted into the fairy tale by Hardwicke, by giving Valerie (Amanda Seyfried, the *Red Riding Hood* character) competing love interests. *Red Riding Hood* recognisably repeats formal and stylistic aspects of *Twilight*, as well, by frequently returning to, and lingering on stunning wide shots of natural scenery. Indeed, reviewer Anthony Quinn sharply observes that “If Catherine Hardwicke had been asked by the studio to give them another *Twilight* she couldn't have obliged more slavishly,” while Sophie Ivan deems the film, “as disappointingly reactionary as the Bella Swan brigade.” These obvious formal and thematic parallels between the two texts clearly indicate that its adaptive strategies are strongly informed by the anticipation of a young female target audience, and specifically “the Bella Swan brigade” of highly commercially exploitable *Twilight* fans.

Indeed, the girl-as-consumer has become a coveted audience member for studios to target, and this is not surprising, considering that “U.S. girls aged eight to eighteen are estimated to be worth \$67 billion,” while “for twelve to seventeen-year-olds in Britain, the figure is £1.3 billion”, and “the collective income of eleven to seventeen-year-olds in Australia is \$AUS 4.6 million” (Harris 166). Commercial interest in the girl-as-consumer, however, does not unfortunately equal her fair representation in popular media. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, a landmark 2015 study revealed that the “prevalence of girls and women on screen has not changed in over 50 years³” (Smith et al 8). This information makes the comparatively small number of films with (young) female leads, all the more crucial to critical examinations of the girl, when there

³ The authors of the University of Southern California base this statement on a comparison between the percentage of on-screen women and girls in films from 1946 to 1955 and the percentage of on-screen women and girls in the top 100 highest-grossing films at the U.S. box office in 2014. The study considered “only fictional films based on domestic U.S. gross as reported by *Box Office Mojo* [...] where documentaries were not evaluated as a part of the top 100. 2011 is not included in the sample.”

are so few spaces of representation for female characters in the media. While the fairy tale film adaptation cycle demonstrates the increased number of films with young female leads, however, the fact that there has been no noticeable increase in films with female leads in general, implies that films which centre upon girlhood take the place of films that prominently feature adult (or middle-aged) women⁴. In other words, with the rise of the girl's prominence in film, comes a drop off in the number of films being produced about adult women. This shift in audience address from women to girls, can be linked to the industrial interest in the highly exploitable girl consumer.

The girl-as-consumer and the exploitability of a young female audience, engender conflicted representations of girl heroines on screen, however. Sarah Hentges asserts that,

“The beginnings of the teen film genre represent a shift from teens playing out the dramas of their particular generation, as in *Rebel Without a Cause* [1955], or previous generations as in *Splendour in the Grass* [1961], to teens as consumers and initiators of culture [...] And this shift has burgeoned into a genre intimately connected with consumption—consumption of ideas and images, as well as a variety of material products” (8).

While the enchanted objects in *Red Riding Hood* and other films I discuss in this chapter “exceed their materiality” through their fantastic uses on screen, they nevertheless speak to a larger contemporary cinematic trend of surrounding young female characters with “material products” (Brown 5, Hentges 8). Moreover, a generic mode “intimately connected with consumption” is highly relevant to representations of girlhood in this film (Hentges 8). Griffin suggests that “the fundamental tension [in] the constitution of the female consumer” is evoked by girls as, on the one hand, “ideal consumers,” and on the other hand, “[subjects] with active wishes and desires” (35). As Griffin puts it, “Patriarchal cultures are relatively comfortable with the notion of female consumers shopping for their families, but are likely to be more unsettled by the image of the consuming female subject, expressing and acting on her own wishes” (35). This tension is reflected in the adaptive strategies which inform Hardwicke's

film. In order to target a young female audience, the narrative of *Red Riding Hood* repeats the 'love triangle' popularised by *Twilight*, in which the heroine is both the "object of male heterosexual consumption and desire," as well as a "desiring, consuming subject," herself, whose romantic choice is a key aspect of the narrative (Griffin 35).

Reviewer Katie McNabb suggests that Hardwicke's architecture degree and past work as a production designer, has made "intricate set design, and unique design at that, [...] along with [striking] construction of photography" characteristic of her filmography (McNabb, n. page). Indeed, just as the Classical Hollywood melodrama employs "expressive visual codes of mise-en-scène [...] to heighten intense [emotions]," the highly saturated colouring and dramatic décor that characterise the settings of *Red Riding Hood*, give rise to a highly emotive visual style (Elsaesser 84). A swooping crane shot over a snow-covered mountain where Valerie and her lover go to seek privacy, juxtaposes vibrantly with the girl heroine's blood red cloak, and expresses the jubilant 'high' of first love. The strong contrast between the red cloak and white snow foreshadows Valerie losing her virginity, but this is formally implied to be no 'loss.' The "sensuous presence" of the red cloak in this shot of Valerie, taking her lover by the hand and leading him across the dramatic, Gothic landscape, becomes the richly luxurious costume of the girl as "desiring, consuming subject" (Brown 5, Griffin 35). This adaptation of the red cloak to signify Valerie as a desiring subject in her own right and an active agent of her own (romantic) wishes, appears to recast Red Riding Hood as a postfeminist heroine. However, the enchanted objects in this film structure Valerie's objectification, as well, and their dual narrative function sets up the tension Griffin observes between the girl as consuming, desiring subject, and the girl as object of consumption and desire (Griffin 35).

Elsaesser identifies objects as a form of narration closely linked to representations of female characters in the Classical Hollywood melodrama, as well. In these narratives, "settings filled with objects, which surround [...] the heroine" create a darkly stylised mise-en-scène, where "the more the setting fills with objects [...] the more [she is] enclosed in seemingly ineluctable situations" (Elsaesser 84). Like the melodrama, the "expressive code" in the fairy tale film adaptation cycle, defines its mise-en-scène, through "a dynamic use of spatial

[...] categories,” (Elsaesser 184). Chapter One and Two demonstrate that characteristic narrative strategies common to the melodrama, such as “the extreme compartmentalisation of the frame,” are adapted to representations of girlhood in the fairy tale film adaptation cycle, as consistently confined by encroaching frames and haunted chambers (Rodowick 243). Melodrama’s coded narrative strategies re-emerge in *Red Riding Hood*, which presents the girl heroine “caught in a world of objects,” that are invested and imbued with “repressed anxieties and emotions” (Elsaesser 84).

The anxiety narratively “sublimated” into objects reiterates melodrama’s narrative strategies, but the anxiety itself reflects a contemporary tension (Elsaesser 83). This tension is evoked by a cycle cinematically addressing and targeting a young female audience of “desiring” girl consumers, while narratively structuring the girl’s desires as dangerous, and constructing the girl heroine as at risk (Griffin 35). While in the scene described above, the red cloak figures as a sensuous object of luxury, which symbolises the heroine’s sexual exploration, objects are also marshalled against the heroine to confine, obstruct and objectify her. This is powerfully demonstrated in a sequence in which Valerie is made to wear both the red cloak she once donned with pleasure, and a large iron wolf’s mask, as a punishment.

In a scene of ritualised ‘marking’ of the young female body through objects, Valerie is taken from her cell and dressed in her sumptuous, blood-red cloak by wolf-hunter Solomon (Gary Oldman), who gravely intones, “It’s time to put on your harlot shroud.”⁵ At once casting the red cloak as a shameful, sexually transgressive costume and as burial garment, Father Solomon suggests her death at the hands of the wolf will be a punishment for promiscuity, and apparently therefore deserved. He gazes hungrily down at her as the garment goes on. The action then cuts to a voyeuristic close-up of Valerie’s neck and hair, as Solomon’s filthy hands arrange the folds of the bright red cloak. While vilifying the object Valerie once joyfully displayed, Solomon

⁵ At this point in the film, Valerie (Little Red Riding Hood) has been accused of being a witch because of her ability to understand the language of the murderous werewolf terrorising her village. The mystery of who the wolf is, to some extent drives the narrative and is thought to be one of the villagers. The wolf pursues and eventually corners Valerie, and asks her to ‘come away with him’. The wolf-hunter, Solomon (Oldman) imprisons Valerie before tying her up in the village square, as a sacrifice to appease the wolf. Otherwise, he hopes to use the opportunity to catch the wolf in the act of claiming her, and so destroy the creature at last. Neither Solomon nor Valerie know that the wolf is actually her father (Burke).

takes evident pleasure in the careful arrangement of its heavy, rich fabric on her form. In close-up, his grimy, bloody fingers pause over and then paw through her golden hair in the red hood, the uncut fingernails pointedly reminiscent of a wolf's paws. This unsettling staging of Valerie's objectification with the donning of the cloak, is strongly suggestive of "male heterosexual consumption and desire," and its controlling gaze (Griffin 35).

The red cloak, both as an alluring garment and as associated with transgressive behaviour echoes many versions of the tale, in which it is commonly implied that she who wears the red cloak invites the wolf. As has been noted by fairy tale scholars from Zipes to Beckett, the red hood was an added, aesthetic invention on Charles Perrault's part, in "Le Petit Chaperon Rouge" (1697). Nevertheless it has become the fairy tale icon's defining characteristic of an "archetypal motif" of the tale (Beckett 44). Its inclusion in literary adaptations from Perrault onwards often accompanies an implicit authorial assertion that by wearing this bright, sensuous and eye-catching colour, the titular character puts herself at risk. In Hardwicke's film, the consuming male gaze is coded as wolfish and predatory, but the red cloak is also represented as inviting its attention. The red cloak is associated with Valerie's consumption and display of rich material goods and her characterisation as an active, desiring subject who pursues her romantic interests, which then makes her the object of Father Solomon's controlling gaze and the wolf's pursuit. In other words, the tension that Griffin observes arising from the idea of the girl as a "consuming female subject, expressing and acting on her own wishes and desires," informs the narration of Valerie as a desiring subject *and* as an object of the consuming male gaze (35).

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Fig. 3.5: Valerie wears the wolf mask

Despite its address to a teenaged target audience as a 'supernatural romance' in the style of *Twilight*, *Red Riding Hood* also engages with an implicit incest narrative, which emerges when Valerie is forced to wear the wolf mask (see: fig. 3.5). After putting on the red cloak now equated with sexual shame,

Valerie is clapped in irons and presented with an enormous, roughly hewn

wolf's mask. The camera lingers on its eerie metal contours in mid-level close-up, as diegetic sound briefly grows muted. The action cuts to a slow-motion sequence of Valerie being marched—the wolf-mask is so large that it obscures, not just her face, but her entire head—bound and cuffed, through the streets of the village, as on-looking villagers stare. In voice-over, Valerie explains, “Father Solomon had designed the mask for public disgrace. And even my friends stared, judging me.”

This costuming engages with a larger fairy tale tradition of coding incest through the ‘othering’ dress of animal skins or fur. Donning fur or animal skin as a coded reference to being the object of incestuous desire, informs the narrative of Perrault’s ‘Peau D’Ane’, (1697). This is used to dramatic effect in Jacques Demy’s adaptation (France,

1970), when Catherine Deneuve dons a donkey-skin cloak with a full head (see: fig. 3.6). Here, a wolf’s head takes the place of animal skin or fur, but the wolf can, in general, be interpreted as a coded reference to incest. As Orenstein observes, “Some Old English variants of Red Riding Hood refer to the villain as a ‘gaffer’ wolf or a ‘gossip’ wolf [and] the etymology of both terms indicate a close family relation, [that] in this case, [...] may be vestigial references to incest” (Orenstein 105). However, the history of symbolism which informs this object need not be known to the spectator, to appreciate the shaming connotations of the wolf’s mask placed over Valerie’s head, coupled with the “harlot’s shroud,” in Solomon’s words. The mask covering Valerie’s entire head erases her subjecthood and reduces her to an eroticised body in the red cloak, an object of “consumption and desire” for the wolf, who has doggedly pursued her throughout the narrative, and who is soon revealed to be Valerie’s own father (Griffin 35).

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Fig. 3.6: Deneuve as the princess, hiding from the incestuous overtures of her father, the King

As in melodrama, objects “serve as correlatives for the female protagonist’s feelings and point of view,” as well, however. (Landy 196). When Valerie is taken to the centre of the village square, she is tied in place on what is effectively an altar of shame. Rendered physically immobile, and faceless behind the shaming wolf’s mask, Valerie becomes the captive object of the

villagers' collective gaze. Only her wide, blue eyes look out from behind the mask, where her eyes are seen to dart nervously back and forth at the assembled villagers. In that moment, however, the narrative shifts back to Valerie's perspective through a cut to an image apparently shot through the eyeholes of the mask. This cut to an almost entirely black screen, restricts the spectator's view to voyeuristic images, seen as if through a keyhole, of the villagers staring at Valerie. Their hungry gaze evokes the "exercising [of] a power that questions, monitors, watches, spies, searches out, palpates, [and] brings to light," (Foucault 45). A young girl appears, only partly visible and fragmented through the eyeholes of the mask, and whispers: "You're going to get what you deserve." In voice-over, Valerie wonders, "What if they were right? Maybe the wolf knew something I didn't. Maybe there was something dark inside of me." Through this narration, the enchanted object again evokes a doubling and the possibility of a repressed, second (wolfish) self. This possibility of the 'other' self and "something dark" that Valerie considers, narrates the internalisation of the collective consuming gaze, and the consciousness of "the self as object/other" (Schanoes 100).

The scene then abruptly shifts into a fantasy sequence, as the wolf-mask intended to humiliate her actually allows her magical access to repressed knowledge. A slow zoom towards Valerie's face in the iron mask gradually comes to frame her wide, frightened eyes behind the iron wolf's mask, in increasingly extreme close-up, until only one eye is magnified on screen. The unexpected sense of proximity that this giant close-up of Valerie's eye evokes, puts the spectator in a position of sudden intimacy with the girl heroine. The tightly framed eye simultaneously de-familiarises Valerie to the viewer, however, as the uncomfortably surreal image visually separates the eye from her face and its recognisable features. This disturbing play between the familiar and unfamiliar again recalls the spectator's sense of uncanny recognition caused by the casting of Billy Burke, as observed by Priest (281). It is this unsettling and "peculiar mix of the familiar and unfamiliar" that foreshadows the incest narrative and the unsettling associations of incest as the familiar made horribly strange, and the strange, horribly familiar (Priest 281). The shock of the wolf being dramatically unmasked as Valerie's father is thus heightened by the

spectator's own associations with Billy Burke as a model father in the Twilight Saga.

When suddenly, the giant close-up of Valerie's blue eye blurs and transforms, through a disorienting feat of CGI, into the yellow, canine eye of a wolf, this de-familiarising effect is compounded, as Valerie too becomes someone or something else. The scene then dramatically shifts into subjective narration, as the camera whirls through the crowd of villagers, searching. Who is the wolf hunting here? Valerie's wolf's eye has expanded her vision, and though physically confined, the wolf mask allows her gaze to magically roam unfettered through space. Operating in subjective narration, the camera pans across the figures of the villagers, who, in a reversal of power dynamics, are suddenly the object of Valerie's fantastically projected gaze. Suddenly, her father (Billy Burke) is framed in Valerie's vision, and looks up, startled and guilty. This scene foreshadows Valerie's discovery that her father is the wolf who desires her, in the film's penultimate scenes at Grandmother's house. Through fantastical intervention of the enchanted object, a scene that stages the girl heroine's humiliation and physically immobilises her, is interrupted. Though held physically captive, Valerie's magically projected gaze affords her an agency through fantasy, and freedom of movement. Briefly, the heroine is able to turn the consuming male gaze on itself, and through the agency of her magically projected gaze, name the wolf at the door.

The 'Red Riding Hood' tale is concerned with a young female character who is depicted as adolescent in most filmic and literary adaptations. She is at risk and, specifically, in danger of being in some sense 'consumed,' by a predatory wolf in the guise of a family member. Indeed, Zipes identifies the fairy tale as an early rape narrative, while Orenstein and other critics suggest it is an incest narrative. Hardwicke's *Red Riding Hood* contains not only the veiled threat of consumption and incestuous desire, however, but desire itself as threatening to its teenage heroine. It is frequently reiterated, both narratively and by various supporting characters, that Valerie's beauty endangers her and indeed it transpires that her sensuous red hood can label her a 'harlot' to be sacrificed as easily as it attracts competing love interests. The narrative and visual foregrounding of the enchanted objects in this film, and its conflicted representation of girlhood, reflects "anxious debates about [the] girl consumer"

the film addresses (Griffin 35). The film's plotting and characterisations may be uneven but the consistency with which Valerie is represented as threatened or in danger merely by virtue of being a young girl, is the single unifying thematic of the film. The equivalence of being desirable and being in danger, for a young girl, structures a larger cultural anxiety regarding the girl as "desiring subject" (Griffin 35). While this is unsurprising, it remains troubling that in fairy tale films addressed to and targeting a young female audience, their on-screen counterparts cannot develop romantically or sexually without being simultaneously constructed as being put at risk. Disturbingly, rather than identifying a single predatory male as the 'wolf', the village emerges as a wolfishly threatening society. This adaptation's apparently 'happy ending' sees Valerie and her teenage lover of choice disappearing into the woods and turning their back on the village altogether.

Hard Candy

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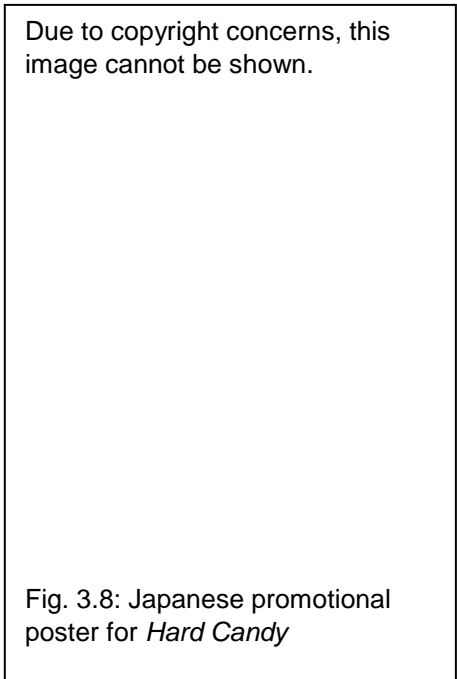
Fig. 3.7: Lensman319 and Thongrrrl14 arrange to meet in an online chatroom

While "much ink has been spilled exploring the symbolism of the distinctive red head-dress that is an intrinsic part of Little Red Riding Hood's name," there can be no doubt of the iconographical status of the object (Beckett 44). A mere

visual reference to a red hood or cloak inevitably becomes an "adaptive moment," and invokes the tale (Geraghty 365). *Hard Candy* (David Slade, U.S.A., 2005) opens where wolves are known to lurk: in an online chat-room, where 'Lensman319' is suggesting to 'Thongrrrl14' that they meet in person at last (see: fig. 3.7). Though the shot is limited to a monitor screen and reveals neither 'Lensman319' nor 'Thongrrrl14' in person, this frame introduces the "colour symbolism" which defines the mise-en-scène (Beckett 44-45). The alias 'Thongrrrl14' appears beside a red heart icon, her name highlighted in a vivid red, while lecherous 'Lensman319' uses a camera icon and is highlighted in blue. In this colour schemata, red connotes youth and desirable vulnerability while blue indicates the cool gaze of the predator. The highly saturated reds and blues transform the film's narrative spaces, visually delineating whether a

character is prey or predator as they are framed by red or blue interiors, while these roles reverse and re-reverse themselves.

