

Of Walt and *Wald*: Power and Gender in East German and US-American Fairy-Tale Film
Adaptations

By

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“Sometimes people leave you halfway through the wood.
Do not let it grieve you, no one leaves for good.”
-Into the Woods

*This Dissertation is dedicated in memoriam to my parents, Rita and Larry, and to Presley—all of
whom did their best to get me through the woods before they had to leave.*

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Abstract

The fairy-tale adaptations of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's tales in the United States and East Germany expand the punishments for women who misbehave by acting contrary to expected gender roles within the gendered power hierarchy. Although fairy tales and fairy-tale film have been extensively studied in scholarship, this dissertation provides a comparative study of power and gender dynamics from the fairy tales of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Children's and Household Tales, or KHM) and their cinematic adaptations in East Germany and the United States. Focusing on two specific tales—"Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich" ("The Frog King or Iron Henry," Grimm 1812) and "Rapunzel" (Grimm 1812)—I examine the gendered dynamics of power and status as they exist within the referent Grimm tales and the adaptation of these dynamics in the fairy-tale films from the East German *Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft* (DEFA) and the US-American Walt Disney Company. Alongside a thematic analysis of power, status, and gender for these two tales across these three corpuses, I demonstrate how these power dynamics and the expanded punishments for women who defy them indicate a continued power hierarchy of gender in fairy tales which mirrors that of both the socialist East Germany and the capitalist United States. Male protagonists have power over villains and female protagonists, villains have power over female protagonists, and female protagonists have power only over animals. My study analyzes three categories of 'misbehavior' for women in these fairy tales and their adaptations—lying and deception, the wish for advancement and higher status, and the enactment of anger and rage. When a female protagonist reverses the direction of the power hierarchy—e.g., lying to a villain or deceiving a male protagonist—the fairy-tale films from DEFA and Disney present greater extremes in the protagonist's loss of bodily autonomy and atonement than what occurs in the Grimm tales. These gendered consequences for female misbehavior reflect not only the 19th-century assumptions and expectations of gender roles still present in modern fairy tales, but the expanded punishments indicate the continuity of those expectations for the behavior of women in society today.

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Introduction

"I'm a man with no power. Does that make me a woman?"

-Barbie (2023)

Once upon a time, and then once upon a time again, deep in the forests of what would come to be known as Germany, there existed a fairy tale. That fairy tale was told—to children and adults alike—to entertain and provide enjoyment. Listeners delighted in tales of the rich and the poor, the maidens and the crones, the men and the women. In their imaginations, they fought alongside the princes and peasants as they defeated evil villains and rescued innocent maidens. And as the fairy tale was told to more people, it grew, and it changed. As society developed, the villains took the shape of the new threats and misbehaviors present in the listener's worlds. The tales' maidens learned lessons on what it meant to grow into a young, well-behaved woman and the young men discovered the responsibility of power and leadership. The fairy tale continued to grow until two brothers named Grimm discovered it, hidden away in the forest as it was, and carved it into literary existence with the scratch of their quills.

There is a certain level of comfort associated with this mythology of the folktale, a mythology reinforced not only by popular media such as shows like *Grimm* (2011–2017) and movies such as *The Brothers Grimm* (Gilliam 2005) but also by our own enjoyment of and belief in the morals of the fairy tale. I use the terms mythology and belief here with purpose, as this myth about the fairy tale's Germanic origins and the Grimms' collection has become a household name at a level with the bible throughout Germany, the United States, and much of

Europe. In reality, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's collection process was not quite as picturesque as roaming through the forest—the *Wald*, in my title of this dissertation—but instead included quite a bit of roaming through books, research, and archival material, in addition to some conversations and transcription of tales from the oral to the literary sphere. However they, too, encouraged this narrative, dedicating the first volume from 1812 to one of the women who did provide some tales, as well as including this in their *Vorrede* (preface):