While the filmmakers behind the chilling *Hard Candy* claim that the



inclusion of Hayley's red hoody was incidental, it features prominently in promotional materials for the film, which also reference the tale. A Japanese poster for *Hard Candy* features the tagline, ["Red Hood Beats the Wolf at Own Game"] and shows Hayley wearing a red hoody. The upended image reflects the film's twist on the tale; and the narrative turnabout of expected power dynamics between an adolescent girl and an adult man (fig. 3.8). *Hard Candy* presents an extreme role reversal and subverts audience expectations of the 'Red Riding Hood' tale, by casting the young female protagonist, Hayley

(Ellen Page) as a kind of Wolf in Red Riding Hood's clothing and Jeff (Patrick Wilson) as a Wolf who soon finds himself at the mercy of his intended victim. As the Japanese poster suggests, teenage Hayley beats Jeff at his own game, by pretending to be manipulated into going home with him, only to hold him hostage and interrogate him about the whereabouts of a local missing girl, Donna Mauer. Whether the film is considered an 'accidental' adaptation is beside the point. The film's themes of predatory sexuality, power and deception echo the tale as surely as Hayley's hoody recalls Red Riding Hood's cloak and I therefore categorise it as a loose/inflected adaptation.

The scene where Hayley and Jeff first meet in person, foregrounds the fetishisation of the Red Riding Hood figure as an object of "male heterosexual consumption and desire," (Griffin 35). Like *Lolita*, Hayley's on-the-cusp, nymphet-like desirability is rooted in her liminal state of becoming and is carefully juxtaposed with passive innocence, a dichotomy which in this scene is demonstrated through acts of consumption. The camera's slow zoom into a side-shot of Hayley as she leans across the café counter and takes a large, slow bite of tiramisu, implicitly adopts the perspective of the onlooker and

“grownup gaze” (Khan 302). Hayley giggles, “Oh my God, that is so good. I want some more!” Jeff’s voice is heard before he is seen: “Don’t get greedy, now.” Miriam Forman-Brunell observes that “this association of girls with sweetness and the more abstract corollaries of sweetness—piety, purity, refinement and femininity” has its roots in early twentieth-century conceptions of the girl, and the girl as a consumer of confectionaries (320).

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Fig. 3.9: Introductory shot of Hayley.

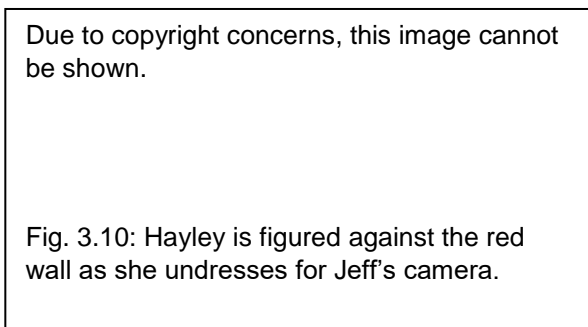
Slowly, Hayley turns into the shot and her brown eyes go wide with surprise. The round pale face above her bright red hood is child-like; her open, mouth covered in chocolate sauce (see: fig. 3.9). This shot demonstrates “the act of girls

consuming sweets [as suggestive of] budding sexuality, as well” (320). A brief shot of Jeff’s (Patrick Wilson) face reveals a good-looking, thirty-ish man staring down at her through glasses that reflect the sunlight from the window, obscure his eyes and create a mediating, lens-like distance between himself and Hayley. Jeff’s hand reaches toward Hayley’s face and, rubbing his thumb against her bottom lip, he wipes some of the chocolate off onto his fingers and sucks them off. “Yum.” This scene represents Hayley as both consuming, and an object of consumption, which briefly negates the potential threat of seeing her as “a consuming, desiring subject” in her own right (Griffin 35).

The perspective adopted in the sequence clearly operates through “the grownup gaze” or voyeuristic wolf, as Jeff only rarely comes into shot while the camera lingers in close-ups on Hayley’s pale face surrounded by the curve of her red hood. The series of close shots which introduce Hayley, from the initial sight of her eating chocolate to her slow turn toward Jeff, draw the eye to the brightness of her red hood and then, when they sit down, to her red stockings as she nervously arranges and rearranges herself against the armchair. The spectator’s experience of her is purely visceral: the sheer redness of the hood coupled with her enthusiastic, greedy chocolate-eating fetishises her impulse-driven, childish behaviour as sensual. Hayley is presented through her acts of greedy consumption and associated with the sensual material goods of her red

hoody and tights; becoming an image for the camera and Jeff to consume—literally, when he eats the chocolate from her lips.

However, this image of the girl as consumable object is soon revealed to be a performance, on Hayley's part. Indeed, from the moment she reveals that



she is there to interrogate Jeff and raid his apartment for clues as to the disappearance of a local girl, Hayley's true identity becomes questionable, fluid and dangerous. In a later scene, Jeff takes Hayley back to his apartment, the red

interiors of which recall the forbidden space of Bluebeard's bloody chamber, evoking a space haunted with transgression, death and sexual violence. Suspense builds as an apparently tipsy Hayley is coaxed into taking her clothes off for the camera, which reflects "the positioning of girls as passive, asexual beings who are vulnerable to sexual exploitation by active male predators" in discourses that surround female adolescence (Rajiva 141). This positioning of Hayley as a victim is spatially framed by the red backdrop of Jeff's wall, while he occupies the cool, blue foreground of this voyeuristic shot, which operates through his "grownup gaze" (Khan 302) (see: fig. 3.10). After photographing her flat-chested, shirtless image, Jeff collapses. He awakes tied to a chair against a bright red wall. The blood red wall framing a terrified Jeff, uses the "colour symbolism" of 'Red Riding Hood' to spatially emphasise the sudden role reversal, implying that Jeff is now the imperilled one of the two (Beckett 44-45).

This corresponds with Classical Hollywood melodrama's "sublimation of dramatic values into décor, colour, gesture and composition of frame" (Elsaesser 76). The connotations of the red hood, in other words, are sublimated into the spatial interiors of Jeff's apartment, which shifts from Bluebeard's chamber, to Red Riding Hood's domain. Hayley admits to drugging him and offers him a glass of water, but makes no move to untie him. In a close-up of his face, surrounded by the vivid, saturated red of the wall, Jeff struggles to regain control of the situation and slurs, as if to a child, "Why do I get tied up first, if this is how we're going to play?" The scene cuts back to Hayley, against the dark blue backdrop of the wall opposite, whose dark eyes (so wide in the

café) appear a wolf-like yellow as they narrow. “*Playtime* is over, Jeff,” she replies, emphasising the infantilising word back at him. “It’s time to *wake up*.”

Hard Candy plays on a host of familiar cinematic concerns surrounding the representation of female characters and sexual violence, both in and beyond adaptations of the ‘Red Riding Hood’ tale. The film also engages with a cycle of female rape-revenge films popular in the late 1970s and early ‘80s, in which “a beautiful woman hunts down the men who raped her and kills them [...] frequently revelling in the [...] man’s agony” (Lehman 103). The difference here is that the “woman” is not a woman at all, but a teenage girl. Hayley complicates “conservative understandings of girlhood that position girls as passive victims of predatory male sexuality” and this makes *Hard Candy* more disturbing than any other thriller in the same vein (Rajiva 138). The “wolf has long been a metaphor of aggressive male sexuality” and recent cinematic adaptations show “its carnal symbolism [...] frequently applied to women,” but Hayley’s characterisation oscillates between these two gendered ‘wolf’ roles, and is not comfortably contained by either of them (Beckett 158-159).

In a cut back to Jeff’s face against the red backdrop, he looks frightened.

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Fig. 3.11: As the roles reverse, so do the background colours.

As their cat-and-mouse conversation continues in a wider shot, the distribution of colour in the space reflects the reversal of power (and roles) between them. Hayley stands over Jeff on the left side of the frame in a space entirely made up of

different moody shades of blue and black, her red tights out of shot while Jeff occupies the larger, right side of the frame, surrounded by red (see: fig. 3.11). Now in just a black top, Hayley ambles toward Jeff’s dark suit jacket and slips into it before sitting on the couch and placing his glasses on her nose, as if changing costumes. She muses, “Maybe it’s this whole camera thing.” Turning to look at him, she smirks, “Cameras, computers, they let you hide, don’t they? So safe.” As if in response, the action cuts to a shot over Hayley’s shoulder as she gazes at him—occupying the close foreground, Hayley appears wider, imposing in Jeff’s jacket—while in the background, Jeff appears small and

scared against the red wall: "I heard how your voice changed when the camera came between us."

In Hardwicke's *Red Riding Hood*, the girl heroine is cast into a postfeminist 'Bella Swan' mould of girlhood, whose supernatural romantic triangle and noble suffering are recognisable markers of the heroine anticipated to appeal to a young, female audience. *Hard Candy* is rated 'R' by the MPAA and thus anticipates an adult audience. Hayley is indeed initially framed as an eroticised object, mediated by Jeff's "grownup gaze" (Khan 302). Like Valerie, Hayley is initially perceived by the spectator to be at risk, which generates suspense but casts girlhood into the familiar mode of "passive, innocent victim" (Rajiva 138). When Hayley embodies the passive, victimised notion of girlhood, she is also fetishised as a consumable object of adult desires. The narrative 'reveal' that Hayley is not what she seems, however, does not suggest the now equally familiar "agentic, savvy, knowledgeable navigator" of postfeminist texts, either (Renold and Ringrose 391). Instead, her characterisation becomes multivalent and ambiguous. At once threatening and desirable, Hayley shifts between a consumable object of male desire, a girl detective and a terrifying, consuming wolf-girl in her own right. As to her motivations, Hayley muses sarcastically, "Was I born a cute, vindictive little bitch or did society make me that way? I go back and forth on that one."

Given the prominence with which the film's colourist, Jean Clement-Soret, is mentioned in the opening titles, this sectioning of the frame into spaces of red and blue to demarcate who is in the position of power, is most likely a conscious directorial choice. Consciously or not, this stylistic use of colour projects the red hood-object into the space itself; so that the red cloak with its connotations of vulnerability and victimhood becomes spatially "sublimated" into the red wall backdrop behind Jeff's head, acting as a signifier for the traditional red hood (Elsaesser 76). Certainly the red-and-blue motif is maintained in scenes that follow, including in the most highly controversial scene of the film, in which Hayley castrates Jeff (this later turns out to have been faked in order to psychologically torture an anaesthetised Jeff). As the man is laid out on a table the red backdrop directly behind his head emphasises his vulnerability. Menaced by Hayley, Jeff begins to sob and beg for her to stop, which shifts the spectator's ability to sympathise with Hayley's desire to take revenge on Jeff,

from uncomfortable yet possible, to essentially impossible. As Jeff begins to be spatially figured as prey rather than predator in red, he begins to occupy not only larger sections of the frame but his identity becomes increasingly the subject of the film. While Hayley remains a terrifying cipher, Jeff as 'Red Riding Hood' becomes represented as increasingly, problematically sympathetic.

The canny use of 'red' backdrops in scenes where Jeff is menaced by Hayley, suggests he now fulfils that role but Jeff is not a viable 'Red Riding Hood'. Not only does he intend to prey upon Hayley but she discovers over the course of torturing him that he and another paedophile are responsible for the rape and murder of a missing girl named Donna Mauer. Despite this 'role reversal' in which a teenage girl tortures him, "the wolf who devours Little Red Riding Hood is clearly a predatory male [...] seducer, rapist, child abuser or pedophile" and Jeff is most certainly a big bad wolf (Beckett 89). By drawing out the wolf's punishment at the hands of avenging Hayley-as-Red-Riding-Hood over the course of a lengthy two hour runtime, *Hard Candy* conspires to incur viewer sympathy for the admitted rapist/killer, while repeatedly posing him not as an aggressor but as the film's protagonist and victim of a warped, highly intelligent and predatory teenage girl with the face of a child. In its penultimate scene, Hayley manipulates Jeff into hanging himself from the roof. She promises that if he does, she will destroy all evidence of his activities and his ex-girlfriend Janelle "will just think [he] was a sad man she never should've left." Just before Jeff jumps, he turns back and crying, stares at her. Sweat drips down his face. Hayley says quietly, "Don't worry. I promise. I'll take care of it all." Then, in slow-motion, Jeff jumps and immediately, we see Hayley run to the edge of the roof, her small face alive with malice, and whisper to the man dying out of shot: "Or not." The film ends with Hayley in her red hood once more, hood up, walking through the woods back to where she came from—but where is that, exactly? Who is Hayley?

Hard Candy tells a story that is, in addition to a version of 'Little Red Riding Hood', a product of the media scrutiny in recent years of sex crimes and the girls and children upon whom these crimes are often perpetuated, who are most at risk of being 'groomed' online. It is not, however, Donna Mauer's story, or even Hayley's story, but Jeff's. The use of the colour red to frame Jeff in the interior shots of his apartment, 'paints' him as a victim and a kind of Wolf/Red

hybrid, which problematically invites the viewer to sympathise with his position. The film also severely problematises contemporary female adolescence by costuming Hayley in the iconic red hood. When the red hood first makes an appearance at the café, Hayley embodies the fetishised Red-Riding-Hood-as-Lolita trope—an object to be admired or consumed, like chocolate cake, or as occurs later, to be reproduced as image onto film, in her red tights. In the film’s final scenes, the red hood is worn by a girl the viewer now knows to have tortured and killed without remorse and we have every reason to believe, will kill again. The viewer is left with the impression, as the girl in the red hood walks into the woods, that this is a figure more dangerous than the wolves who wait for her. Had the film made any attempt to give Hayley a back-story, pathology or any motivation to kill beyond *being* a teenage girl, this image could have been powerful and interesting. In discussing the new wave of contemporary wolfish Red Riding Hoods in literature, Fiona Mackintosh asserts that,

“Little Red Riding Hood is [...] something of a wolf in sheep’s clothing, and the true wolf is most disappointed that his idyllic impression of her was so far from the truth [...] The collapse of this hyperbolic, idealised version of Little Red Riding Hood also signals the demise of the sickly, demure stereotype that has been standard fare since Perrault” (161).

Hard Candy’s narrative dispels the “idealised version” of the character but is not able to conceive of a Little Red Riding Hood who is not a victim, who is not also a monster (Mackintosh 161). Instead, *Hard Candy* oscillates between depictions of the girl in the red hood as either fetishised little girl object, or monstrous, castrating girl-turned-wolf. The fluidity between these two roles, however, suggests a multivalence that reflects the ambiguous liminality of the girl. Through the film’s engagement with a “grownup gaze,” Hayley’s fluid identity evokes a terrible potentiality in the adolescent state of ‘becoming’: she may become, be, or do anything (Khan 302).

Thus while *Hard Candy* and *Red Riding Hood* belong to distinctly different genres, each concludes with its teenage heroine putting up her red hood and disappearing into the woods, effectively turning her back on the audience. The wolf-mask in *Red Riding Hood* visually broaches the idea of a character inhabiting the role of both wolf and Red Riding Hood through its

inclusion of the wolf-mask. However, Hardwicke's film does not suggest Valerie as a predator, like Hayley, but emphasises that in being preyed upon, Valerie is 'cast out' as complicit with her own victimisation by the villagers. *Hard Candy* boldly complicates the "Red Riding Hood" / "Big Bad Wolf" binary division, and sees Hayley go 'full Wolf', as it were, in a mise-en-scène defined by disorienting, nightmarishly confined spaces. The haunted chambers of Jeff's apartment, in frames connoting 'prey' as red and 'predator' as blue, cannot adequately contain Hayley, however. Instead, she remains as terrifying as she is inexplicable. Hayley treats the red hood and Jeff's jacket as costumes that are as easily shrugged on, as they are shrugged off. Both films are clearly in dialogue with themes of sexual initiation and sexual violence. These 'Red Riding Hood' adaptations present these themes as inevitably intertwined and the young female character as both dangerous and in danger. Here emerges a construction of girlhood in visual culture as in a crisis; a crisis being played out on screen through a "multi-valency [that] complicates any either/or, inside/outside construction of gendered identity or gendered narrative forms" (Bacchilega qtd by Haase 24). In putting up their red hoods and turning their backs on the viewer in the last shot, going where we cannot follow, the final scenes of both films see Hayley and Valerie resist the spectator's constructing gaze.

The relationship between visual culture, sexuality and girlhood is a schizophrenic one. Images of contemporary girlhood and sexuality in popular visual culture oscillate between high media coverage of sexual assaults enacted on adolescent girls in which the survivor's supposed role in her own victimisation is frequently speculated upon, based on her mode of dress or level of intoxication. Nevertheless, the image of the disempowered girl-in-crisis pervades popular discourse, as evidenced by the success of third wave feminist texts like Mary Pipher's *Reviving Ophelia* (1996) and Robin Wiseman's *Queen Bees & Wannabes* (2009). Representations of the girl in visual culture thus corresponds strongly with depictions of girlhood in canonised, literary versions of 'Red Riding Hood': both victimised and complicit with victimisation. Imperilment and the girl's emergent sexuality are continuously associated in visual culture as inevitably joined, as in *Red Riding Hood*, to the point that coming into an awareness of one's sexuality as a girl is to become aware of the

possibility, danger and often reality of sexual violence. Girls who successfully navigate this danger, as Hayley does in *Hard Candy*, however, are represented as dangerous themselves. Widespread fetishised representations of youth, girliness, virginity, passivity and innocence in popular media betray that ‘othering’ girlhood in this way, denies the girl’s personhood in favour of a fantasy, predicated on eroticising childhood and the girl in peril. When turning their hoods and disappearing into the woods in the final moments of both films, both of the adolescent protagonists of these films ‘disappear’ into their enchanted garment. Enchanted objects form part of the syntax of fairy tales, which clearly continue to strongly inform the girl’s contemporary coming of age narrative as well as discourses surrounding female adolescence and sexuality. Perrault’s version of the tale equates the girl with the red hood as a signifier of victimhood and complicity and his version haunts contemporary adaptations. However, *Hard Candy* and *Red Riding Hood* show that while images of girlhood continue to be associated with fairy tale imagery, this form of narration can simultaneously be repurposed to resist, trouble and challenge representations of girlhood as inevitably imperilled.

***Sleeping Beauty* (Julia Leigh, Australia, 2011)**

Due to copyright concerns, this image cannot be shown.

Fig. 3.12: Lucy is interviewed

Julia Leigh’s *Sleeping Beauty* tells the story of Lucy (Emily Browning), a young, low-income university student who takes a job as a brothel’s resident ‘sleeping beauty’: paid to be put into a drugged sleep, and molested while unconscious, by

the brothel’s clientele.⁶ The brothel’s madam, Clara (Rachael Blake) interviews Lucy for the position, in a sequence which foregrounds the objectification of the young female protagonist’s body. Asked to strip to her briefs, Lucy stands in between Clara and Thomas (Eden Falk) in the centre of the frame, as they turn

⁶ The premise, in brief, is this: Lucy is an Australian student who struggles to make ends meet. Despite working several jobs and taking part in medical experiments as a test subject for cash, Lucy can barely keep her head above water and is frequently harassed (sexually and otherwise) and humiliated by employers and housemates. She eventually takes a job as a server in a highly exclusive brothel, where she is well paid. Eventually, Lucy is offered more money to be drugged into unconsciousness and placed in bed for patrons to have sex with (though never penetrate). She agrees but grows ever more anxious to know what happens when she is unconscious and so, in the final act, buys a small camera and hides it in her room at the brothel—with disturbing results.

her limbs this way and that, minutely examining her every curve and flaw (see: fig. 3.12). Neither Clara nor Thomas make eye contact with her, as they freely handle and critique her body. “What’s this?” Thomas asks, knelt at her feet and gestures to a small mark on her upper thigh. “I had a mole removed,” Lucy replies. Her blank expression as she gazes into the middle distance, emphasises her performance of a “radical passivity,” and she allows the doll-like treatment of her body, without complaint or visible reaction (Festival de Cannes: 2010, 5). Lucy occupies the centre-foreground of the shot, with her head directly framed by a colourful abstract painting of a woman on the wall behind her, furthering the scene’s sense of spatial enclosure as she is doubly ‘framed,’ as an object of erotic display.

Like *Hard Candy*, Leigh’s *Sleeping Beauty* inflects a fairy tale narrative in a contemporary non-magical diegesis, anticipates an adult audience, and centres upon a young female protagonist. Like Hayley, Lucy embodies a mode of girlhood that is at-risk, and both narratives see the young female protagonist entering chambers of horror, which stage the threat, or enactment, of sexual violence being perpetrated against her. As established in Chapter Two, bloody chambers of forbidden space frequently stage the girl’s encounter with terror. Marshall identifies “Disney’s [...] *Sleeping Beauty* (1959)” as a textual “representation of adolescent girlhood as a period of crisis,” and asserts that this mode of at-risk girlhood “surfaces in different time periods, in distinct ways, in a variety of cultural texts written for or about young women” (2006: 117). Both *Hard Candy* and *Sleeping Beauty* centre upon representations of “girlhood as a period of crisis,” but the nature of that crisis takes a different form in films that anticipate an adult audience, rather than a young female one (Marshall 2006:117). Leigh’s *Sleeping Beauty* inflects Geronimi’s iconic imagery of the enchanted girl asleep in bed, to narratively push its idealisation of young feminine passivity to the extreme. Browning’s performance of “radical passivity” reimagines a heteronormative trait of sexually innocent girlhood as a “perverse provocation” to the world, that according to director Leigh, announces: “My cheek is turned, try me” (Festival de Cannes: 2010, 5). This mode of girlhood de-familiarises the naturalness and nature of young feminine passivity and interrupts the audience’s “grownup gaze” (Khan 302).

In *Hard Candy*, the red hoody becomes a costume for Hayley's performance of a Lolita-like mode of easily victimised, consumable girlhood, only for her to cast it aside, and embody a fluid, and wolf-like identity. The inconsistencies of Lucy's performance of passive, innocent girlhood and her opaque, remote characterisation subverts audience expectations of a young female heroine, in a similar way. Kyra Clarke observes that "the aversion and discomfort expressed by audience members [at the 2010 Cannes Film Festival premiere] drew attention to the desire for coherence and consistency around representations of girls, coherence that is unapparent in *Sleeping Beauty*" (2). What Leigh describes as Lucy's "radical passivity," again complicates "static binary positions that locate girls as either savvy sexual agents or objectified sexualised victims" (Leigh qtd in *Festival de Cannes, 2010*: 5, Renold and Ringrose 403-4). Lucy's paradoxical and multivalent performance of girlhood as alternately agentic and victimised, comes to the fore in bedroom scenes.

Like Leigh, Catherine Breillat, has attempted to wrest Beauty back from the order of objects and centralise her subjectivity in adaptations of this tale, by reimagining the bed. In a subversive retelling of the tale, Breillat makes Anastacia's dream (the named 'Beauty') the subject of the film, rather than the quest to wake her. Nevertheless, in *La Belle Endormie* (France, 2009) the narrative remains inextricably tied to the bed. The enchanted object transforms at will into carriage and castle and back again. It becomes a site of knowledge, exploration and eroticism, a screen upon which the whole of Beauty's adolescent dreams play out, free and unchecked. The bed becomes a vehicle for transformation, as well as an object. In a technically direct adaptation of the tale, however, the bed in Breillat's film is no more than one enchanted element in a fairy tale chronotope already defined by the matter-of-fact presence of magic. As discussed previously, Brown imagines "*things* [...]" as what is excessive in objects," describing, in effect, "the magic by which objects become values," and become adaptable as symbols generating meaning even outside their original narrative (Brown 5). Plucked from a fairy tale chronotope and divorced from the tale, *Sleeping Beauty's* bed retains its magical 'thingness' and enchanted iconography when deployed in the contemporary, non-magical diegesis, of Leigh's *Sleeping Beauty*. The bed initially inflects the image of the sleeping princess woken by a true love's kiss. The bed becomes a site of

horror, however, when it becomes a setting for rape and begins to resemble the fetishising display of the glass casket, instead.

Leigh's film is a 'named'/loose adaptation, which includes the familiar image of the beautiful young girl made to be unconscious in a bed, visited by a desirous male. Without the inclusion of magic, the film cannot be categorised generically as either fairy tale or fantasy, but through the deployment of the bed, as enchanted object, it becomes a magical *mise-en-scène*. The juxtaposition of acts of sexual brutality and death within the magical *mise-en-scène* is purposefully jarring and interrogates the sexual fantasy of sleeping beauty as erotic object. The culturally romanticised 'fairy tale' image of the girl in 'enchanted sleep' is deconstructed and revealed as a rape narrative. This engagement with sexual violence through adaptation of a fairy tale is not a feminist re-write, but rather a return to "the earliest collected version of the complete story, [...] 'Sun, Moon and Talia' in Giambattista Basile's *The Tale of Tales*" in which "the princess, under a spell induced by a splinter in her finger, is ravished by a young king" (Hearn 221). Talia awakes after the fact, to find she has been impregnated and given birth to a pair of twins and soon marries the prince, after his evil wife has been successfully dispatched. Leigh's film resists such easy narrative closures and returns to the tale's ambiguities, through powerful evocations of Bakhtinian liminal "threshold" spaces of the in-between:

"The door left ajar, a strange house in the countryside, a sleeping chamber, a so-called wicked woman who puts girls to sleep. What will happen to Sleeping Beauty if and when she wakes...?" (Festival de Cannes: 2010, 5).

Operating within a fairy tale chronotope in an otherwise non-magical diegesis, the chamber scenes frame the bed in a space demarcated by ambiguity, or what Leigh describes as "cinema as *wunderkammer*, wonder room" (Festival de Cannes: 2010, 5.) The bed first appears on-screen in a low-angled shot; its sheer, lavish hugeness manifesting itself in the space as an unreal, dream-like object, as if super-imposed. Part of what contributes to this effect is that the bed is somewhat archaic as well as luxurious. With its wide golden headboard and silken blankets, there is something of the relic about it. The gleaming, pale green silk linens against an otherwise dark, quite featureless wall may also contribute to its not-quite-there-ness or sense of

otherworldliness, what Brown might call the bed's "metaphysical presence," as if having been projected, disembodied, into the otherwise contemporary, non-magical setting (Brown 5). Lying asleep beneath the covers, Lucy is posed as an appealingly innocent figure, who embodies "Western ideals of femininity," but the way her golden brown hair almost exactly matches the pattern on the headboard has a deliberate, staged air (Clarke 3). It is a highly stylised, visually captivating image too artistically arranged to seem entirely 'real', which evokes the fantasy as "the staging of desire" (Cowie 159). The nature of that fantasy, however, is soon revealed to engage with rape narratives and the eroticisation of the unconscious, seemingly dead female body.

When an old, bald man enters the space and, staring unabashedly at Lucy's sleeping form, begins roughly undressing her until she is nude, the previously languid scene tips from dreamlike fantasy, into violent nightmare. Though we will see three different old men handle, arrange and abuse her body on the bed, each does so with a complete disregard for Lucy. Her limbs are lifted and dropped, her mouth touched and invaded by poking fingers; she is alternately struck or caressed and, like a doll, she flops powerless and inanimate beneath their wrinkled hands. In this scene, the old man roughly grabs Lucy's drooping head and licks her face. Later, as she is being driven back to the city, Lucy wonderingly touches the place on her cheek and frowns, looking disturbed. The spectator's knowledge of events restricted from the heroine's knowledge continually implicates their gaze, as complicit with the acts perpetrated by the men in the chamber scenes.

When Lucy knowingly and calmly agrees to be the brothel's resident 'Sleeping Beauty,' the narration implies that this is merely an acceptance of an opportunity for higher paid work, of a similar kind, to that which she has already performed. Lucy's choice is contextualised by the humiliation, effort and vulnerability that her other efforts to make money have already exposed her to. During the interview for the position, Clara promises Lucy will not be vaginally penetrated, but the film opens with the girl allowing a long tube to be slowly fed down her throat as part of a medical research study, for money. Her body is continually framed as an object for manipulation, exploitation and handling by others in both sexual and non-sexual contexts, in these scenes. The mode of girlhood Lucy embodies is put at risk by poverty because the exploitation of her

body is her main source of income, whether as a test subject in a lab, as a silver service waitress fondled by patrons and 'accidentally' tripped, or as a sex worker at the brothel. The possibility that Lucy could exploit the systems of power that reduce her to an object of "male heterosexual consumption and desire" and benefit from her own objectification, resists infantilising Lucy as a damsel to be rescued, while implicating cultural narratives and male sexual fantasies which fetishise the girl's unconscious body as an object of erotic possibility (Griffin 35).

However, as Clarke observes, audience reactions reported following the film's premiere at Cannes, indicate that it is Lucy's ambiguous characterisation and lack of moral panic or emotional turmoil in the choice to willingly engage in sex work as a passive erotic object, which generates the most discomfort (2-5). Christine Westwood reports an audience member at Cannes commenting, "I don't know if I like Lucy or not, I felt disconnected from the character." This lack of identification with the heroine is clearly purposeful, however. It is technically achieved through static, long shots of Lucy's movements, adopting a "detached, almost voyeuristic" style of filming which restricts the audience from fully accessing Lucy's perspective (Westwood n. page). In Disney's *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), the spectator is given the action *surrounding* the girl in the bed. The prince cuts through the briar to reach Aurora, the sleeping princess, in spite of the efforts of her gaoler, Maleficent, the witch-like fairy. Immobilised and unconscious in the bed, Aurora's perspective is entirely absent during these scenes, as her body becomes the object of the prince's quest. In Breillat's *Endormie* (2010), however, the content of the sleeping girl's dream itself forms the main action of the film, but the events of the waking world are primarily restricted from the spectator. Leigh's film, however, juxtaposes static, external narration of Lucy as a subject, going about her day, with narration of Lucy as an unconscious body and object of "male heterosexual consumption and desire" (Griffin 35).

This evokes the "subject-object dualism that [binds] women's subordinate positioning," by alternately moving between scenes of Lucy awake, and scenes absenting her subjectivity from the scene altogether, when her unconscious body becomes the object of male sexual desire and violence (Brown and Gannon 162). The spectator consistently and disturbingly shifts between subject

positions, by moving between Lucy's perspective as she waits on tables and attends classes, and seeing events restricted from her knowledge, when she is unconscious and assaulted upon the stylised fairy tale bed. In these chamber scenes, the bed becomes a de-familiarising site of horror, instead of a stage for fantasies surrounding the girl's unconscious body. Watching the old man treat the body of a now-familiar character as no more than an extension of the bed, reduced to an object of erotic fantasy borne out of fairy tale narrative, interrupts and implicates that fantasy. By extension, the spectator is implicated, as well.

In Breillat's comparatively light-hearted, whimsically feminist *La Belle Endormie*, the staging of Beauty's dreams inevitably figures her as erotic spectacle, for the audience. While Anastacia's uncensored fantasies and dreams play across the screen, one is uncomfortably aware of the fetishising spectator's 'gaze' through which her almost exclusively romantic and erotic dreams are inevitably filtered. As in Hollywood Classical cinema, she is reduced to "erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic object for the spectator within the auditorium, with a shifting tension between looks on either side of the screen," where her body on the bed principally informs the visual pleasure of the enchanted *mise-en-scène* (Mulvey 48). The bed becomes a screen upon which fantasies about girlhood sexuality play out, for an art house audience primarily composed of adult viewers. Though both Breillat's and Leigh's versions of 'Sleeping Beauty' appear to narratively critique the character's lack of subjectivity in canonised literary versions of the tale, only Leigh's film fleshes out and complicates the violence of objectification that the enchanted bed invites the adult spectator to adopt.

Unlike Leigh's "death-haunted" heroine, there is no sense of death in Breillat's phantasmagorical world (Festival de Cannes: 2010, 4). Death is effectively banished from the narrative when a wicked witch, standing over Anastacia's cradle, suggests the princess should die at age six and a good fairy argues her out of it. Instead of death at age six, the fairy decides, Anastacia will sleep from age six to sixteen. The enchanted sleep is thus presented as an alternative and a solution, rather than a metaphor, for death, in Breillat's film. In Julia Leigh's *Sleeping Beauty*, however, the narrative consistently returns to the image of the passive young female protagonist lying motionlessly in bed, until the bed begins to resemble a casket, both in and outside of the chamber

scenes. Thus Leigh's adaptation engages with a rape narrative, as well as the fetishisation of the unconscious deathlike female form, which are taboo aspects of the tale conventionally veiled in contemporary retellings. The gradual cinematic transformation of the enchanted bed into a symbolic coffin, unfolds in a key sequence which powerfully visualises this bed-into-casket object morphology.

About midway through Leigh's *Sleeping Beauty*, Lucy has been working as the brothel's own answer to 'sleeping beauty' long enough to at last move from a cramped, oppressive student house to a flat of her own. Her normally inexpressive face glows with pleasure as she hands over her credit card to pay for it. The first scene in the new flat opens in a panoramic shot of the city skyline at night, its lights twinkling alluringly through the barrier of a wide ceiling-to-floor glass window, onto which is projected the blurred reflection of a young girl, lying nude on her side. In a gradual zoom out to a wider shot, Lucy's form is revealed to be lying in bed, directly opposite the glass window and the city skyline beyond. For a moment, the image of this slip of a girl with an entire city before her, sleeping in her own expensive flat, appears powerful, the narration at this point suggesting she has escaped her earlier poverty and the dependence it brought her to. The commodification of Lucy's body allows her to step into the seemingly agentic role of consumer, but her material rewards are almost immediately narratively implied to be disempowering.

Lucy is visibly ill at ease and shifts uncomfortably in her large bed. Her reflection in the glass beyond her bed, moves with her. Though the luxurious apartment is ostensibly a sign of material wealth and upward mobility, its claustrophobic glass enclosures are described as a "high-rise glass coffin" in the film's synopsis (Festival de Cannes: 2010, 4). Its reflective walls mirroring Lucy's movements, echoes the looking-glass in 'Snow White' as well. As discussed in relation to magic mirrors earlier in this chapter, the high-rise, acting as both mirror and coffin, reflects that each are "transparent enclosures into which [the heroine has] been locked: a magic looking-glass, an enchanted and enchanting glass coffin" (Gilbert and Gubar 36) This sense of "enclosure" generated by the transparent, reflective space transforms the luxurious king-size bed into a mirrored coffin, which is haunted by Lucy's second, 'sleeping' self (Gilbert and Gubar 36). Lucy gets out of bed and walks toward a moving

box and her pale reflection in the mirror-like window moves with her, so that two Lucys cross the space. She retrieves a pair of briefs, which she hastily pulls on and her quick, nervous movements suggest a sense of sexual shame, or an awareness of being watched.

Returning to the bed, Lucy crawls in under the covers and turns off the light. Pulling the sheet up to her chin, she stares at the ceiling and breathes quickly and audibly. Now pulling down her sleeping mask to cover her eyes, she lies rigid and, folding her hands, one over the other as if in prayer, clutches the edge of the sheet tightly between her fingers. Indeed, her reflection in the window shows Lucy's still form projected onto the glass and with her hands folded over her chest, she resembles nothing so much as a beautiful corpse. In contemplating the glass coffin in 'Snow White', Bronfen observes, "the contents of the coffin can not only be viewed from all sides, but owing to the prominence of its position, the body virtually offers itself to the gaze of others, draws this gaze onto itself" (Bronfen 100). Shot from behind, the bed foregrounded against the backdrop of the glass window lends the sequence described above a sense of unmistakably claustrophobic enclosure. With no walls in shot, the bed appears surrounded by the transparency of the reflected glass which visually invokes the deadening sense of "display" inherent in the glass coffin as an object, inside of which Lucy is symbolically figured (Bronfen 95). Lucy's reflection mimicking her every movement in the glass suggests not just a sense of her being trapped within the encroaching glass, however, but a doubling of selves, as well.

Bronfen describes the "relationship between an external body and an internal representation, negotiated over an external symbol, binding both oppositions 'internal/external' and 'body/figure' onto one object" (25). As in my earlier discussion of magic mirrors in adaptations of 'Snow White,' the glass reflects a repressed, interior self. Her reflected, doubled self is 'another' Lucy (in another, reflected bed) who is aware of what Lucy cannot consciously remember. This 'doubling' visually engages with the spectator's knowledge of Lucy's objectification and violation in earlier scenes, by imaging the 'self/object' as a ghostly reflection, separate from the 'self/subject.' What the second, sleeping self has registered, seems to drive a restless Lucy out of bed. *This* bed, though bought by Lucy as a gesture towards independence and self-

sufficiency, is haunted by the nightmarish fairy tale bed shown in previous scenes. The bed object itself has become charged with anxiety within the *mise-en-scène*. Despite having been asleep while she was subject to the controlling, violating gaze and acts of the men who visited the fairy tale bed, Lucy's evident disquiet as she is caught between the reflective glass of window and camera lens reveals the toll that violent objectification is beginning to take. Surrounded by her "high-rise glass coffin," Lucy's reflected image becomes another screen of surveillance and a projection of the inescapable, objectifying gaze.

The coffin-like enclosure stages Lucy's growing awareness of her objectification, enacting a kind of private deadening of the spirit, while the next appearance of a bed goes further and forces her to confront actual death in the arms of her only friend, Birdmann⁷. Tearfully, Lucy approaches his bedside and tenderly touches his face. "It's okay," she tells him softly, her eyes wide at the sight of Birdmann's waxen, wasted face. "I'm here." Breathing raspily, he stares up at her blearily and whispers, "Hello, Lucy." He smiles blandly. "Take your top off." Lucy stares at him blankly for a moment, then obediently rises and the camera rises with her, as she shakily begins to unbutton her shirt. In an extended, static cut, Lucy's chest heaves with the attempt to hold back her tears as slowly, she unbuttons each button, to the sound of Birdmann's now irregular, rasping breaths. There is no sense of affection between Birdmann and Lucy now, as she removes the shirt and lets it drop, stripping as she stripped down for Clara and Thomas to examine her, during the interview. The steady, static shot frames Lucy's isolation in a moment of extreme intimacy, as she is once again reduced to being the object of the gaze (that of Birdmann and that of the viewer). Climbing in beside him, Lucy turns her back to him and allows him to spoon her naked chest against his, his arm wrapped around her chest. He closes his eyes, beginning to succumb, and Lucy sobs against the pillow.