So ist es uns, wenn wir den Reichtum deutscher Dichtung in frühen Zeiten betrachten, und dann sehen, daß von so vielem nichts lebendig erhalten, selbst die Erinnerung daran verloren war, und nur Volkslieder und diese unschuldigen Hausmärchen übrig geblieben sind. Die Plätze am Ofen, der Küchenheerd, Bodentreppen, Feiertage noch gefeiert, Tristen und Wälder in ihrer Stille, vor allem die ungetrübte Phantasie sind die Hecken gewesen, die sie gesichert und einer Zeit aus der andern überliefert haben. (Grimm vi [1812])

This is how it seemed to us when we began examining the richness of German literature in earlier times and then saw that nothing much had been preserved from that richness. Even the recollection of that treasure had been lost, and only folk songs and those innocent household tales are all that has remained. The places by the stove, the hearth in the kitchen, stone stairs leading to the attic, holidays still celebrated, pastures and woods in quiet seclusion, and above all the undisturbed imagination have been the hedges that have protected the tales and have allowed them to be transmitted from one generation to another. (trans. Zipes, *Original 3*)

Drawing on imagery of the forest and cozy stories by the fireside, the Grimms themselves situate their collection and 'discoveries' of the tales in a fairy-tale setting. They continue in their *Vorrede*, drawing on concepts such as *Poesie* (Grimm vi [1812]), (poetic stories, trans. Zipes, *Original 4*), and remarking on how those who tell these stories are disappearing. In this preface, the Brothers Grimm situate themselves as the preservationists of oral storytelling, "Es war vielleicht gerade Zeit, diese Märchen festzuhalten, da diejenigen die sie bewahren sollen, immer seltner werden" (Grimm vii [1812]) (It was perhaps just the right time to record these tales since

those people who should be preserving them are becoming more and more scarce) (trans. Zipes, *Original* 4). In reality, the Grimms' sources were only rarely living informants drawn from the *Volk*—used here in its nineteenth-century sense as a contrast to the nobility, as well as in the folkloric definition which situates folklore as drawn from the culture of the everyday person rather than the institutional. Instead, many of their tales were drawn out of existing literary traditions¹.

Just as the Grimms transcribed their collections and codified them into the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Children's and Household Tales, or *KHM*), positioning themselves as potential 'saviors' of the dying orality of the fairy tale in their collecting and codification, so too did Walt Disney write himself into the narrative of the fairy tale, centering his own name for the story credit of his films and effectively erasing the referent tales. In many ways Walt also codified the tales for American society. "Disney became the orchestrator of a corporate network that changed the function of the fairy-tale genre in America." (Zipes, *Breaking the Disney Spell*, 351) Similarly, in East Germany, the films of the *Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft* (DEFA) created a lasting tradition of fairy-tale film still enjoyed today. This dissertation, in the Grimm tales from their first edition into their East German and US-American film versions, centers on the traces of the tales' codification in the mythical *Wald*, or forest, of the Brothers Grimm and the adaptations within East Germany as they were used to present a sense of cultural heritage to the mythology of *Walt*, in his new codification of the tales.

¹ See Heinz Rölleke's *Grimms Märchen und ihre Quellen: die literarischen Vorlagen der Grimmschen Märchen* (1998) for a study of the source material for Grimm tales.

This dissertation traces the portrayal of gendered power dynamics in two Grimm tales across their editions, variants, and remediations into their film versions. Both of the tales analyzed across the three chapters of this dissertation, “Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich” (ATU 440) (1812) and “Rapunzel” (ATU 310) (1812) not only feature changes—or dynamic variation—across the seven editions of the Grimm corpus, they also are adapted into their respective fairy-tale films in the East German *Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft* (DEFA) and the Walt Disney Company’s corpuses at the same times. DEFA’s *Der Froschkönig* (The Frog King, Walter Beck 1988) and *Rapunzel oder der Zauber der Tränen* (Rapunzel or the Magic of Tears, Ursula Schmenger 1988) both appeared in 1988, near the end of the German Democratic Republic (GDR). *The Princess and the Frog* (John Musker and Ron Clements 2009) and *Tangled* (Nathan Greno and Byron Howard 2010) appeared immediately after one another during Disney’s most recent crop of fairy-tale films.