In the film's final scene, Clara (the madam and owner of the brothel) enters Lucy's room at the brothel the morning after and opens the shutters.⁸ Lucy lies, unmoving and apparently asleep, on her back beside an old man who

⁷ Birdmann, played by Ewen Leslie, is another oddly opaque character who appears to be terminally ill and seems to spend most of his time in his apartment where he is often visited by Lucy. He and Lucy do not appear to be romantically involved, although they make a habit of mockingly play-acting the domestic happiness of a traditional married couple.

⁸ At this point, Lucy has hidden a small camera in the room to discover what happens to her while she is unconscious during these encounters.

the night before, chose to drug himself to death at her side, as Birdmann did. Clara sadly checks the old man's pulse and finding him dead, shakes her head before coming to sit at the end of Lucy's side of the bed. In a moment that seems to visually reference the tale⁹, Clara gently tugs at the sleeping girl's toe beneath the blanket to wake her. Lucy's foot beneath the covers does not move, however. Suddenly, breathing quickly, Clara leaps into motion and violently shakes Lucy's shoulders; slaps her sleeping face. At first Lucy does not respond and appears dead, until Clara manages to slap her awake and, disoriented, Lucy sits up and looks around. She freezes at the sight of the old man. Though the viewer is intimately familiar with the men who have visited Lucy's unconscious body, this is the first time she herself has ever seen one. Touching his back and apparently finding it cold, Lucy recoils in horror. Clara moves away from Lucy and out of frame without offering any explanation for the dead man, evidently satisfied enough with the fact that Lucy is not dead. Lucy, meanwhile, begins to hyperventilate as she rocks forward, eyes wide, and looks as though she might choke. Suddenly, Lucy's face contorts and crouching down onto the coverlet, she screams bloody murder. Clara's back is just visible at the end of the bed, unmoving, watching. There is no visible reaction to Lucy's hair-raising wails, which are all the more affecting after her predominantly withdrawn, almost unreadable performance. Now convulsing into sobs, Lucy shudders. Then, face growing livid with grief once more, she turns to the headboard and begins beating the gorgeous, sumptuous fairy tale bed with both fists.

De Lauretis describes a myth similar to the narrative of the 'Sleeping Beauty' tale, in which a hero and demon engage in a power struggle over a woman's body, where the battle is also waged. Like 'Beauty,' the woman is less subject than object. When the prince and the witch engage in a power struggle over the sleeping princess in Geronimi's *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), the narrative obliges the reader to identify with the prince, as well. While the witch is made merely vengeful and monstrous, the princess's enchanted body is drawn exclusively from the perspective of the prince. As the prince approaches the

⁹ As previously mentioned, in Giambattista Basile's "Talia, Sun and Moon" (1634-1636) Talia is raped and gives birth to twins 'Sun' and 'Moon' while in an enchanted sleep. Talia is awoken and released from the spell when one of the children sucking on either her toe or finger (accounts vary), serendipitously remove the magical piece of flax that caused Talia's enchanted sleep in the first place.

bed, her enchanted sleeping state is, to him, an “obstacle” to attaining her, while her body is the “landscape or battlefield,” upon which he will inscribe his victory over the witch. Finally, her beauty is both the dream-object of desire that compels him to cut through briar and his inevitable reward for doing so (de Lauretis 45). This familiar narrative perspective adopted in Perrault’s ‘La Belle au Bois Dormant’ (1697) and the Brothers Grimm’s ‘Briar Rose’ (1812-1819) is interrogated in Leigh’s film, and denaturalises the tale’s romanticisation in popular culture.

Leigh’s film reworks the heroine’s objectified body as “spatially fixed object or personified obstacle,” by exploring “the effectiveness of symbols [like the bed] and symbolic function” to “construct the female as object and the object as female” in discourse (de Lauretis 45). The morphology of the bed in Leigh’s film is gradually established as both coffin and magic mirror, which echoes the tale’s “splitting of the female subject” into “hero” and “object” (de Lauretis 45). The narrative defamiliarises the objectification of the female protagonist as unnatural and the surveillance and staging of her body as a form of violation, however. Eroticising the sleeping girl is complicated by the “splitting” or doubling of Lucy into heroine in some scenes, and the unconscious object of geriatric, would-be princes’ sexual gratification, in others. By implicating the spectator in the fantasy staged in the chamber scenes, the film critiques the art house audience’s fetishising “grownup gaze” and its participation in a fantasy of sexual violence (Khan 302). Lucy’s passivity is so extreme, that it cannot be idealised as hyper-feminine or desired by the spectator. Instead, her passive participation in the ‘sleeping beauty’ fantasy, builds toward the final scene’s horror.

The gradual killing of Lucy’s spirit, first through the menial nature of poverty and then insidiously, as she fulfils her role as ‘sleeping beauty,’ is the death with which the narrative is more concerned than that of either of the men who choose to die entertaining her body as fantasy. That the film equates Lucy’s objectification with a metaphorical death is gradually established, with each scene in which Lucy passively submits to the control of the male gaze. The enchanted bed is revealed to be a deathbed as the film’s body count rises: first Birdmann, then the old man and in this final scene, Lucy’s own metaphorical death of the spirit. The visual impact of the girl in the bed’s beauty is undercut by the fantasies of violation and death it necessitates. The fantasy

with which it is inextricably bound as an enchanted object is at last implicated for what it is: the girl in the bed “becomes [...] the desired object only after she becomes a ‘seemingly’ dead body” (Bronfen 100). By participating in that fantasy, Lucy finds that in even consensually becoming an object of that fantasy, her subjectivity is nullified and that engenders a death all of its own.

Conclusion

In identifying certain enchanted objects at work in these generically complex films, this chapter demonstrates the consistency with which they are deployed as a form of narration surrounding the coming-of-age of multivalent, complex young female characters. The corpus of films discussed all work through processes of the formation of the self; and do so in ways that makes that process visually spectacular, but represent girlhood as inevitably imperilled and at risk. While comparatively light-hearted *Mirormask*, *Snow White and the Huntsman* and *La Belle Endormie* conclude with a sense of a coherent ‘happy’ ending, *Hard Candy*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *Red Riding Hood* resist coherent narrative closures. The latter three engage with paedophilia, rape and incest narratives, respectively, and do not ‘solve’ or fully resolve their revelations but conclude with a sense of disruption and incoherence. Recognisable objects of fairy tale like the bed, cloak and mirror, and their various cultural meanings, interpellate the young female subject and draw out the contradictory and multiple positionings of girlhood in contemporary discourses. Each appeared to oscillate between the same conflicting representations of the figure of the girl, however: as consuming subject and consumable object, victim and aggressor, passive and agentic.

Scenes of girls’ bodies being arranged, made over or displayed often form part of the visual pleasure that characterises this highly stylised cycle. The young female protagonists appear, at times, to be dream-figures from a nostalgic “image repertoire of familiar fairy tale stories”, less subjects, than enchanted objects themselves (Bronfen 85). Simultaneously, however, the surveillance of young female characters within the diegesis is narratively construed as putting them in danger. In both films geared toward a young female audience and films anticipating an adult art house audience, the figure of the girl is imbued with a genuine sense of anxiety, as she comes of age in a darkly stylised, menacing landscape that appears symptomatic of the current

cultural scrutiny of and social fears regarding contemporary girlhood (Bronfen 76).

This chapter demonstrates that comparing the melodrama to the contemporary fairy tale film adaptation cycle proves highly productive. The melodrama and fairy tale mode both make use of objects as central to the mise-en-scène; both filmic cycles are sensational and hyperbolic, and both target a female audience and centralise girlhood. As established in Chapter Two, Hollywood studios during WWII anticipated a largely female cinema audience and thus produced narratives specifically geared toward commercially exploiting and addressing the female spectator (Doane 383). Today, studios are targeting young adult women as a commercially exploitable audience, which reflects “the shaping of young women’s postfeminist status around consumer citizenship” (Harris 170). The themes of consumption, and the girl as either a consumable object of male sexual desire or as a desiring, consuming subject, that I observe at work in *Red Riding Hood* and *Sleeping Beauty*, exists in an uneasy relationship with the girl-as-consumer and the “capacity and potential of this group as economic agents” (Harris 166).

These fantasy films which inflect fairy tale narratives do not exist in a socio-cultural vacuum. In the 1940s, as today, young female audiences are being both represented on screen and targeted as audience members through the adaptation of the fairy tale; each in a period in which girlhood is the subject of a cultural discourse that problematises, polices and politicises female subjectivity. While mainstream big-budget adaptations such as *Snow White and the Huntsman* and *Red Riding Hood*, which anticipate a young female audience, are often considered to lack “sufficient cultural prestige,” it is worth considering that, as with the Classical Hollywood melodrama, these films are largely “condemned [...] by association with a mass and, above all female, audience” (Gledhill 6). In a period of profound anxiety regarding the imaging of adolescent girls, the way in which films in this cycle that specifically address young women, construct girlhood and “girls’ sexuality [as] always risky/at risk,” invites critical examination (Renold and Ringrose 391).

The industrial desire to exploit girls as consumers in this cycle exists in opposition to representations of girls as objects of consumption themselves. This results in representations of girls who exhibit agency within frames of

constraint, and whose desires as subjects, inevitably put them in danger from a violently consuming, objectifying (adult, male, heterosexual) gaze. Enchanted objects like the magic mirror visualise the young protagonist's coming of age and necessarily coming into awareness of herself as both subject, and as 'object/other' within the male, grownup gaze. Conversely, films like *Hard Candy* and *Sleeping Beauty* anticipate an adult audience and centre upon the fluidity of the girl's identity and present this multivalence as threatening and dangerous. Hayley and Lucy do not embody, but rather knowingly perform the role of passive "bearer of the look" for the benefit of the adult male onlooker, which undercuts the disparity of power between adult and child, the subject who gazes, and the object of that gaze (Mulvey 11).

Doublings and multivalent representations of girls in magic mirrors, in red hoods and on beds that are also caskets, consistently draw on the ambiguity of fairy tale narratives to represent young female characters as evading such dichotomies. The enchanted objects narrating young female coming of age are themselves "always and already excessive in meaning" and because "there is no singular way of seeing the object or image," their adaptation within this cycle of films, engenders complex, unstable representations of girlhood (Brown and Gannon 173, Coleman 17). As Clarke observes, resistance toward the adult audience's desire for a coherent representation of girlhood, forces the spectator to re-evaluate their expectations of the girl's identity and "surrendering such expectations enables recognition of the heteronormative constraints that structure society" (2). By framing the girl in borderline, chronotopic "threshold" spaces and in complex relations with enchanted objects, girl figures embody an ambiguous mode of young femininity that evades conventional binaries of female identity (Bakhtin 21). Culturally, the enchanted object is a "thing" unto itself even beyond and "in excess" of the tale to which it belongs. When adapted, it reveals its iconographical significance in a larger order of societal signs surrounding power, gender and myth-making to which we, knowingly or unknowingly, respond and through which we represent, see (and therefore construct) the world (Brown 5-7).

Chapter Four: Into the Woods: Locating Girlhood in the Fairy Tale Heroine's Journey

Introduction

In Stephen Sondheim's musical *Into the Woods*, the little girl in the red hood comforts herself as she ventures into the forest, singing: "*The woods are just trees/ the trees are just wood...*"¹⁰ As anyone who's ever heard a fairy tale knows, however, the woods are more than the sum of their parts in these tales. Woodlands are a liminal space of possibility, danger and transformation, for the young heroine. In this chapter, I analyse sequences in which the young female protagonist enters the woods and is profoundly altered by its liminal space. Laura Hubner reads the woods as a site of "fairy tale ambivalence, where wild woodland can be both threatening and dangerously appealing" to the heroine (Hubner 49). Indeed, the ambiguity of this fairy tale space re-emerges in the postfeminist, supernatural teen romance genre, where "the enchanted forest space has become an imaginative horizon on which to explore and celebrate female mobility, agency and even aggression," but can also become the setting for her disempowerment and victimisation (Bellas 2012). The previous three chapters demonstrate that the contemporary fairy tale film adaptation cycle consistently engages with the intersection between fantasy, representation and space, by depicting girl protagonists alternately entrapped in frames of enclosure and coming of age in fantastical spaces of possibility. As a possible space of both disempowerment and agency, the woodlands become another topography of fairy tale that stages this dichotomous representation of girlhood.

The girl entering the woods is an image with its roots in the fairy tale, but is also a narrative trope that recurs across wider narratives and cycles that engage with fantasy and the fantastic. Indeed, Fred Botting draws on the work of Deleuze and Guattari, to argue that the Gothic heroine's movements map the genre's "desiring geographies," from her arrival at the

¹⁰ *Into the Woods* is a highly popular musical that adapts such tales as 'Little Red Riding Hood', 'Sleeping Beauty', 'Rapunzel' and 'Jack and the Beanstalk' and combines these into a single, comic multi-layered narrative surrounding narrative, identity, desire and the woods. Though first put on Broadway in 1986, a definitive version of the play was filmed for television, with the original cast (including Bernadette Peters), to great acclaim, in 1991. In 2015, riding the wave of both the emerging cycle of fairy tale films and the current rage for adaptations and remakes in general, *Into the Woods* was brought to the cinema screen, with Johnny Depp playing the Big Bad Wolf and Meryl Streep the evil witch.

haunted ancestral home or castle, to her flight into the woods (160). The fantasy heroine of this cycle maps the geographies of fairy tale through her movement between its characteristic “chronotopic” spaces, as well, as the previous three chapters have already demonstrated (Bakhtin 21). These generic spaces “are a set of cues to the audience as to which loose assortments of situations, moods, characters and topics to expect” (Martin 65). For “knowing audiences,” the girl entering the woods space cues narrative expectations, structured by their familiarity with genre texts belonging to the Gothic, fairy tale, or horror film (Hutcheon 121). Whether the heroine escapes to seek succour in the woods, or is lured into harm there, the woods are often associated with girls at risk.

Thus the generic trope of the girl entering the woods gives rise to expectations of girlhood in peril, or the prototypical fairy tale damsel in distress, a figure perpetuated by conservative adaptations. However, this chapter focusses on woodland sequences in adaptations which break the expected script of imperilled girlhood. In *Fairy Tales Transformed*, Bacchilega observes that the twenty-first century has seen the rise of a fairy tale heroine who is “actively decoding but also recoding, interrupting and intervening in the scripts she finds herself written into” (83-84).

While Bacchilega is referring to narrative scripts, “any social convention is like a ‘script,’ [and] the term offers to social analysis what ‘ideology’ offers to cultural analysis: a generic term for the processes by which meaning is produced, challenged, reproduced [and] transformed” (DuPlessis 283). Reading woodland sequences which break from the conventional script of representing girlhood as imperilled, allows me to analyse the heroine’s transformation and the changing meaning of ‘girlhood’ in postfeminist texts.

“Woodland signifies a space in-between,” and sets the stage for the renegotiation of this “landscape of girlhood” in response to shifts in postfeminist discourse and thought (Hubner 51, Bettis and Adams 1). Friedlander defines postfeminist discourse, as “no longer interested in perpetuating a gender binary by which female empowerment is continually

defined by its opposition to male control,” in which “the individual’s freedom to actively define their own identity” is promoted (Friedlander 85). However, postfeminism’s celebration of “gender equality [as having been achieved, often] means wilfully ignoring gender disparity” (Friedlander 85). The nature of the heroine’s trials in the dark wood, and her ability to navigate and overcome them, reflects the mode of heroism young female protagonists embody in contemporary, post-feminist film texts.

Tasker and Negra observe “that aspects of post-feminism appeared in popular media as far back as the early 1980s, [but] it was during the 1990s that the term became concretised, both as a discursive phenomenon and as a buzzword of U.S. and U.K. journalism” (8). In this chapter, I read a woodland sequence in David Kaplan’s *Little Red Riding Hood* (1997) in relation to two films belonging to the contemporary fairy tale film adaptation cycle, *Maleficent* (2014) and *The Hunger Games* (2012). The purpose of drawing on a representation of fairy tale girlhood in a text from the 1990s, is to highlight the specificity of the 2005-2015 cycle. Rebecca Munford and Melanie Waters coin the term ‘ghost feminism’ in their excellent *Feminism and Popular Culture* to describe how the concerns of first and particularly second-wave feminism ‘haunt’ postfeminist depictions of women and girls. This chapter builds on that premise in the comparison between representations of fairy tale heroines in the contemporary adaptation cycle and fairy tale girlhood in 1990s cinema. In doing so, I hope to illustrate a key shift in adaptive strategy, from the 1990s heroine’s depoliticised, individual agency, to the contemporary heroine’s political significance within broader discourses of girlhood and intersectional feminism.

Feminist Narratology and Girlhood

Feminist intersections into the field of narratology consider the inner-workings of narrative texts and structures in light of gender and sexuality, asserting the “shared belief that sex, gender, and sexuality are significant not only to textual interpretation and reader reception but to textual poetics itself and thus to the shapes, structures, representational practices, and communicative contexts of

narrative texts” (Lanser 1-2). The original narratological aim of studying texts outside of societal, historical and cultural contexts, and thus as a ‘science’ unto itself, was critiqued by feminist critics. In “Gender and Narrative,” Lanser asserts that Vladimir Propp’s “Morphology of the Folktale” sought to universalise certain motifs, plots and dramatis personae in fairy and folk tales but, “[implies] a male hero throughout” (2). Thus the “widespread application of Propp’s functions to other tales and texts reinforced attention to what was in effect a gendered plot” (Lanser 2).

That narratology, and specifically the study of genre, should intersect with and be interpreted through social discourse and cultural context, appears in line with the very conception of the term ‘narratology’. Todorov first coined the term ‘narratology’ as the study of stories, and thus may be considered the earliest proponent of the field. In “The Origin of Genres,” he argues that genre itself originates from social discourse. Constituted by ‘speech-acts’, Todorov conceptualises genre as a discourse unto itself that arises from, expresses and disseminates a specific culture’s ideologies. Therefore, narrative “as a human institution is [...] organised by many ideological scripts [and] any literary convention—plots, narrative sequences, characters in bit parts—as an instrument that claims to depict experience, also interprets it” (DuPlessis 283).

In the previous three chapters, I have read genres as defined by characteristic, chronotopic spaces, which “knowing audiences” recognise and associate with specific events (Bakhtin 21, Hutcheon 121). The woods, whether in the horror film genre, the Gothic or the fairy tale, recalls the forbidden, the dangerous and anticipates girls in peril. However, “no convention is neutral, purely mimetic, or purely aesthetic” (DuPlessis 283) Driscoll observes that “girlhood is invested with a range of meanings by film genres and dominant understandings of the film audience” (227). Moreover, my discussion has demonstrated that these chronotopic spaces of forbidden chambers and alternate fantasy worlds, often ‘contain’ and entrap young female characters. Hubner observes that,

“Through the course of most of Western history, diverse fairy-tellers (Marie-Jean L’Héritier, Charles Perrault, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen, and Walt Disney, for example) have used

woods and forests to warn [...] against straying from the path. As a warning against revolt, woodlands can *be a symbol of repression, as much as a symbol of escape*, pointing finally to a return to civilisation, *a sanitised norm governed by societal law and order*, as part of a necessary rite of passage for those between the age of childhood and adulthood” (51) [emphasis mine].