I use Robert Darnton’s concept of cultural opacity as an entry point for my analysis and readings of fairy tales in adaptation. This provides the theoretical foundation for my inquiries into the dynamics of power through the elements sex and lies, race and transformation, and anger in the Grimms’ “Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich” and “Rapunzel” as well as their cinematic adaptations from the Disney and DEFA studios. The state-supported production of fairy-tale films in the GDR illuminates that state’s view of fairy tales as respected cultural artifacts as opposed to their use by the fascist regime of the Third Reich. At the same time their content, as well as the changes to the traditional referent tale, illustrate the filmmakers’ perceived cultural realities of life in East Germany. **TKWhile the constitution of the GDR promised equal rights to the sexes, the progression of fairy-tale films from DEFA reflects the**

realities of the changing socio-political context and the continued distinction of gender expectations. As Mary Fulbrook explains in her chapter “Gender” in *The People’s State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker*, “policies were often out of line with practices, professed ideals out of line with ingrained attitudes.” (141) The fairy-tale film of the GDR, while toeing the ideological line to pass the censors, paints a picture of these practices and attitudes. The two DEFA films analyzed throughout this study—*Rapunzel oder der Zauber der Tränen* and *Der Froschkönig*—appear near the end of the time in the GDR state, in a well-established canon of fairy-tale films. Like the two films from East Germany, *The Princess and the Frog* and *Tangled* appear at the end of their canon, during the US-specific fourth wave of feminism and thematically focus on a return to the family and family values. **TK_The three chapters of this dissertation explore the ‘misbehaviors’ of women in these fairy tales—misbehaviors defined as times in which they act contrary to the power hierarchy through lying, seeking more status, and enacting their anger and rage—and the consequences which they suffer in the film adaptations that are not present in the Grimm tales.** The adaptation of these tales reveals how the performance of gender developed throughout the life of these fairy-tale film companies and, through this gendered performance, the continued gendered expectations of power dynamics.

In this introduction, after defining the terms used throughout the dissertation, I outline the theoretical framework for my study of power dynamics in the cinematic retellings of the Grimms’ “Der Froschkönig” and “Rapunzel” in the US and East Germany before a discussion of the Disney and DEFA fairy-tale film canons within their respective societal contexts. In my literature review, I provide a discussion of the relevant scholarship on fairy tales, fairy-tale film,

adaptation, gender, and the intersection of these topics with fairy-tale film. Finally, I conclude with a description of the dissertation's three chapters.

Defining Terms and Acronyms

Throughout this dissertation I refer to the tales collected by the Brothers' Grimm using the acronym *KHM*, referring to the title of their seven-edition collection of folk- and fairy tales: *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*. Translated into English, this title is *Children's and Household Tales*. In the age of the internet, I am grateful for the high-quality scans and transcriptions available from the *Deutsches Textarchiv* (DTA), from which I source each of my German-language quotations for the multiple editions of the tale. For translations of the 1812 edition from the Grimms, I use Jack Zipes' thorough and accurate translations of the tales in his *The Original Folk and Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm* (2014). Translations from Zipes for the 1812 edition and from other authors are indicated within citations. Translations without translation citations are my own.

To define the fairy tale, I turn to Max Lüthi's (1979) description of the genre, which he describes as part of the "Übernatürliches, Wunderhaftes" (supernatural, wonder-full) alongside sagas, legends, myths, and fables (6). He notes that one of the primary differentiating aspects of the fairy tale is that "Zauber und Wunder werden erzählt, als ob sie sich von selber verstünden, sie verlieren an spezifischem Gewicht" (7) (Magic and wonders are told as though they are self-explanatory—they lose a specific weight). Drawing on a long tradition of genre analysis in the field of folklore studies (e.g., Bascom 1965, Holbek 1987), Lynne MacNeill draws the distinction between the folktale and myths and legends in a similar vein, as a type of story distinguished by how the narrator expects the audience to react to the story. Categorized under "things we say",

the folk- and fairy tale is framed as “a fictional story [in which] the teller makes it clear that we’re supposed to just accept what is happening without question.” (39) This suspension of belief and acceptance of the magical and supernatural in the context of the story being told distinguishes the fairy tale from other types of stories and things we say. Because I analyze gendered power structures, this dissertation focuses specifically on princess tales, for which I use the definition provided by Dawn Elizabeth England, Lara Descartes, and Melissa A. Collier-Meek for identifying Disney princess tales: “a central female character, the princess, and a male character who is romantically linked with the princess.” (556)

In discussing the adaptations of tales from the Grimms’ canon into that of DEFA and Walt Disney’s fairy-tale films, I interchangeably use the terms “adaptation” and “remediation²” to indicate the tales’ transition from the literary to their cinematic forms. I refer to these remediated tales as adaptations, variants, and remediations. To describe the elements that remain from one adaptation to the next, I employ the folklore terms coined by Barre Toelken to designate the details that change and those that stay the same as a tale travels, “dynamic” and “conservative”, respectively. (McNeill 13) Finally, I draw on Guy Spielman’s forthcoming article, “Adaptation Studies’: Steps towards a Necessary Re-foundation” in which refers to particular folktale redactions using the term “crystalized version” as the adaptation of a story that is most relevant to a culture or the most prevalent in their society. As an example, the version of “Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich” has been crystalized enough that it has engendered the phrase “to kiss a lot of frogs” refers to a transformation catalyzed by a kiss, rather than a throw against the wall.

² Remediation as the adaptation to new media, not as a remedial repetition

Theoretical Framework

Throughout this dissertation I develop a hierarchy of power as related to gender in the Grimm tales and their cinematic adaptations in the GDR and in the United States. I do this through addressing and utilizing theories grounded in adaptation studies, gender and feminism, anger and emotions, intersectionality, and structural analysis. Central to my analysis of these tales is the question of gender roles, specifically as applied to the female protagonists and antagonists in the tales. The interplay of power and gender is inherent in the fairy-tale form, which often had a didactic purpose in society. Drawing on theories of gendered behavior performance from Judith Butler, I develop a hierarchy of gendered power in fairy tales which places the male protagonist at the top of the hierarchy, able to enact his power upon those beneath him—the male and female villains as well as the non-binary characters, who can then enact their power upon those beneath them, namely, the female protagonists.

In researching theory on gender and gender roles, I first came across Judith Butler's essay "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory" (1988), in which she first argues against the idea that masculine and feminine gender behavior is inherent, natural, and not learned. I see a connection to my analysis of how gendered behavior rules are reinforced through selective enforcement and punishment in Butler's argument that gendered behavior is a performance, one that is stylized and learned through repetition and enforced by fear of rejection and hope for external acceptance. In this essay she explains that "gender identity is a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo." (520) She complicates this in her monograph *Gender Trouble* (1990). In

the preface, she discusses her title's use of the word "trouble," noting the double meaning of the word trouble in that one could "make trouble" and the consequence of such is that it "would get one *in* trouble." (xxix, Butler's emphasis) She then draws on Sartre, noting that he categorized all desire as "trouble," and that when desire was turned around from the masculine desiring the feminine, it displaced the power of the masculine.