Thus the image of the girl entering the woods being generically invested with anxiety, could be said to reflect the ideological policing of acceptable spaces for and enactments of young femininity, as well as the containment of girlhood within “a sanitised norm” (Hubner 51). In the Grimms’ tales and Perrault’s work, the woods are problematically scripted to depict the girl’s victimisation, as well as her culpability. In the following filmic case studies, I will analyse whether the mode of girlhood performed by the heroine “breaks the script” of “sanitised norms” of young femininity (DuPlessis 283, Hubner 51).

Red Riding Hood and the Woods as Depoliticised Space

David Kaplan’s *Little Red Riding Hood* (1997) is a direct/named arthouse adaptation, with narrative twists that may seem unfamiliar to contemporary audiences used to the appearance of a rescuing woodcutter in the tale, or Red being devoured by the wolf. However, this film closely adapts oral folktale versions of the tale, collected by such fairy tale scholars as Delarue and Gottfried Hanssen, which were in circulation long before Charles Perrault’s 1697 moralising tale, “Le Petite Chaperone Rouge.” In these, Red “shrewdly outwits the wolf and saves herself [...] no help from granny, hunter or father!” (Zipes 23). The same is true of Kaplan’s film, for which Zipes was a consultant. Indeed, far from a victim, the evident pleasure Red takes in her own on-screen seduction, shifts the film in a distinctly postfeminist direction.

As previously discussed in Chapter Three, Red Riding Hood scholarship generally asserts the tale to be a rape parable and adaptations thereof in popular culture have often contained themes of sexual violence, with wolfishness itself coming to connote predatory sexual behaviour. Since that is the viewer’s association with the tale, an adaptation which eliminates

intervening woodsmen or fathers and depicts Red as an active agent within the tale, appears empowering. The prioritisation of the 'dark' romance between Red and Wolf also exhibits postfeminist leanings, by allowing the pleasures of romance to coexist with Red's emancipation from the role of the 'good little girl led astray', or 'victim,' respectively. The agency Christina Ricci's teenage Red exhibits operates almost exclusively within her sexual subjectivity, however. Reflecting the Girl Power Movement of the 1990s, this incarnation of Red Riding Hood marks the postfeminist "shift in the discourses of femininity away from docility, quietness, acquiescence, and passivity, in support of self-determination, individualism and sexual subjectivity" (Adams and Bettis 35). Indeed, Kaplan's adaptation of the 'Red Riding Hood' tale and distinctly postfeminist female protagonist, encapsulate both the possibilities, and problematic aspects, of the postfeminist heroine. The film jarringly juxtaposes the ancient fairy tale forest space with postfeminist narrative "breaks" from the fairy tale script, as most audiences have come to know it (DuPleissis 283). However, the postfeminist re-interpretation of the tale's heroine, does not so much depart from the conservative fairy tale's ideal of young femininity, as shift its parameters to support a new, and no less restrictive mode, of idealised postfeminist girlhood.

Ricci's Red Riding Hood is not victimised by the Wolf, and exhibits agency by rejecting his duplicitous attempt at seduction in Granny's house, in favour of initiating a flirtation, on her own terms. However, while she does not perform a victimised and passive mode of femininity, her agency is purely expressed within the context of (heterosexual) desire and sexuality. This may interrupt the script of 'Red Riding Hood' as canonised by the Brothers Grimm, but her performance of girlhood nonetheless fully adheres to the "non-negotiable markers of ideal femininity" of "attractiveness [and] heterosexuality" (Bettis and Adams 10). The text gives the impression of a subversive reworking of the tale through the heroine's characterisation but Ricci's Red in fact embodies "contemporary meanings of ideal girlhood [and its accommodation of] shifting expectations about normative femininity" (Bettis and Adams 10). Ricci's portrayal of Red combines "the old markers of normative girlhood such as prettiness alongside the new markers of assertiveness and independence," in a performance of young, white, heterosexual female adolescence within the

depoliticised space of the fairy tale woodland chronotope (Bettis and Adams 10). Representations of the young female fairy tale heroine shift in response to new, postfeminist ideals of young femininity that nevertheless continue to set strict parameters for girlhood. Within the fairy tale woodland space associated with the heroine's jeopardy, Red defies the male narrator's edicts and rejects a victimised persona, but does so without breaching the then-newly emerging parameters of postfeminist girlhood.

In their exploration of girlhood and social spaces, Bettis and Adams assert that "race, ethnicity, social class and sexual orientation are filtered through different spaces [and] although [these are] powerful markers of identity, they are fluid in their manifestations, depending on their context and the space the girl inhabits" (10). By displacing Ricci into the fairy tale setting of the woods, markers of identity like race, ethnicity and social class appear entirely evaded, however. The black-and-white, silent photography renders the 1997 film stylistically timeless, as though it could as easily have been made a year ago as sixty years ago. The woods exist within the "sealed and timeless" fairy tale chronotope of "once upon a time," and without socio-historical or broader narrative context, the meanings of these markers of identity are negated (Nikolajeva 141).

Kaplan's dreamlike magical woodland mise-en-scène particularly recalls Jean Cocteau's *La Belle et la Bête* (1946). Ricci's distinctly 1990s postfeminist ideal of young femininity, contrasts sharply with the film's black-and-white photography and stylistic nods to classical cinema. Indeed, Kaplan's *Little Red Riding Hood* is not only shot entirely in black-and-white but as in silent film, includes little to no diegetic sound. Thus while Ricci's Red is not cast in the familiar Grimm's mould of damsel in distress, or passive Disney princess, she is rendered voiceless. Almost the only spoken voice heard in the film is that of the male, Vincent Price-like narrator (Quentin Crisp) over a continuous, simple, yet lush musical score composed entirely of Debussy's *L'Après Midi d'une Faune*. The narrator's unsettling vocal delivery would be more at home in a horror film and juxtaposed with the serene aural backdrop of Debussy's music, sets up another deliberate contrast between form and characterisation. The viewer is thus invited to distrust the ominous, out-of-place male narrator, who appears to act as a stand-in for male tellers like Perrault and the Brothers Grimm. Indeed,

the power speech being given exclusively to the narrator/teller and denied to the heroine, could be read as a critique of the misogynistic canonisation of tales said to have originally emerged as a female cultural form. However, denying the heroine speech effectively repeats “the persistent denial of female voice in Grimm’s’ Tales” (Bottigheimer 169). Moreover, by not allowing Red to deliver her own lines, her characterisation is entirely enacted through her physical performance. Thus while the heroine exhibits some level of agency to ‘break character’ in this film, her muted performance when she later strips off her costume at Grandmother’s house, invites the spectator to participate in her objectification.

Due to copyright concerns, this image cannot be shown.

Fig. 4.1: Ricci’s Red Riding Hood in the forest

“Once there was a little girl who went to take some milk and bread to her granny,” narrates a sinister male voice (Quentin Crisp) and the heroine appears in a disorienting wide shot of a seemingly endless forest, as a tiny figure carrying a basket and wearing a long hooded cloak (see: fig 4.1). Since the red hood is widely assumed to be an invention of

Perrault’s, the black-and-white photography distances itself from his literary adaptation. By extension, this monochromatic image of Red Riding Hood alone in the woods, distances itself from Perrault’s infamous moral. The line, “Children, especially attractive, well-bred young ladies, should never talk to strangers, for if they should do so, they may well provide dinner for a wolf,” implies the heroine is to blame for her own victimisation. The wide shot of the barren forest does stress the girl’s isolation and smallness in a vast wilderness, and primes the viewer to expect these frightening woods to be the scene of her violation (fig. 4.1). This audience expectation is soon subverted, however.

Due to copyright concerns, this image cannot be shown.

Fig. 4.2: Red Riding Hood sees the Wolf.

As in the recent spate of teen supernatural romance films, the woods in this film acts as a space, in which, “rather than representing the heroine’s empowerment and agency in conflict with the romance narrative of the ‘dangerous lover’, these elements [are

shown united by] the postfeminist text” (Bellan n. page). “In the woods, she met a wolf,” the narrator continues and Red stops to gaze through the trees at something out of shot. In the grass, an oddly gorgeous sight emerges: a slim, almost androgynous wolf-man (Timour Bourtasenkov) curls into and unfurls himself with the long, graceful movements of a stirring cat. The music swelling, a close-up of Red’s face shows her rapt expression, as she openly admires the wolf. Unaware of her presence, the wolf springs onto all fours gracefully, then looks up and long hair parting, sees her. His huge, yellowed eyes widen. The action cuts back to Red’s face in close-up, her large dark eyes dominating the frame. Thoughtful and unafraid, she regards him for another moment then moves away. Wonderingly, the wolf rises to his full man’s height and follows. This sequence is the first instance at which the viewer notices the unreliability of the narrator, and the disparity between the events as he describes them and the events as they unfold on-screen. The phrase, “She *met* a wolf” implies a wolf approaching a girl, or crossing her path. Instead, the wolf is the object of Red’s admiring gaze long before she is an object of his (see: fig. 4.2). In addition to probing the understood power dynamic between girl and wolf, this moment also reveals the extent to which a line that appears so self-evident can be open to a variety of interpretations, through adaptation.

The woodland sequences of the heroine traversing the woods alone on her way to Granny’s house, repeatedly frame her as only partially visible, through the trees or covered by her hood. These fragmented shots of the young heroine reflect the “fragmentation of the fairy tale [through adaptation and] the central role that [...] competing notions of the fairy tale play in the encoding, decoding and remaking of popular culture” (Bacchilega 112). An extreme close-up of a spider’s web reveals a fly caught inside and struggling to escape, visually foreshadows the Wolf’s efforts to entrap Red. Suddenly, however, the web is carefully torn apart by a small hand, until Red’s hooded face slowly comes into focus behind it, where she is revealed to be freeing the captive fly. Bacchilega argues that in order to “respond critically to the multivalent currency of the fairy tale [and the fairy tale’s] multiplicity of position takings [...] it is helpful to think of a fairy tale web” (18). The ‘path’ Red takes through the woods initially casts her in an unknowing, innocent light as she innocently picks wildflowers, unsuspecting of the Wolf’s plan to beat her to Grandmother’s

house. However, ripping apart the web in this entrancing shot, is not an action borne of passivity.

This shot echoes the film's opening scene, in which Red gazes down at her reflection in the brook, only to splash the water's reflection and smile as its image blurs and reforms; breaks and coheres. The spider's web obstructs a clear view of Red's face in a similar way, by mediating the girl's image. Tearing the web cast over her face and breaking up the water's reflection of her image bespeaks "the fluidity of identity amidst a shifting discursive and material landscape" (Bettis and Adams 10). As she clears away the cobwebs, Red's sorrowful look for the fly not only shows her empathy for trapped things but asserts a desire to literally 'clear the cobwebs' from this tale and "decode" the conventional script of the girl who leaves the path and is victimised (Bacchilega 84). More crucially, this scene shows Red Riding Hood willing to tear apart the fabric of the tale's story-structure as she tears apart the spider's web. Significantly, neither of these instances are narrated, which again implies the depths of story lost between the lines of canonised, literary tales.

The narrator is absent during the entire grandmother-eating sequence¹¹ as well, until after a dissolve from the Wolf giving the grandmother's face a lick, the narrator says in a dead-pan, matter-of-fact manner, "He put her blood in a bottle and some of her flesh in a bowl. Then the little girl arrived." Red materialises outside of Granny's house in her long cloak and enters, removing her cloak. "Thank you, my child' said the wolf." Red turns around and looks at the creature in the bed with an expression of instant comprehension. "Help yourself to some of the meat and wine on the table." At these words, Red looks coyly from the wolf to the meat on the table and apparently coming to a decision, leaves her cloak hanging by the door and coolly moves to sit down. The narrator fails to note her comprehension of the situation or her complicity with it. The cat suddenly announces, "A *slut* is she," and Red looks up irritably at the cat on the mantle, at the use of this word, clearly hearing both narrator and cat, "who eats the flesh of her granny." The cat (who in reality, is a Disney-esque plush puppet) actually moves his mouth when speaking, unlike Red and Wolf throughout. This seems to visually ally the plush cat with the sinister

¹¹ The grandmother-eating sequence, though not relevant to my discussion here, has clear overtones of violation and sexual aggression, despite the narrator's comedic narrative delivery afterward.

narrator, as though the cat were a moralistic placeholder for the narrator's thoughts, projected into the diegetic story-space. Giving the cat/narrator one last dark look, Red turns sullenly to the bowl of Granny's flesh and—meeting the wolf's eyes meaningfully—takes a small, seductive bite. The wolf, whose eyes widen and long fingers wiggle above Granny's bedcovers, looks comically titillated.

Red goes on to slowly remove all her clothing at the behest of the wolf, with accompanying shots of her legs in their “long stockings” as she removes them and so on, and throws each new item in the fire. In “La Conte de la Mere” as collected in Zipes' *Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood* this is an extremely tense narrative moment, in which Red's death or rape (or both) is imminently expected by the reader. However, this sequence fetishises Ricci's teenage body, separating her feet from her bare shoulder from her lips, in a series of lingering, close-up shots.

In Kaplan's adaptation of the tale, however, Red is clearly performing the role of 'innocent' and enjoying doing so (complicit with and performing her own objectification) while equally, the wolf is rather unconvincing as a threat, as he visibly trembles at the sight of her, while wearing Granny's nightcap. And though Red has burned all her garments, the cloak from which other adaptations take her name, remains safely hung up by the door, giving the sense that there is some level of safety, or game, at work here. Yet Red's shadow projects against the canopy around Granny's bed, as the wolf's shadow did when he came for Granny in the previous scene and this does visually recall Granny's fate at the hands of the wolf. Pulling back the curtain with a confident smile, she finds the wolf shaking just as Granny did, however—thus casting Red as initiating the encounter, even as sexual aggressor. As she clambers into the bed with the wolf, she pokes his hairy arm and leans towards him as the

narrator delivers the necessary lines, like “What hairy arms you have, Granny!” Only when the wolf runs a claw down her cherubic face, does Red draw back and claim she must leave the bed to make water.

Due to copyright concerns, this image cannot be shown.

Fig. 4.3: The Wolf pines for Red.

Despite the overall comedy of this adaptation which diverts the viewer's attention, a real threat is being negotiated here—after all, Granny was devoured by the wolf and the girl does not want to be next. The wolf eventually does allow Red to leave the bed, with a string tied around her ankle to make sure she does not escape. When she does not return, he goes out to find Red gone and the string tied to a plum tree. Red watches from the trees in the woods, casually eating a plum as the wolf prostrates himself and visibly pines for her (see: fig. 4.3). Eventually, Red throws her half-eaten plum at his head, smiling widely and so alerts him to her presence. Joyfully, he chases after her in a dreamy, slow-motion montage through the trees. “He ran after her,” the narrator explains, “but arrived at her house just at the moment she closed the door.”

This adaptation self-reflexively questions itself—leaving open gaps between the male narrator's moralising voice and the action taking place in the woods, so that the woods itself becomes the stage on which the narrator's unreliability is consistently revealed. This representation of the woods appears to act as a subtle evocation of the impossibility of ever adapting any fairy tale ‘faithfully’ in the absence of an *uhr-text* which, in that evocation, powerfully invokes the lost oral history of fairy tales. While Red, who—whether she is ripping spider webs apart, straying from the path or making her own, eating Granny's flesh or plums, slipping into bed with the wolf or evading him—does not merely represent a complex, adolescent heroine but one who creatively and boldly transgresses against the male narrator's voice and triumphs, by doing so.

“Normative femininity is a liminal state” and the woods, as a liminal space that can as easily be “a symbol of repression,” or “a symbol of escape,” becomes the stage for the film text's negotiation of “the old markers of normative girlhood” with postfeminist ideals of girlhood (Bettis and Adams 10, Hubner 51). Red leaving her cloak behind at Granny's cottage and re-entering the woods, could be read as her sexual awakening or crossing of the boundary into adulthood. This constructs a postfeminist ideal of girlhood, which portrays the heroine as an agent of her own coming of age but “legitimises a heteronormative and linear developmental trajectory of ‘healthy female heterosexuality’” (Renold and Ringrose 2013: 248). Leaving behind the ‘red cloak’ is itself a significant narrative moment: a shrugging off, as it were, of her assigned ‘role’ in the narrator's story. In her jubilant run through the woods, she

evades the moralising narrator and his plush-cat proxy in Grandmother's house. In inviting the wolf to chase after her with the mischievously thrown plum, Red exhibits agency and pleasurable complicity in a familiar sequence (wolf chasing Red through the forest) that in another adaptation's context, might otherwise have cast her into the role of victim. This represents the heroine as empowered to participate in seduction, rather than as the victim or object of seduction but nevertheless "encourages either/or position-taking among stakeholders between sexual empowerment and pleasure, versus sexual danger and protectionism" (Renold and Ringrose 248-249).

In Kaplan's *Little Red Riding Hood*, the heroine runs away from the wolf not to escape, but to invite him, and the woods she runs through are revealed, in turn, to be less a space of danger than one of agency and play. As discussed in Chapter Three, the contemporary, conservative "commodification of the fairy tale [is] a compensatory fiction" primarily addressed a young female audience (Bacchilega 115). Kaplan's *Little Red Riding Hood* thus ostensibly provides a compensatory postfeminist alternative, by featuring this agentic, playful Red Riding Hood, who isn't violated. This rewrites the well-known, conservative fairy tale script as popularly told by male tellers, but centres upon a heroine whose agency is delimited to her sexual behaviour. Kaplan's film breaks the script of adaptations in which "the heroine is obliged to bear the responsibility for sexual violation" (Zipes 78). However, the film is not addressed to a young female audience, but to an arthouse audience primarily composed of adults. Ricci's knowing and seductive turn as an adolescent Red therefore functions less as a critique of the disempowerment of Red Riding Hood in Perrault's work or Grimm's' tales, than as a performance of girlhood mediated through an objectifying adult gaze. Jack Zipes' involvement as a consultant and the adaptation's references to versions of the tale that predate Perrault and the Grimm's' tales, imply that this adaptation is more legitimate or faithful than other adaptations, as well as less misogynistic. However, Kaplan's film ultimately displaces a fantasy of passive, imperilled girlhood in conservative fairy tales, in favour of a postfeminist fantasy of a specifically non-threatening mode of agency.

Jess Butler observes that postfeminist discourse "works to conceal the underlying power relations that reproduce hegemonic ideas about race, gender,

sexuality, and class [and] requires participants to reject political activism in favour of consumption and cultural visibility” (50). In Chapter One, my discussion of Guillermo Del Toro’s *Pan’s Labyrinth* (2006) demonstrates that fairy tale texts can be adapted to undermine “hegemonic ideas” and reveal “underlying power relations” (Butler 50). The woods, where the anti-Francoist rebels are hidden, is also the stage for Ofelia’s rebellion against her fascist stepfather and her coming of age. By setting the narrative of *Little Red Riding Hood* in a fairy tale woodland within the sealed, fairy tale chronotope of “once upon a time,” the threat Ricci’s characterisation might otherwise pose to conservative fantasies of imperilled girlhood is undercut, by being entirely removed from any socio-political context. The woods in *Little Red Riding Hood* set up narrative expectations for the heroine’s violation, only to show her knowingly performing and then rejecting an imperilled mode of girlhood. The depoliticised space of the fairy tale woods conceals the “underlying power relations” which contribute to sexual violence (Butler 50). In turn, the voiceless heroine’s individual agency being exclusively constructed as sexual, allows an agentic mode of fairy tale girlhood to remain non-threatening, while simultaneously catering to an objectifying, adult audience. Thus Ricci’s portrayal of Red embodies “the central figure of postfeminist discourses [as] white [and] heterosexual,” and in the depoliticised woods, is far removed from any meaningful discourse surrounding sexual violence (Projansky 2001: 12).