For that masculine subject of desire, trouble became a scandal with the sudden intrusion, the unanticipated agency, of a female "object" who inexplicably returns the glance, reverses the gaze, and contests the place and authority of the masculine position. (xxx)

This disruption of the masculine power occurs beyond desire in fairy tales and fairy-tale films. In each of the chapters of this dissertation, I identify and analyze how the female characters in these narratives "reverse the gaze" through lying and deception, social climbing, and anger, effectively "causing trouble" and disrupting the presumed power dynamics of the gender binary. By identifying and analyzing when the gaze "reverses" up the hierarchy of power, it is possible to see how these "social sanctions and taboos" develop and change over time and across borders. Identifying the gendered behaviors of the female characters in these tales and comparing those instances in their later variations provides insight into the expected and accepted gender performance and the consequences brought upon characters who do not perform according to expectations.

This is not to say that female protagonists never enact power in the opposite direction in the hierarchy. On the contrary, they often do so as part of their development into adulthood. Where the hierarchy reigns, however, is in which characters are punished for their behaviors that fall outside of their expected gendered performance. In the adaptations of these tales

examined in this study, this punishment is often extended, concomitantly extending the fourth stage of Walter Burkert's "Maiden's Tragedy." Although Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928) proves a valuable structural sequence to analyze the narrative of the fairy tale, his analysis primarily considers tales which place male protagonists as the main characters. Because I am analyzing princess tales, Burkert's discussion of "The Initiation Tale: The Maiden's Tragedy"—a sequence of five functions that can be observed in tales of maidens drawn from antiquity—is more relevant for my study. The five sequential functions outlined by Burkert begin with the woman leaving home, followed by a period of idyllic isolation or seclusion, intrusion and catastrophe, suffering and punishments, and then rescue with salvation (71). In the adaptations of "Rapunzel" and "Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich", the fourth—suffering stage—is where the punishment for acting out against expected gendered behavior is added or expanded in both the DEFA and Disney films. Burkert himself draws on the tale of "Rapunzel" to illustrate how her punishment for the prince's intrusion—the catastrophe of the fairy tale—includes her pregnancy while she is abandoned in the desert (73).

Burkert compares the stages of the "Maiden's Tragedy" with the life cycle of women as they enter into adulthood, noting that there are "three dramatic events that work this change: menarche, intercourse, and pregnancy", which he then connects to the "seclusion, sexual encounter, and childbirth" (73) of his five stages. This shift from child to adult in female protagonists is mirrored in the Grimm tales through pronominal shifts of "es" (grammatically gender neutral "it") to "sie" (grammatically gendered as feminine, "she") when a female protagonist enters into adulthood by virtue of the (sexual) interest of a potential male partner.

Orrin Robinson outlines how the Grimms altered the pronouns for multiple tales, including “Rapunzel” from their literary source texts.

The Grimms’ choice of pronouns to refer to girls was not in principle determined by the choice of accompanying nouns, but was instead correlated with aspects of the characters in question as the Grimms saw them. (120)

Robinson maintains that young girls, referred to as “das Mädchen” (the—grammatically neutral—girl) are only referred to as “sie” when they become bad, begin to have sex, or reach an age where they are old enough to be referred to as “sie” without question (116). The question as to whether to use “es” or “sie” depends on the girl/woman’s entrance into adolescence and then her behaviors. If she follows the expected behavior for a ‘good’ girl, the “es” pronoun remains. But if she is ‘bad’ and lies (Chapter 1), attempts to move beyond her station (Chapter 2), or becomes angry at someone higher in the hierarchy than her (Chapter 3), she is coded as bad and then goes through the punishment stage. For my analysis, Robinson’s pronominal shift correlates with Burkert’s stage three catastrophe and stage four punishment stages. It is when the sorceress locks Rapunzel in her tower that she shifts from “es” to “sie”, at the start of her isolation which is then broken by the prince’s intrusion (stage four: catastrophe) and followed by her punishment (abandonment in the desert).