***Maleficent* (2014)**

In this section, I will analyse a key sequence from a recent direct/referenced adaptation of ‘Sleeping Beauty’ that received a mixed critical reception but proved to be highly commercially successful: Disney’s *Maleficent* (dir. Robert Stromberg, U.S.A., Disney, 2014).¹² Though the film adapts the tale from the perspective of Maleficent, the villainess (Angelina Jolie), it is nevertheless a direct/named adaptation that closely follows the plot of the tale, as it has been popularly canonised and circulated. Indeed, Charles Perrault’s 1697 literary version is cited as the film’s source material in the film’s closing credits.

¹² *Maleficent* had a domestic (U.S.) box office gross of \$241,410,378 and a foreign gross of \$517,129,407, with a worldwide gross of \$758.500000.

However, *Maleficent* is clearly most crucially intended to be a re-visioning of Disney's 1959 *Sleeping Beauty* (dir. Geronimi, U.S.A., 1959).

Screenwriter Linda Woolverton is credited with co-writing two of Disney's most commercially successful and critically well-received films, *The Lion King* (1994) and *Beauty and the Beast* (1991). Her involvement in the film and the film's considerable budget of \$180 million, demonstrate that Disney clearly remains artistically and commercially concerned with continuing its 'Disney Princess' oeuvre, and committed to targeting a new generation of girl consumers. Such gendered 'princess' roles have come under public scrutiny, however, and in some ways, *Maleficent* appears to narratively acknowledge and subvert the repressive gender tropes of its 1959 animated adaptation of the same tale. Its narrative twists of characterisation and plot "break the script" of cinematic rape narratives and how these portray the survivor, in the form of Maleficent (DuPlessis 283). Simultaneously, however, Aurora's (Elle Fanning) characterisation preserves the conservative fairy tale's idealised mode of passive, imperilled girlhood.

An entire sequence in *Maleficent* revisits and adapts, almost word for word, and shot by shot, its parallel sequence in the earlier animated version. The scene in question, in which Maleficent casts the curse upon the infant Princess, clearly identifies her as the antagonist in the 1959 animated film. However, in the 2014 adaptation, the repetition of the christening scene and Maleficent's curse carry very different connotations, when preceded by a coded rape scene involving the King. The sequence shows a younger, girlish Maleficent who can fly and has large, feathered wings, falling asleep beside her lover, the future King. When she awakes, her wings have been cut off by him and stolen. Like Ravenna in *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012), this instance of symbolic rape problematically forms the impetus for her rage and displaced act of revenge against the Princess Aurora, in what has been read as a "fairy-tale spin on the rape-revenge subgenre" (Aranjuez 10). This controversial scene stages the heroine's journey into the woods with a man she believed to be her friend, and adapts the Gothic tradition of narratively demarcating "the forest [as] the place of rape" (Carter 1979:35).

The regulation of representing sexual violence on screen has a history that is relevant to this sequence and its codified representation of rape, through

fantasy imagery. Sarah Projansky has convincingly argued that the conventions associated with screening rape have been shaped by the 1935-1965 Production Code. While the Production Code has long since been abolished, its mandate that rape should “never be more than suggested” gave rise to complex instances of implied, symbolic or otherwise coded representations of rape in Classical Hollywood Cinema (Maltby 62). As a contemporary fantasy film, the depiction of sexual violence in *Maleficent* is obviously not constrained by the Production Code. However, in order to be rated ‘PG’, the sequence in question is subject to operating within the bounds of ‘FV’ (fantasy violence). By being mediated through fantasy, the symbolic rape scene in *Maleficent* is nevertheless coded in a way that recalls the conventions of screening rape in Production Code Era Hollywood. By reading the sequence in light of codified representations of sexual violence, and what the MPAA understands by ‘fantasy violence,’ this section will demonstrate that the symbolic rape scene breaks the ideologically scripted narrative conventions of depicting sexual violence on screen. Furthermore, it will be demonstrated that the regulation of screening sexual violence is bound up with assumptions regarding fantasy as a mode, as well as girl audiences, and their relationship to (sexual) violence.

Symbolic or connotative representations of rape like the one that occurs in *Maleficent* are coded but nonetheless identifiable and understood as rape by audiences. While the symbolic rape scene in a PG-rated film divided reviewers into those who felt Disney to be “pushing” inappropriate content “for children,” and those who regretted that the “rape/revenge angle so many reviewers have noted” was “lost in the story’s drive to soften its title character,” both camps recognise that the scene stages rape (McWeeny 2014, Bahr 2014.) This recognition on the audience’s part is contextualised by the larger cinematic history of representing rape through narrative suggestion in Classical Hollywood Cinema, rather than screening the act itself. As mentioned above, the 1935 Production Code’s censorship regulations dictated that rape “should never be more than suggested, and only when essential for the plot” (Maltby 62). As Projansky observes, films under the production code therefore “alluded to rape obliquely but nonetheless systematically *depended on the act* to motivate narrative progression” (Projansky 64) [emphasis mine]. This effectively distinguishes between appropriate and inappropriate modes of representing

rape, by the extent to which rape is considered narratively 'necessary.' This distinction repeats cultural 'scripts' of rape as an "origin of both plot and social relations," in which rape is made permissible to be shown, because it has a narrative function, which in turn problematically implies it has a function socially and politically (Higgins and Silver qtd by Projansky 64).

As Projansky asserts, its function in classical Hollywood narrative is often 'corrective,' "a woman's punishment for inappropriate action," which polices women's bodies and place within cultural and social spheres (63-64). This is the context in which Maleficent's rape is initially introduced: she refuses to allow an invading king's army to conquer the Moors, and as a result, her wings are cut off, while she lies in a drugged sleep. While disturbing, this symbolic rape is critically framed as an act of violation and violence in no uncertain terms, and by enacting the rape through the symbolic cutting of the heroine's wings, avoids graphic sexual violence. The negative reactions this scene provokes in reviews claim to be primarily concerned with its address to a young audience, however. Indeed, reviewer Drew McWeeny asserts, "I will not be taking my kids to see *Maleficent*, a film that is so swollen with psycho-sexual subtext that I felt like I was watching a true hijacking of the mainstream" (2014). This perceived "hijacking of the mainstream" through the inclusion of a symbolic rape scene, was deemed 'fantasy violence' by the MPAA, however, and therefore appropriate in a film rated 'PG' (McWeeny 2014). As Rachel Blau DuPlessis observes, "To compose a work is to negotiate [...] which stories can be told" and this sequence clearly goes to the heart of "what is felt to be narratable by both [cinematic] and social conventions" in a fairy tale film directed to a young and primarily female audience (283). McWeeny's review is one of many which raise concerns about the so-called 'fantasy violence' the sequence contains, but exposes equal discomfort with fairy tales which position heroines as less than passive victims, who might "[murder] the men responsible" (McWeeny 2014).

Narrative events of a "terrible or traumatic [nature are] often associated with a certain location such as the house and the wood" (Allen 96). Chapter Two demonstrates the chambers of horrors containing encounters with trauma, within the otherwise familiar space of the house and home. Woodlands are frequently figured as a setting for violence and rape in the horror genre, the Gothic tradition and fairy tale narratives. In this sequence, the woodland scene

of the crime is revisited but simultaneously subverted, by revealing the culturally scripted myths which contribute to sexual violence. When Stefan hears the King's plan to name whoever murders Maleficent as his successor to the throne, the young man travels to the border of the woodland Moors. Though the film opened on a magical, sunshine-filled woodland kingdom, the same setting is now suffused in darkness, with bright moonlight barely piercing the leafy forest ceiling. The shift from idyllic fairy tale forest to Gothic wilderness is evoked by the shadows of gnarled branches and a heavy mist rolling across the once dreamlike scene. Stefan stands at the edge of the woods and calls Maleficent's name. When she appears, he warns her of the King's plot to kill her, imploring: "Please, Maleficent. You have to trust me."

Accompanying this plea for trust, a soft and delicate melody on violins rises, as if in agreement with Stefan's request. A mid-close up shot of Maleficent standing sentry at the woods' edge, shows her tight, suspicious expression in the shadows slowly soften, in response. The action cuts to the pair sitting side by side, in a woodland clearing, to swelling violins. In this scene, score and voice-over narration inhabit the role of the 'teller,' by aurally raising the expectation of romance. As Zipes observes, tellers like Brothers Grimm and Charles Perrault, adapt 'Red Riding Hood' from "a hopeful oral tale about the [social] initiation of a young girl into a tragic one of violence in which the girl is blamed for her own violation," a version that has been "largely accepted by most writers and storytellers in the Western world" (7). In this woodland scene, the narrator and score are similarly shown to be complicit with Maleficent's violation, as these elements stage the woodland reunion between the two old friends, as desired.

By appearing to occupy the romance genre, the scene narratively cues a romantic reconciliation, only to violently deviate from the script. The expected romantic scene ending in a violent act of violation and assault, is an extreme disruption of audience expectations. The film otherwise plays upon the familiarity of Geronimi's *Sleeping Beauty*, and anticipates a "knowing audience" with prior knowledge of Disney's 1959 conservative fairy tale (Hutcheon 121). The gentle, enchanting melody initially accompanying this woodland scene "primes the [knowing] audience's expectation as to what will follow," only to cause them to experience a betrayal of those expectations, which in turn

echoes the extreme betrayal of trust Maleficent experiences (Hutcheon 121, Karlin and Wright 131).

The juxtaposition of the teller's claims and the reality of the scene, indict cultural narratives and myths surrounding rape and its prevention. Indeed, as in *Little Red Riding Hood* (1997), the actions in the woodland space soon reveal the unreliability of score and the narrator. The female narrator's voice reassures the spectator of the safety of Maleficent welcoming Stefan back into the woods, explaining in a sing-song fairy tale cadence, that "she forgave Stefan his folly and his ambition, and all was as it had been, long ago." The light, airy melody on violin strings gently returns, and glimmers of fairy lights on the river brighten the scene's previous darkness. Maleficent and the viewer are lulled into a sense of security offered by the music and narrator, which reflects the erroneous belief that assault is only to be feared from a stranger. A 2011 study interviewed 200 college-age young women who had experienced sexual violence, and of the 10 types of relationships survivors were cited to have with the perpetrator, 9 out of 10 indicated a relationship with someone they knew, while only 1 of the 10 was categorised as a "stranger" (Rinehart and Yeater 932). Likewise, conservatively told fairy tales warn of the dangers of the strange witch in the woods or the wolf who lures you from the path, but not of the prince. However, just as Hardwicke's *Red Riding Hood* reveals the wolf hunting the heroine to be her father, and thus locates the threat within the familial home, Maleficent reveals the boy she once shared 'true love's kiss' with, to be capable of rape.

Due to copyright concerns, this image cannot be shown.

Fig. 4.4: The bottle discarded on the grass in *Maleficent* (2014).

All is not "as it had been, long ago." The narrator's dreamy tone and the sweet, delicate melodic refrain belie the expression on Stefan's face in this scene, as he hands her a bottle and offers her a drink. Maleficent brings the bottle to

her lips and drinks it down, and only as her head falls to one side and her wings droop, does the soothing score slow and ominously change to a minor key and lower register. A cut to an isolated shot of the bottle discarded on the grass, shows a murky brown liquid dripping from its contents (fig. 4.4). The low, ominous melody that surrounds this image makes direct visual reference to the

illegal but common use of 'date-rape drugs' like gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB) and rohypnol to tranquilise the victim into a state of either unconsciousness, or disorientation, to enact an assault. This association is emphasised by a close-up of Maleficent's sleeping face immediately following the shot of the bottle, as a shadow falls across her cheek.

In his review of the film, McWeeny imagines "a whole generation of women explaining how deeply and permanently broken their view of men was by Angelina Jolie when they were just princess-crazy little girls" (2014). This statement positions the reviewer as negatively viewing the film for the sake of the young female audience, but is more clearly concerned with the film's representation of men as sexual aggressors, and how dangerously this representation subverts "mainstream" conservative fairy tales' depiction of male characters as heroes and protectors of girls and women (McWeeny 2014). The review positions the girl in the audience as both "princess-crazy" and like a prototypical Disney princess, in need of protection: in this case from narratives about sexual violence (McWeeny 2014). Research within girlhood studies has shown that young women and girls experience "routine sexual violence," however, to the point that "girls' experiences of violence are very much bound up with their experiences of being a girl" (Renold and Ringrose 400, Batchelor, Burman and Brown 132). This suggests that if they haven't already, the young female audience is likely to experience some form of sexual violence at some point in their lives. This being the case, a mainstream, big-budget fairy tale film that includes sexual violence and depicts the heroine as being in no way at fault, acknowledges and legitimises the young female audience's experience of violence in their daily lives.

This woodland sequence does indeed, as McWeeny puts it, "hijack the mainstream" by subverting conventional rape prevention literature, much of which adapts fairy tale imagery to oblige young women to bear the responsibility for sexual assault (McWeeny 2014). In the same year *Maleficent* was released, the campus police of the University of Madison-Wisconsin posted a guide to student safety online, which implored the student to "Be a hard target – a victim looks like a victim!" In a direct reference to 'Red Riding Hood,' the article asserts, "If you present yourself as easy prey, then expect to attract some wolves" (Brown 2014). This advice on how to "[shed] the victim persona," clearly

assumes a stranger to be the threat, rather than a person known to the victim (Brown 2014). Rajiva asserts the harmful nature of such cultural myths regarding rape and rape prevention, observing that, “it is still girls who are expected to avoid violence and police themselves, and other girls, in their behaviour, dress and leisure activities; none of which [...] prevents the ongoing sexual violence that many girls experience in their daily lives” (141).

Batchelor, Burman and Brown’s findings report that while “the possibility of being sexually attacked by a stranger was a source of major anxiety and vulnerability for many girls in the self-report study,” girls showed “reluctance [to] describe coercive sexual encounters with boys they knew as ‘violence’” (127). Therefore the myth that rape and sexual violence is largely perpetrated by strangers, does not simply misrepresent the majority of sexual violence taking place in young women’s lives, but potentially contributes to low rates of reporting these crimes. In *Maleficent*, score and voice-over narration manipulate audiences to expect romance in the build toward the rape scene, only to sharply subvert them and stage a violent instance of symbolic rape, instead. This strongly critiques the expectation that girls should foresee potentially unsafe situations by placing the audience in a position of being equally unable to anticipate the scene’s violence. By thus depicting the assault perpetrated by a trusted friend and acknowledging the reality of such occurrences, within a safe fairy tale frame, *Maleficent* breaks the all too common social ‘script’ of giving the victim the responsibility of anticipating and preventing assault.

Furthermore, the text evades objectifying the act of rape on screen by representing it symbolically through fantasy imagery. Indeed, Projansky analyses a large sample of films depicting rape both under and after the abolishment of the Production Code, and suggests that many of these films risk engaging in voyeurism while depicting sexual violence. She asserts that,

“Many of these texts have the potential to offer nuanced critiques of both rape and the representation of rape that could encourage continued feminist activism against rape and for rape law (and legal practice) reform but the texts undermine that potential by providing more comfortable positions for viewing rape” (Projansky 118).

The ethical questions raised by viewing and screening rape within the context of a fairy tale film geared toward young viewers, engages with more contemporary rating systems, as well. The sequence in *Maleficent* was deemed 'fantasy violence' by censors, which is a term that emerged "[following] the revision of parental guidelines implemented by the U.S. television industry in 1997," and describes, broadly, violence that occurs within a fantasy narrative (David Butler 29). However, Julia Cantor suggests that "whether the violence is indeed of the impossible variety or whether it is quite realistic but simply performed by animated characters," or in a fantasy setting, the term 'FV' simply "reduces the possible loss of advertising revenue [the industry] expected the words [such as] 'sex' [and] 'violence' [...] would cause" (1997). The implication to parents is that fantasy violence depicts a lesser and less harmful violence, but "rather than offering a clear guidance to parents" fantasy violence has become a "convenient 'get-out clause' for an industry nervous about loss of revenue" (Butler 30).

Indeed, the guidelines within which fantasy violence conventionally operates is maintained throughout what is nevertheless a horrifying sequence. The knife Stefan produces after *Maleficent* has lost consciousness, is easily identified as a representational phallic object by the position in which he holds it, in a shot that frames *Maleficent*'s sleeping face and the weapon clutched

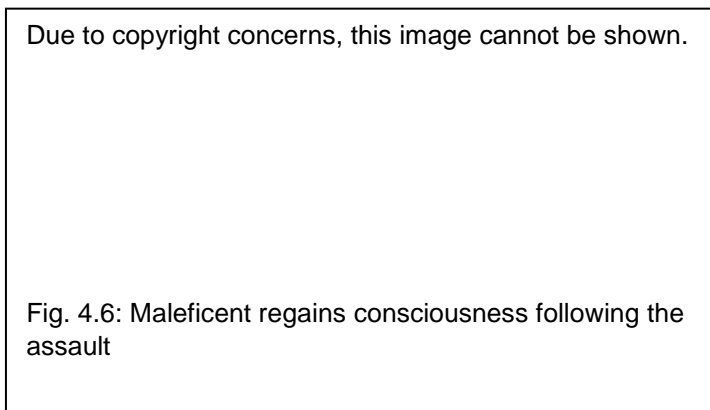
Due to copyright concerns, this image cannot be shown.

Fig. 4.5: Stefan, preparing to attack a sleeping *Maleficent* with a blade.

between Stefan's hands, as he kneels behind her head (see: fig. 4.5). Now raising the knife above his head, arms trembling, he begins to bring the knife down upon her, only to cast it aside at the last moment. *Maleficent*'s face disappears from shot, as

Stefan suddenly runs hands across her folded wings, open mouthed. A hair-raising, high-pitched note strikes as a slow zoom toward Stefan's face shows his initially conflicted, and then resolute, expression. A mid-level close-up suddenly frames his hands unfolding what appears to be a type of garrotte, or ligature of chain used to strangle, or slice. The action abruptly cuts away from the disquieting image of the garrotte, and its sudden appearance and then

disappearance from the frame, chillingly evokes the unseen, off-screen violence it represents. Through the avoidance of even showing the garrotte in the same frame as Maleficent in this carefully edited sequence, violence is only ever implied and threatened, and blood is never shown. However, the implication that this instance of fantasy violence is “less real and thus, perhaps, not to be taken as seriously, the inference being that FV is (more) acceptable violence” does not hold (Butler 30). By depicting rape through the lens of fantasy, *Maleficent* shows its devastation but avoids exploiting the actress or the young female audience. The scene changes from the isolated shot of the garrotte, to Maleficent lying alone in the emptiness of the wood until she awakes, wincing in visible pain. A transition to a close-up shot tightly frames her wide-eyed look of disbelief as tears fill her eyes. She reaches over her shoulder, where only a stump of a wing is visible. In wider shot, her wings are entirely absent, leaving only the darkened, wounded skin covering two stumps, through her brown shift. A ragged gasp emits from Maleficent’s throat as she touches her back and continues to feel for her wings that are no longer there. The gasp soon turns to screams, as she hugs herself and continues to look over her shoulder, in horror. The setting was cast as romantic in the previous scene, but now frames



Maleficent sobbing on earth covering the ragged, exposed roots of an enormous tree (fig. 4.6). The image of a woman whose wings have been sawed off juxtaposed with the tree’s severed roots

powerfully visualises the unmooring of Maleficent’s sense of self.

The narrator’s voice only returns in the aftermath of the rape, connoting the experience as unspeakable, and simultaneously implicating the teller’s failure to canonise its occurrence within the broader narrative of ‘Sleeping Beauty’. Instead, she narrates Stefan gaining the throne and hiding behind castle walls, from Maleficent’s wrath, but continues, “Maleficent built her own walls, that the Moors may never again suffer the touch of a human...” The narrator’s euphemistic language sublimates Maleficent’s pain and the violence

of the assault into the narrative space of the woodland Moors. This is another example of melodrama's convention of codifying women and girls' experiences and emotions into setting, space and object, being narratively repurposed in the corpus of fairy tale films this thesis analyses.

Rape in *Maleficent* arguably drives the narrative forward by motivating the heroine's quest for revenge, but this adaptive choice is also contextualised by the rape narrative earlier versions of 'Sleeping Beauty' engage with, as discussed in Chapter Three.¹³ Like Julia Leigh's *Sleeping Beauty*, this film thus revives and foregrounds themes of violation, and the tale's earlier incarnations as a rape narrative. However, Leigh's film constantly implicates the spectator's gaze, and makes feminine passivity monstrous. *Maleficent* transposes the act, and re-casts the bad fairy into the rape narrative, which effectively protects the image of the sleeping princess waiting to be kissed awake, and its idealisation of young feminine passivity. This provides the audience with "more comfortable positions" from which to view the adolescent girl's body in enchanted sleep as an aesthetic, romantic and erotic object, because the spectre of rape has been raised in *Maleficent*'s backstory, and thus displaced from Aurora (Projansky 118). While the removal of *Maleficent*'s wings is portrayed as an act of violation against her unconscious body, Aurora's body in enchanted, deathlike sleep is "a body situated outside temporality [...] meant to afford erotic pleasure even though, or maybe because [she is] inaccessible" (Bronfen 96). This "erotic pleasure" being predicated on Aurora's "inaccessibility" and inability to give consent, inevitably and problematically offers the viewer "a comfortable position" from which to maintain a fantasy of the idealised, ultimately passive mode of deathly young femininity (Projansky 118).

Tasker and Negra identify, in opposition to the girlish, positive postfeminist heroine, "the 'bad' female [who is] repressive, deceptive and deadly" (Tasker and Negra 9-10). *Maleficent*, who vengefully curses an infant princess and claims the Moors as her own dark kingdom, appears to outwardly embody this 'bad' mode of female characterisation. When Aurora flips the script and allies herself with *Maleficent*, a postfeminist intervention into the fairy tale

¹³ I am again referring to "Sun, Moon and Talia" ["Sole, Luna e Talia"] by Giambattista Basile (1634) a canonised version of 'Sleeping Beauty' that predates both Charles Perrault's version "La Belle aux Bois Dormant" (1697), and the Grimm's retelling "Dörnroschen" (1812). As discussed in the previous chapter, Basile's version engages with a rape narrative that is adapted and veiled in later versions, as a kiss.

text as we know it, takes place. Geronimi's 1959 *Sleeping Beauty* reinforces Disney's perpetuation of the Grimm's tales' tendency to pit "passive, pretty heroines," against "female villains" (Stone 44). By uniting Maleficent and Aurora as allies, the film reworks the "popular stereotype of the innocent beauty victimised by the wicked villainess" (Stone 44). The 'maiden/crone' binary perpetuated by Geronimi's *Sleeping Beauty* is resisted in favour of representing Maleficent and Aurora's maternal relationship as the textual example of 'true love'.

While Aurora performs a mode of classical, retrograde Disney Princess passivity, she is also not the film's heroine. Maleficent is the attractively flawed powerhouse of the story and the anti-heroine the narrative is championing; the figure that the young female audience is invited to project themselves onto and identify with. The text preserves the traditionally imperilled, passive maiden who must be rescued from her doomed sleep, but it is Maleficent's motherly kiss and not that of a prince, which wakes Sleeping Beauty. Though Maleficent is imperilled when she is assaulted in the woods, her woodland kingdom soon becomes the setting for her agentic pursuit of revenge against Stefan and eventual efforts to protect and mother Aurora. The woods thus becomes "the place of rape" but also the setting for its potent acknowledgment to the young female audience (Carter 1979: 35). It stages the heroine as imperilled, assaulted, in recovery and finally at peace, which ultimately re-tells 'Sleeping Beauty' as a powerful evocation of young female coming of age and survival.

The Hunger Games (2012)

The protagonist of *The Hunger Games* franchise arguably epitomises the postfeminist fantasy heroine on-screen. In many ways, Katniss Everdeen (Jennifer Lawrence) is the cultural and cinematic descendent of iconic fairy tale heroines. Defining moments for Katniss, in which her characterisation or heroism is narratively established, consistently occur when she enters the woods. Both her role as 'tribute' in the trials of the Hunger Games and her role as 'provider' for her starving family as a hunter of game, are framed by woodland spaces. The sacrificial nature of the 'tribute' role, when she first enters the woodland arena, is reminiscent of the Grimms' fairy tale heroines who, like Gretel, are abandoned to the woods, and like Snow White and Red Riding Hood, are lured into danger there.

The woods space in contemporary fairy tale adaptations continue to stage representations of girlhood as imperilled, throughout the cycle. However, my analysis of Kaplan's *Little Red Riding Hood* reveals that postfeminist interventions in that representation, often grant the otherwise victimised heroine a purely sexual, depoliticised agency, which "obscures and ignores relevant social issues pertaining to gender inequality" and gendered violence (Friedlander 85). As the discussion of *Maleficent* demonstrates, however, contemporary adaptations that engage with rape narratives can "break the script" of the familiar damsel in distress, by acknowledging and critiquing the underlying inequalities of power, which contribute to gendered violence (DuPlessis 282). Like *Maleficent*, *The Hunger Games* (2012) breaks from a tendency in postfeminist texts to depoliticise female agency and instead, adapts fairy tales centring upon young female protagonists within a critical, political frame. *The Hunger Games'* representation of imperilled girlhood and gendered violence is also an exception to a tendency in postfeminist discourses to "reinstate whiteness as the standard" (Butler 48). I will analyse the death of Rue (Amandla Stenberg) in the woodland arena of the Games, in relation to its depiction of black girlhood and violence. Furthermore, I will argue that Katniss and Rue embody a new kind of heroinism in this sequence, which resists the glorification of violence as a form of 'female action heroine' agency.

Like Ofelia in *Pan's Labyrinth* (Del Toro, 2006), Rue's performance of an imperilled mode of innocent girlhood is ultimately empowering. In her discussion of Lee Daniels' *Precious* (2009), Projansky observes that, "many African-American feminist scholars point out [that] black girls are systematically denied girlhood [and therefore] this is a question that must be asked of films [which centre upon girls of colour coming of age]" (Projansky 2014: 124). In this case, I argue that Rue's embodiment of innocent girlhood "can be read to challenge the denial of black girlhood" (Projansky 2014: 124).

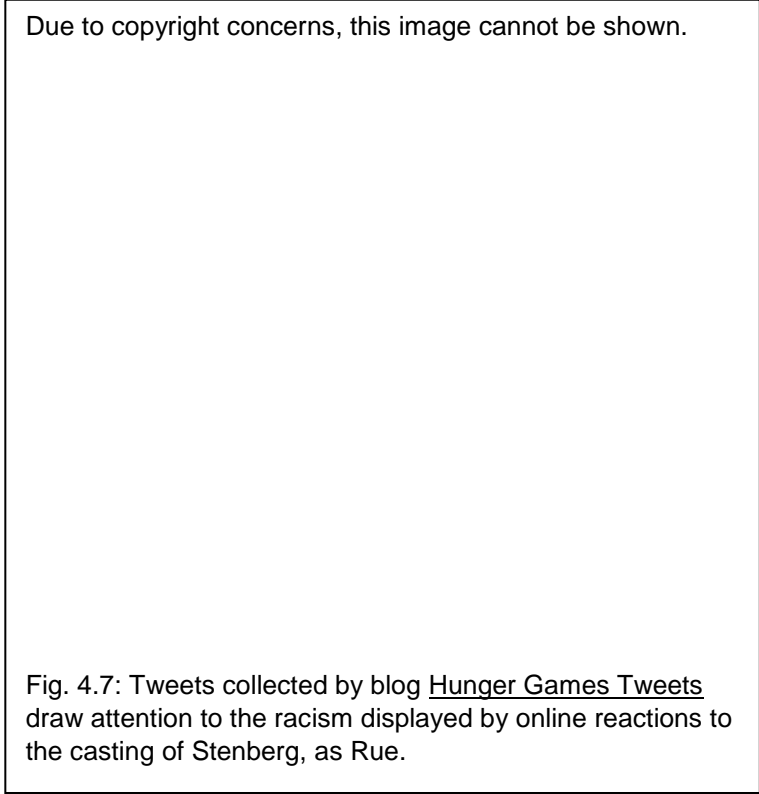
The denial of girlhood to girls of colour and the "dehumanisation of black children" can be read in relation to Eurocentric adaptations of fairy tales and in particular, to the racialised image of innocence woven into the Grimms' Tales (Jones 207). Fairy tales originally adapted to teach moral lessons to the children of the bourgeoisie, equate goodness and beauty with fairness and whiteness, and while "these tales are [now] read by children across various

social class and racial groups, [fairy tales continue to] contain symbolic imagery that legitimates existing race, class, and gender systems” (Baker-Sperry and Grauerholz 714).

Baker-Sperry and Grauerholz observe that in the Grimm’s’ Tales, “The ‘lazy’ daughter [...] is covered in black pitch [and] ‘The White Bride and the Black Bride’, the mother and daughter are “cursed” with blackness and ugliness,” and assert that these tales collectively produce a discourse in which “beauty becomes associated not only with goodness but also with whiteness, and economic privilege” (719). The pedagogical impact of advancing a notion of innocence as inevitably white and economically privileged should not be underestimated. Studies have shown that, “innocence, a protection afforded to children that typically gives them the benefit of the doubt when it comes to

criminality, is not granted to black children in equal measure as it is given to white children” (Jones 207).

The extent to which the image of childhood innocence as a white, fair-haired girl continues to be entrenched in Anglo-American culture, was demonstrated with the release of the first trailer for *The Hunger Games*, when audiences caught



its first glimpse of cast members. Cassandra L. Jones has since conducted a critical reading of the racist responses communicated on social media by *The Hunger Games* fandom to the casting of Amandla Stenberg, an African-American child actor, as Rue (see: fig. 4.7). Tweets like the one from user Alana Paul (“Awkward moment when Rue is some black girl and not the little blond innocent you pictured”) implicitly equate ‘innocence’ with whiteness and

fairness, and blackness as both 'other' and other than innocent. As Jones astutely points out, "Paul's use of the word 'innocent' in contrast to Stenberg's blackness reveals a deeper message about who is afforded innocence in American culture" (214). It is worth noting that the literary character Stenberg's performance is based on, is described in the book as, "a twelve-year-old girl from District 11 [with] dark brown skin and eyes, but other than [that] very like [my sister] Prim in size and demeanor" (Collins 49). Reading a character consistently described as "hauntingly" innocent, gentle, and kind, immediately signified 'whiteness' to these readers, despite clear indicators in the source material that the character is a person of colour (49). Thus Stenberg's ethereal performance of girlhood, and innocence in the face of a corrupt state, challenges the construct of idealised, innocent girlhood as inevitably white.

The sequence in which Rue is killed in the Arena, as part of the yearly reaping of children from poor districts to fight each other to the death, takes place in an idyllic woodland clearing. Katniss and Rue have become allies and friends in the Arena and previous scenes establish their bond, as they cook and gossip in their small, demarcated space of safety. When Katniss returns from an assault on rival tributes, she discovers that the space of safety has been breached, as Rue is caught in a crude trap. Once she escapes, Katniss and Rue embrace, until a sound out of shot disturbs the peaceful moment. As Katniss turns, a boy comes into shot and releases an arrow. In a quick, reverse shot to Katniss, she counters and shoots him in the chest. The action cuts to the boy's knees buckling—he is hit, and collapses. When Katniss turns, however, Rue stands staring in silent amazement at the arrow piercing her small chest. In *Interrogating Postfeminism*, Tasker and Negra assert that, "The proliferation of feminist writing in relation to the 'action heroine' or 'kick-ass girl' is problematic to the extent that it evades an exploration of the meaning of violence" (20). Unlike representations of violence which glamorise violent acts through drawn out action sequences, or present violence as a mode of agency for the action heroine/heroine, the violence leading to Rue's death is quick, sudden and the consequences immediately irreversible.

Katniss holds Rue in her arms, the small girl's head in her lap, and zips up her hoody, to conceal the wound on her chest. Shots of Rue's face in close-up reveal tears in the corner of her eyes, but she never breaks her gaze from

Katniss. Her small hands frame either side of the shot, where they clutch the older girl's forearms. Katniss whispers, out of shot, that Rue will be 'okay' but the child doesn't reply and asks Katniss to sing. The lyrics of the song are the same that were sung to Katniss's younger sister Prim in the film's opening. The words evoke a woodland bed, and now anticipate the forest as Rue's final resting place, "Underneath the willow/ A pale green pillow/ Lay down your head..." Rue's graceful tree climbing and ease in the forest, portray her as a kind of "woodland nymph" and the music now associated with her death, again associate her with the purity of the natural world (Jones 212). Rue tells Katniss, "You have to win," meaning, "You have to survive." In response, Katniss looks to the dead boy only yards away. The camera lingers on his prone body, the arrow piercing his chest and his neck thrown back, eyes closed. Off-screen, Rue breathes unsteadily. The murder of the boy is shown, in this shot, to be no more unwarranted than the little girl's. Spectacular shows of 'super' violence often characterise representations of fantasy heroes and heroines, but that is not the case here.

Rue's death occurs off-screen, in a shot of the ceiling of trees swaying above them and to the sound of Katniss still singing. The shot goes briefly out of focus and Katniss's voice falters. The action cuts to Rue's still face and sound becomes muted. Beating her fist soundlessly against the ground, Katniss sobs, then angrily throws the arrow into the clearing. The score of cellos rise in response, as Katniss begins gathering flowers. In a realisation of the song associated with both Prim and Rue, Katniss gathers the flowers into the shape of a bed, and 'buries' Rue in wildflowers.

Haase notes the importance of recognising the symbolism of flowers in relation to fairy tale heroines, observing that,

"The connection is evident in the constant semantic convergence between flow and flower (English), fluer and fleur (French), Blut and Blüte (German) [and so forth]. Any wonder-tale maiden associated with flowers is marked to see her blood flow. Beauty's request of a rose seals her fate to marry the Beast; Little Red Riding Hood is often laden with flowers as she enters the forest house [and] Briar Rose (i.e. Sleeping Beauty) pricks a finger at age

fifteen and then falls asleep until the elected prince passes through her blooming flowers...” (134).

Thus the flowers Katniss gathers and covers Rue’s body with, connote Rue’s girlhood and youth and align her visually with fairy tale heroines, who come to harm in the woods. While Haase is concerned with flowers as a coded sign of the heroine beginning to menstruate, this itself associates flowers with female coming of age in the tales. While in folk tales, female coming of age is equated with menarche and thus readiness for marriage, coming of age as an adolescent in the contemporary sense, describes acquiring knowledge and the consequent loss of childhood innocence. The image of Rue laden with flowers is all the more poignant within this context, as she comes of age through her violent loss of innocence, at the moment of her death. Like *Maleficent*, *The Hunger Games* has a ‘fantasy violence’ rating, which prevents blood from being overtly shown (Cantor 1997). Thus the flowers Katniss covers Rue’s wound with, stand in for blood spilled through violence. Like images of Ophelia wreathed in flowers, the contrast between the natural beauty of the wildflowers starkly contrasts with the violence of the girl’s death, and the political corruption which led to her unnaturally early demise. Instead of symbolically ‘blooming into womanhood,’ as in the tales, the floral arrangement powerfully visualises both Rue’s youthful innocence, and the violence that prevented her from growing up.

As Katniss turns to leave her friend behind in the clearing, the image of

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Fig. 4.8: Rue resembles girl heroines fallen to enchanted sleep. Katniss notices the cameras watching, as she finishes laying flowers on Rue’s body.

Rue on a bed of flowers resembles images of maidens fallen to enchanted sleep, never to be woken (see: fig. 4.8). In Chapter Three, I discuss problematic depictions of deathlike young, female bodies as objects of eroticism and fascination,

but in the context of the film narrative, giving Rue a burial ritual of any kind is a sign of respectful tribute. In an arena filled with children fighting to the death for the entertainment of the state, this acknowledgment of Rue’s girlhood powerfully visualises the injustice of treating her as disposable. By ‘burying’ the girl in flowers, Katniss mourns Rue’s innocence and girlhood in a way that

acknowledges Rue's personhood, in defiance of her dehumanisation at the hands of the Capitol. Rue's innocence "marked in these ways, [underscore[s] the cruelty of the Capitol's regime [and] Rue's death makes her a martyr for a society-wide civil rights movement" (Jones 210).

Indeed, the tribute Katniss pays to Rue acknowledges the cause of her death to be rooted in systemic oppression (i.e. the Hunger Games) and protests it. The tone of this sequence quickly turns from grief to defiance and anger, as Katniss makes a three-fingered salutation to the cameras. The action cuts to Rue's home, in District 11, where Katniss is shown projected onto enormous screens before a captive audience, giving the salute. Returning the gesture, an African-American man in the crowd soon acts against the fascist 'peacekeepers,' until a full-scale riot erupts among the citizens. In light of the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States, this transition between scenes is even more powerful. The film foregrounds Rue as a symbol of both innocence and revolution, which runs powerfully counter to discourses perpetuating the concept that "the protesting black figure, be it a child or adult, does not 'deserve' protection" (Jones 123). Moreover, the inevitability of Rue's death in the arena, powerfully represents contemporary protest and revolution in American culture as shaped by the mistreatment and deaths of the innocent and vulnerable.

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Fig. 4.9: Katniss gives the three-fingered salute to District 11.

In her work on cinematic violence, Lisa Coulthard explores representations of the feminine in relation to genre violence. Coulthard asserts that, "Much of today's action cinema tends to articulate an idealised, nonviolent

and stable femininity" (171). Rue indeed embodies an idealised mode of imperilled girlhood in this film. However, her heartrending performance effectively breaks the script of normative images of female victims of violence by associating her youth, innocence and femininity with uprising, revolution and protest. Conversely, Katniss becomes a heroine when she helps her friend to die, in the woods. While violence and death characterise the scene, they do not define her, as an incarnation of the fairy tale heroine. Katniss comes of age

when she moves to leave the clearing, only to catch sight of a camera filming overhead (see: fig. 4.8). Expressionlessly, she turns her back on the lens and trudges forward, until she turns back and gives the three-fingered salute, acknowledging Rue's death to the camera and publicly paying tribute to her life (see: fig. 4.9). Katniss becomes a heroine in the shot of her projected onto screens above District 11, her salute translating as a recognition of their loss, and a call to arms.