The punishment stages and their causes—often at the same time as the catastrophe due to the intrusion of the male character—become the central evidence to support my readings of power structure in the Grimm tales and their subsequent film adaptations. These stages in the tales and how they are expanded or edited in their remediations are fruitful for my understanding of fairy tales and their adaptations under the analogy of “potato soup,” which draws on Robert Darnton’s explanation of cultural opacity. In his book, *The Great Cat Massacre:*

And Other Episodes in French Cultural History, Robert Darnton illustrates the concept of cultural opacity through the tale of “The Great Cat Massacre.” As gory as it sounds, Darnton’s tale focuses on how the telling of the tale, the exaggerated reenactments, or *copies*, of the massacre acted out by the mistreated printing apprentices would be incomprehensible for the modern reader. The incident itself has to do with apprentices of a Parisian print shop in the early 18th century who were treated terribly by their masters. Having reached the limit of what they could tolerate, the apprentices revolted, tortured and murdered the local cats, and then placed the remaining cats on trial before hanging them in the place of their masters. The retellings of this incident served as both humorous entertainment and as a balm for the continued dissatisfaction in their situation for the audience of the *copies*, even if they had not taken part in the massacre itself. Unlike the viewers of these reenactments, the modern reader is generally repulsed by the gruesome depiction of satisfaction in cruel cat torture. Because the modern audience is not connected to or part of the 1730s Parisian apprentice life—poor working and living conditions, lack of upward mobility, the preferential treatment of cats over the apprentices—there is little humor to be found. “Where is the humor in a group of grown men bleating like goats and banging with their tools while an adolescent reenacts the ritual slaughter of a defenseless animal?” (Darnton 77). Here, Darnton states, is an invitation for the reader of the tale to investigate further in order to understand the humor and the motivation of the massacre:

our own inability to get the joke is an indication of the distance that separates us from the workers of preindustrial Europe. [. . .] the best points of entry in an attempt to penetrate an alien culture can be those where it seems to be most opaque. (77–78)

This opacity—or cultural opacity—serves as the entry point for understanding parts of a time, people, or culture that is removed from shared experience and familiarity. As a work enters another culture as a retelling, a translation, an adaptation, or through physical travel³ across borders, it either conquers cultural opacities through editing or leaves them as points of investigation. One example of this is the multiple translations of the name of the heroine in “Rapunzel” who often appears as her non-English namesake even in English translations, as the English word “Rampion” would be jarring as a woman’s name for an English-speaking reader.

In adaptations of fairy tales and other media, these adjusted elements with their new details and plot concomitantly tell a story of the culture in which the new variant is publicized. These changes serve multiple functions, both in terms of mitigating potential cultural opacities as explained above and in providing educational content regarding ideological values. As society and context change, so do the details contained in the adaptations of the tales. We can observe this on a continuous spectrum of sometimes minor and sometimes major changes in tone, setting, attitudes, and character behaviors that render the tales at the start of the spectrum vastly different from those at the end. In the Grimm tales, this begins with the codification (or entextualization) of the tales into their written form—or recodification, for the tales that they took from other literary sources—and persists through their edits of the seven editions of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* released in the lifetimes of the brothers. Indeed, Donald Haase, in his article “Framing the Brothers Grimm,” explains that the Grimm tales resist categorization as a single work, instead noting that “the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* is a dynamic publishing

³See Venkat Mani’s 2017 monograph *Recoding World Literature: Libraries, Print Culture, and Germany’s Pact with Books* to explore the physical distribution of books, or *Bibliomigrancy*.

phenomenon that existed in seventeen different authorized editions in the Grimms' lifetime alone" (59). The brothers, with much of the edits made by Wilhelm, expanded the plots of their tales and edited passages that refer to sex and violence⁴ to make the editions align with contemporaneous sensibilities and other tale collections. Successful retellings – or at least, successful in that they continue being told, played, or remediated—rely on familiarity to help the readers and viewers connect to the tale. The familiarity of fairy tales and their inherent ability to convey motifs and messages about societal expectations are advantageous elements in fairy-tale adaptations because the form is open-ended and non-specific enough to provide opportunity for reinterpretation and the insertion of further familiar elements that support the new message and reflect the fresh context of the retelling.