Conclusion

Thus in *The Hunger Games*, the inevitably ambiguity of the fairy tale form emerges within the woodland setting, as the clearing becomes both the scene of violence and death, as well as a stage for protest, revolution and social critique. As in fairy tales, the woods are a space charged with danger and Rue's death evokes the fears associated with the image of the girl entering the forest. By adapting the fairy tale woodland as an arena in which the disenfranchised are systematically put to death, the implication made by Perrault's works and the Grimms' tales that the girl who enters the woods bears responsibility for her violation, is powerfully challenged. Beyond identifying systemic oppression as the cause of violence against young girls of colour, the woods also becomes a

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Fig. 4.10: An image of Rue's death, painted in protest against the Capitol, by Peeta

place of heroism and tribute, as Rue's body is covered in wildflowers. In the film's sequel, *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire* (2013), a woodland image of Rue surrounded by flowers, is painted in protest against the Capitol (see: fig. 4.10). This image of

Rue signals her continuing importance as a symbol of resistance, following her death, while the woodland wildflowers 'marking' her body modify fairy tale imagery to connote her innocence and purity, in the face of injustice.

In the films analysed in this chapter, the history of narratives depicting the woods as a stage for the heroine's trials and victimisation, is adapted and explored through the lens of contemporary cultural anxieties and desires surrounding the figure of the girl. Just as heroines of fairy tales who enter the woods inevitably encounter danger there, the plight of the Gothic heroine in popular fiction is to be trapped between spaces of repression and danger.

Robert Miles describes the “heroine [as] caught between a pastoral haven and a threatening castle, sometimes in flight from a sinister patriarchal figure” (Miles 131). Indeed, the iconic image of the heroine in the Female Gothic and Melodrama is commonly articulated through spaces charged with menace. These anticipate the girl’s victimisation and downfall. Carter identifies the “the forest [as] the place of rape” for the fictional heroine, and that association re-emerges in *Maleficent* (Carter 39) [emphasis mine]. *Maleficent* powerfully evokes the aftermath of sexual assault, by initially presenting the heroine’s home in the Moors as an idyllic and vibrant space of play and peace, before becoming the setting for her violation. The desolating image of the once Technicolor forest visually darkened and suffused with fog, when *Maleficent* awakens and realises she has been raped, reflects the devastating effects of sexual assault. Within the fairy tale wilderness, the implicit rape narrative in ‘Sleeping Beauty’ is brought to the forefront and contemporary rape culture is critiqued.

While the woods in Kaplan’s *Little Red Riding Hood* recalls the Gothic vision of the wilderness as a stage for the heroine’s victimisation and “as a place of rape,” the text quickly subverts those expectations (Carter 39). However, the heroine is only refigured as agentic within the tight parameters of postfeminist ideals of girlhood. By being granted an agency expressed almost entirely through her heterosexual desire and sexuality, the fairy tale woods is reconfigured as a depoliticised space in which young female agency is performed for the pleasure of a voyeuristic, adult gaze. This reduces Kaplan’s re-scripting of the tale through adaptation to a shift from one mode of innocent, idealised girlhood to another, sexualised one. Thus while the film breaks from the script of ‘Red Riding Hood’ as canonised by Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, the heroine is not transformed through adaptation but continues to perform a mode of girlhood dictated by an adult, objectifying viewer. The tale’s implicit rape narrative lingers in the background as the film poses the silent, unknowable girl’s negotiation of the threat of sexual violence as an erotic fantasy.

In a discussion surrounding girlhood and the supernatural, Rebecca Munford explores the idea of “the girl as a ‘line of flight’,” who occupies “the ‘in-between, the border’ and ‘carries [the audience] away across our thresholds

towards a destination that is unknown” (158). The woods is another territory of the “in-between, the unknown,” in the magical mise-en-scène, to which the audience must travel with the heroine (158). While the trials undergone by Maleficent and Rue in the woods are devastating and represent girlhood as imperilled by violence, the expected audience for this narrative is young women and girls themselves. Girls’ bodies are not exploited during the scene of violence for the benefit of an adult, objectifying gaze. Rather, the enactment of violence acknowledges the systemic nature of violence against girls, and particularly against girls of colour. More crucially, these sequences interrupt the script of discourses surrounding gendered and racially motivated violence against girls, which oblige them to bear the responsibility for its occurrence. Rather than depoliticising this violence through the imposition of a fairy tale frame, *Maleficent* and *The Hunger Games* adapt ‘Red Riding Hood’ as a tale of violation and violence. Thus these woodland sequences break from the Grimms’ script, in order to implicate and challenge the way such narratives continue to represent the girl who survived violence, as she who strayed from the path.

Conclusion: The Uses of an Enchanted Cycle and the Emergence of a Young Woman's Cinema

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Fig. Con.1: Still from Breillat's *Barbe Bleue* (2009).

Fairy tales often begin with the words, "Once upon a time" and conclude with "happily ever after," but in between, fairy tale heroines are found on paths through dark woods, paths of needles and pins, eating poison apples and cleaning bloody keys, locked in dark chambers and opening doors to new and frightening knowledge. This thesis has cut a deliberate methodological path through the landscapes, spaces and objects of fairy tale narratives to form a close-up analysis of the girl in the filmic fairy tale. Moving from fantasy worlds at large, to chambers, to objects and finally to the fairy tale heroine, effects an increasingly close analysis of how filmic elements make up her construction. Through the enchanted object and use of magical spaces, fantasy girlhood is mapped by the fairy tale film. Its landscapes, fantastical spaces of in-between and vibrant, iconographical objects become visual modes for the exploration and construction of girlhood and girl heroines. This visually spectacular style, is what I have termed the magical *mise-en-scène*, and identify as common to all the filmic case studies in this thesis.

The magical *mise-en-scène* and the narrative centrality of the girl are what tie together the cycle as a whole. Indeed, it has been demonstrated that this cycle's representation of the young fairy tale heroine cannot be divorced from highly visual, material elements of setting, space and objects. These cinematic encounters with 'fantastical' girlhood reveal girlhood itself as a constructed and culturally invested category. This thesis deconstructs gendered mythmaking by investigating the textual construction of girlhood and female adolescence in the fairy tale film adaptation. The highly contemporary nature of the fairy tale film adaptation cycle, which effects another return to fairy tales as a wellspring for imagining and constructing girlhood, demonstrates that the

cultural relationship between representations of femininity and fairy tales endures. Secondly, this thesis interrogates the cultural investment in girlhood as a category by demonstrating the ways these cinematic representations of girlhood reflect contemporary anxieties and desires surrounding female coming of age. Throughout this cycle, fears and desires relating to the vulnerability of the heroine, as well as fears and desires of what a 'knowing,' active and empowered mode of girlhood manifests itself as, come to the fore. Yet these fears and desires are projected onto a very particular type, or model, of girlhood. Indeed, the mode of girlhood being centralised in this cycle demonstrates that girlhood in this cycle exists within specific parameters. The mode of girlhood the contemporary fairy tale film adaptation centres upon is spectacular, imperilled and exclusionary.

The representation of girlhood in this cycle is executed through spectacularly visualising the heroine's inward self or selves and through journeys within the fantastic. I have analysed how girlhood is textually delineated and filmically imagined in this cycle, as a socially invested and culturally constructed category and performance. Girlhood in the contemporary fairy tale film adaptation cycle is spectacularised, as the heroine's inward self is made over fantastically into multiple mirroring selves, and projected into fantasy spaces and onto enchanted objects. This yields rich possibilities for staging internal negotiations of identity as young women come of age. However, the representation of spectacular girlhood is often subject to an objectifying adult gaze, particularly when narratives surrounding the girl's sexual coming of age or sexual exploitation are directed at an art house, primarily adult audience. Thus the relationship between the cycle's representations of young femininity and the spectacular reveals that girlhood, even when boldly re-imagined from a feminist perspective, is as much to-be-looked-at as 'to be'. Conversely, young female audiences are increasingly considered as desirable target consumers of fantasy franchises and fairy tale adaptations, while the girl heroine is as often constructed as a consumable enchanted object, as she is represented as a fully-fledged subject.

Representations of girlhood have been shown to be exclusionary in this cycle, as well. In Chapter One, the analysis of alternate fantasy worlds, where girl heroines come of age, are shown to be spaces of evasion, which avoid

visualising the female protagonist outside traditionally feminine settings. Films that relegate fairy tale heroines to the sealed, timeless chronotopes of wonderlands, provide the ideal setting for depoliticised, postfeminist characterisations of agentic girlhood. My analysis has suggested that in these wonderlands a non-threatening mode of agency emerges for the heroine, and is enacted without any ideological, overtly feminist frame.

Despite the rise of fantasy female action heroines like Katniss Everdeen in *The Hunger Games* film series (2012-2015) and Tris in the *Divergent* film series (2012-2014), imperilled girls are ubiquitous to this cycle. In Chapter Two, I discuss trauma in relation to imperilled girlhood in adaptations of 'Bluebeard'. In all three films discussed, trauma is spatially located in chambers hidden within structures of the familiar; the home and the domestic sphere. Thus contemporary Bluebeard adaptations "offer no closure, no therapeutic 'remembering to forget' the horror," as in George Cukor's *Gaslight* (1944) but rather, assert "the various ways in which this tale emplots [girls'] lives" (Bacchilega 98). This image of at-risk female adolescents and girls mines contemporary anxieties regarding young women's safety. My research suggests that this 'emplotting' varies with the adaptive approach to girl figures. My discussion of Slade's *Hard Candy* (2005) in Chapter Three demonstrates that when fairy tale films adapt and subvert the imperilled girl trope, the heroine quickly becomes represented as monstrous by the text. When Hayley performs a mode of Lolita-like, imperilled girlhood, in order to catch a paedophilic rapist and murderer, she becomes a wolfish antagonist, instead of an anti-heroine, for example.

In these instances, fantasy does provide a safe space from which to explore and address taboo and otherwise censored subject matters, such as incest in Hardwicke's *Red Riding Hood* (2011) or online grooming in *Hard Candy* (2005), through 'coded' reference and fantasy symbolism. My research in Chapter Three, traces the re-emergence of the Gothic marriage haunted by murder and reveals that the spectre of domestic violence continues to be coded and cinematically veiled through fantasy in this contemporary cycle. In Chapter Four, I analyse how *Maleficent* (2014) deploys a coded rape scene, and *The Hunger Games* (2012) stages the murder of a young girl of colour, motivated by prejudice and systemic injustice. These young female characters are at risk,

victimised and imperilled in fantastical fairy tale settings by real world violence. The consistency with which acts of (sexual, racially motivated and gendered) violence are threatened, or fully emerge, in young female coming of age narratives, troublingly suggests that to grow up as a girl, is to grown into an awareness of gendered violence.

In Chapter Four, I discuss the woodland death of Rue in *The Hunger Games* (2012), in relation to the figure of the heroine, violence and race. Rue is a symbol of innocence in the literary source material, whose death sparks a social revolution. The murder of a young girl of colour engages with a larger institutionalised violence against people of colour in the United States, and Rue's performance of innocent, imperilled girlhood powerfully evokes that injustice. Nevertheless, Rue's character is an exception within the cycle to an otherwise monolithically Caucasian mode of fantasy girlhood. Indeed, the virulent reactions from social media users to Rue being portrayed by young, African-American actress Amandla Stenberg, when the film was initially released, reveal the extent to which 'innocent girlhood' and girlhood itself, is culturally equated with whiteness. The predominance of white, heterosexual, able-bodied, slim and conventionally attractive heroines of the fairy tale adaptation film cycle at large, underlines that only a highly specific, exclusionary model of girlhood becomes associated with these narratives.

My analysis in Chapter Four shows that the treatment of violence against girls in the fantasy film can disrupt and challenge representations of imperilled girlhood as inevitably passive and disempowering to its young female audience. My recognition of the disparities of power which contribute to high incidences of assault, harassment and violence in young women's lives in a contemporary fairy tale film, effects an implicit feminist critique. The coded rape narrative that *Maleficent* (2014) engages with, further demonstrates that fantasy can be a useful lens through which to show and critique violence against girls without objectifying the act. The cutting off of Maleficent's wings to signify rape and the heart-breaking wildflowers covering Rue's wound, in place of blood, awaken the audience to the injustice of these acts, without exploiting or sensationalising violence. Throughout, the thesis has demonstrated that contemporary films within the postfeminist era continue and adapt the coded narrative strategies typical of Classical Hollywood Cinema, and of the woman's film in particular, to

represent gendered violence and trauma in the girl's life, through the lens of fantasy. The fairy tale film adaptation cycle largely centres upon female adolescents and primarily targets a young, 'knowing' female audience (Hutcheon 121). As a 'young woman's film,' the fairy tale film adaptation's narrative strategies and representations of femininity compare to those of earlier sub-genres and generic cycles addressed to female audiences, such as the woman's film. Indeed, the current trend of adapting fairy tales to the screen constitutes more than a filmic cycle, it is an emerging young woman's cinema.

Fantasy Girlhood and the (Young) Women's Cinema

Similar visual strategies through use of space and iconographical objects, suggest that this emerging young women's cinema is a direct descendent of women's films of earlier periods in cinematic history. Both address and are associated with female audiences and the mainstream and have been critically denigrated for that reason. Just as studios sought to commercially exploit what they assumed would be largely female cinema audiences in the 1940s, contemporary film industries target young female audiences through fairy tale and fantasy franchises. The commercial exploitation of (young) female audiences then and in the contemporary moment suggests not only the recognition of their impact as consumers but a cultural preoccupation with the identities of girls. To advance that argument, the first three chapters have made comparisons between contemporary live-action filmic retellings of fairy tales and a particular sub-cycle of the women's film genre. Chapter One reads contemporary fantasy realms in relation to Victor Fleming's 1939 *The Wizard of Oz*; Chapter Two reads contemporary adaptations of Bluebeard alongside the Paranoid Gothic Woman Cycle of the 1940s and Chapter Three reads the use of enchanted objects in the contemporary fairy tale adaptation cycle in comparison with iconographical objects in the melodrama. The thematic, visual and narrative links I have drawn between women's films of that period and the contemporary cycle which forms the basis of my enquiry, suggests that the way femininity is culturally imagined has not changed as much as one might expect.

Yet despite this, the cinema of fantasy and fairy tales is shown throughout the thesis to be a cinema of possibility. While the contemporary fairy tale film adaptation cycle continues to delimit its heroines to the same

claustrophobic enclosures, domestic spaces and natural landscapes that are generically characteristic of the women's film genre, those same spaces can become stages for feminist and post-feminist fantasy. As discussed, the chapters in the main body of the thesis have shown that the contemporary fairy tale adaptation cycle textually delimits girlhood to a specific mode or type that is spectacular, exclusionary and imperilled. However, films that enact feminist interventions into fairy tale settings, enchanted objects and tropes throughout the cycle through adaptation, show that within that fantasy of girlhood, the cycle also actively challenges and resists such limiting representations.

The widespread familiarity of fairy tales means that largely all cinema audiences are, as Linda Hutcheon puts it, "knowing audiences" who will anticipate the plot movements of the tale being adapted (Hutcheon 120). This 'knowingness' positions the text to be experienced on multiple levels, which Hutcheon describes as "an interpretative doubling, a conceptual flipping back and forth between the work we know and the work we are experiencing" (120). In addition to "the palimpsestic pleasure" the viewer derives from that experience, the young, female audience is made actively aware of adaptation as a form of critique (Hutcheon 121). Knowing audiences are familiar with characterisations of Red Riding Hood as a one-dimensional culpable victim, through Perrault's works and the Grimm's tales. The image of a wolfish Red Riding Hood coming of age as dangerous and complex in her own right, thus alerts the knowing audience to the re-negotiation of gender roles and power dynamics, effected by the heroine's transformative characterisation. Joe Wright's 2011 *Hanna* rewrites a fairy tale icon of popular culture who, for many, definitively symbolises victimhood, and so the film challenges the spectator's preconceptions of what girlhood is, and how female coming of age is understood. The contemporary fairy tale film adaptation cycle has thus been shown to reinforce but also resist and challenge uncomplicated, delimited representations of girlhood.

The Magical Mise-en-Scène and the Futures of Fantasy Girlhood: Final Thoughts

My thesis has established that a highly specific mode of girlhood is centralised in this cycle, within rigid (social, racial and narrative) parameters. This spectacular, imperilled and exclusionary mode of girlhood has disturbing

implications for how we culturally image, construct and address young women through film. However, as Klein argues, film cycles are defined by an observance of a commercially exploitable and historically specific ‘moment’ (2011), and this is demonstrably true of the recent fairy tale film. The contemporary fairy tale film adaptation cycle is illustrative of a socio-cultural preoccupation in Anglo-American culture with constructing girlhood through fantasy. The ambiguity of the fairy tale form allows girls on film to be depoliticised within certain spaces and represented only within rigid parameters, but also to challenge the frames in which girlhood is cinematically imagined—and often within the same narrative.

Girlhood Studies conceptualises girlhood as a historically constituted category that is subject to change through being culturally revisited and textually reimagined. I have demonstrated throughout the thesis that fairy tales are adapted through shifts in cultural thought. Thus the contemporary fairy tale film cycle facilitates the emergence of a young woman’s cinema in which girlhood and its perception will continue to evolve and be explored through fantasy, in response to the changing perception of girlhood and feminism itself. In the last three years, popular television and cinema have already begun to replay fairy tales and explore fantasy girlhood through cyborg, robotic and cloned incarnations, that bespeak the anxiety surrounding women’s reproductive rights in *Orphan Black* (2013-present); *The Machine* (2013) and *Ex Machina* (2015). Equally, fairy tales and the monstrous feminine are re-emerging on the big and small screen in Neo-Gothic narratives, from *Penny Dreadful* (2014-present) to Guillermo Del Toro’s *Crimson Peak* (2015). Increasingly, these new trends in fairy tale adaptations suggest the breaking down of the rigid parameters in which girlhood has been previously confined, through new interventions, and uses of fantasy.

Overall, this thesis has demonstrated the fairy tale adaptation cycle of the last ten years (2005 to 2015) to be paradoxical in its treatment of girls; narratively centralising girlhood, feminist critique and female fantasies while often reducing its heroines to enchanted objects of fairy tale themselves. Even as Kenneth Branagh’s postfeminist *Cinderella* (2015) celebrates a fantasy of idealised feminine passivity, Matteo Garrone’s *The Tale of Tales* (2015) sees Selma Hayek eat the bloody heart of a sea monster raw. The wide and multivalent possibilities of fantasy and fairy tales demonstrate the power of

adaptation and retelling. Fantasy girlhood proves to be equally as mutable and complex. The diverse representations of girlhood in the filmic fairy tale are characteristic of a period of transition and transformation, in this case, the struggle and shifts between post-feminism and recent feminist revival and their inevitable backlash. Above all, the relationship between fairy tales, gender politics and girlhood proves to be an area of study rich with meaning. Studying these in relation to each other has allowed this thesis to capture a film cycle. The fairy tale film adaptation cycle is itself a snapshot of a socio-historical cinematic 'moment': the young woman's cinematic coming of age.

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