Familiarity in adaptations is created in two ways: by adding familiar themes, visuals, motivations, and other elements to the adapted work, and by adapting stories that would be familiar to the intended audience. I agree with Angela Carter in her comparison of the fairy-tale form to potato soup when she explains that the origin of the recipe for potato soup is unknowable, but I would like to expand her use of the metaphor from the backwards look at the origins of tales to a forward look to the adaptations and remediations of the tales from their literary codification into modernity. Although Carter would remind us that it is impossible to find the very first recipe for potato soup (x), the dish offers familiarity through its many iterations across a multitude of cultures that take the required traditional elements—a potato, some broth—and add their own culturally familiar flavors to create a new recipe. As I have

4. See Maria Tatar's *Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales*, Chapter 1: Sex and Violence, for a more in-depth discussion of the edits made by the Grimms in reference to sex, incest, and violence.

argued elsewhere, the way potato soup exemplifies questions of originality, familiarity, and adaptation highlights my understanding of the fairy tale and its adaptations:

Similar to the recipe for potato soup, the fairy tale is a cultural good, one that can be, has been, and will continue to be taken and remade to suit the adaptor's and translator's needs. And, just like potato soup, which can still be potato soup when called *Kartoffelsuppe*, *aloo ki kadhi*, or *ajiaco*, its appearance in various cultures implies certain flavors and characteristics. The elements remain the same and each chef is free to take it and make it their own, though they may need to protect themselves by citing their source. Such is the case with the Brothers Grimm fairy tales. (Wilcox, "Brothers Grimm" 2335)

While Carter focuses on the role of the individual, "this is how I make potato soup" (x), I expand on her use of this metaphor to discuss the 'new' recipes of fairy tales. I have introduced this in previous work, naming them "new originals."

In reading the remediations and retellings of fairy tales I expand on this to illustrate how their authors and adaptors build upon previous versions—transforming these singular versions into "original recipes" in their own right—to infuse politics, social movements, and societal attitudes into their retellings. Just as certain recipes for potato soup build upon their predecessors, these "new original" fairy tales are part of a continuous process of adaptation which can be used to observe the evolution of attitudes and expectations in a society. (Wilcox "Pregnancy" 188)

Just like the recipes for *Kartoffelsuppe* and *ajiaco* rely on the recipes that come before them as a base for their transformation, adapted fairy tales are a part of a continuous process of adaptation that can be used to explore the real and potential cultural opacities—the ingredients that would not be familiar to a consumer in a new time, place, and culture—which would render an adaptation too unfamiliar to be successful in its new context. I use the already-existing ingredients of lies, sex, transformation, and anger in the traditional Grimm tales of "Der Froschkönig" and "Rapunzel" to identify the starting points into my investigation on how power structures are portrayed in the cinematic tales of the GDR and the United States. I then locate

the corresponding scenes and plot points in the adaptations to identify how these elements have been edited for their intended viewers. Although often not culturally opaque by Darnton's definition but rather culturally obscured, the dynamic variation in these adaptations provides culturally transparent, new originals which render these adaptations more familiar to their intended audience.

Fairy-tale film provides many opportunities for investigation of the changes made in adapting the generally short form of a tale into a feature-length adaptation. Unlike longer texts such as novels and epics, the fairy-tale film requires additions to the plot rather than subtractions in addition to the visual and spatial imaginings necessary to adapt a text to the celluloid. Although film adaptations are often less detailed than their source texts—Linda Hutcheon's *Theory of Adaptation* reminds us of Virginia Woolf's metaphor in which she calls film a "parasite" and its literary referents "prey" because of the "severe pruning" necessitated by the adaptation process (Hutcheon 1)—fairy-tale films face the opposite challenge in adapting a short form. Some films create additional length and detail by placing the events of the tale in a specific time and place, such as the setting for Disney's *The Princess and the Frog* in New Orleans of the 1920s. This approach allows the creators to draw on the viewer's familiarity with the social and political context⁵ of that point in history. Another option is combining two familiar tales into one film. Ursula Schmenger employed this method in her 1988 *Rapunzel oder der Zauber der Tränen*, joining the tale of "Rapunzel" with the "Jungfrau Maleen" tale. Whichever strategy is employed to expand the tales to the cinematic form, the film format necessitates a

5. Another example of this is Guillermo del Toro's 2022 *Pinocchio*, which is set during the Interwar Period and World War II in fascist Italy.

more specific articulation of motivations, emotions, responses, and consequences than the short fairy-tale text.

Despite the increased complexity of the film medium compared with the short form of the tale, fairy-tale films have often been discounted as frivolous entertainment. They are, “with a few exceptions, [...] associated with contemporary popular culture, rather than elite art.” (Greenhill and Matrix, 4). This is partly because the genre of the fairy tale itself— despite many examples that are clearly meant for a mature audience—is considered to be part of the realm of children. And yet, as Zohar Shavit outlines in “The Concept of Childhood and Children’s Folktales,” it wasn’t until the seventeenth century that the concept of childhood and the need for different clothing, games, and literature developed (318). The fairy tale began in the realm of adults and was only later developed for children. And adults did not stop reading or interacting with fairy tales once they entered into children’s literature. Adults and parents are responsible for providing access to the tales for their children, often through reading them aloud or previewing media to assess the appropriateness. Marc Silberman, in his article on the 1950s films of the German Democratic Republic, notes that Wilhelm Hauff specifically developed his fairy tales to speak to children while also engaging “alert adults who could understand his irony and indirectness.” (Silberman 110) In this way, fairy tales reach both children and adults and become ideal vehicles for ideological education. “Both in the time of the Grimms as well as in the GDR, fairy tales served to instill the lessons and morals of adult society” (Sheedy and Wilcox 79). Both the *Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft* of the GDR and the Walt Disney Company in the United States have benefited from the fairy tale’s didactic opportunities. The fairy-tale film corpuses of these two companies show the developments in societal attitudes and political

policy regarding the employment of power through themes of sex, loyalty, and emotion in their respective contexts in the twentieth and, for the Walt Disney Company, twenty-first centuries.

These social attitudes are central to my explanations of gendered behavior as portrayed in the cinematic adaptations examined throughout this dissertation, and I utilize the feminist wave model to situate the expectations of gender roles in the Disney films I analyze. Although I acknowledge that these waves can be “perceived as generationally divisive, each one attempting to rectify failure or a refusal to adapt to a changing society” (Chamberlain 459), the wave model is a useful tool for identifying the overarching struggles and protest of women in the United States over the course of Disney’s fairy-tale film productions. The concept of feminist waves was first introduced by Martha Weinman Lear in her 1968 New York Times article “What do these women want? The Second Feminist Wave.” The waves of feminism refer to specific goals central to women’s rights. In short, first-wave feminism concerned itself with women’s suffrage and their right to be recognized as human beings. Katherine M. Marino and Susan Ware’s “Rethinking ‘First Wave’ Feminisms: An Introduction,” situates the 1848 Seneca Falls convention as the start of the first wave and the Nineteenth Amendment as its culmination (813). They note, however, that this is an overly simplistic narrative which diminishes much of the intersectional activism of the feminist movement. The first feature-length animated film from Walt Disney appeared after this wave—*Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs* (David Hand, Perce Pearce, William Cottrell, Larry Morey, Wilfred Jackson, and Ben Sharpsteen 1937). Second-wave feminism centered on the right to work—a right that was already guaranteed to East Germans by the GDR’s constitution— and economic equality as Lear outlined in her 1968 article:

What NOW wants, by way of immediate implementation of its goals, is total enforcement of Title VII; a nationwide network of child-care centers, operating as optional community facilities; revision of the tax laws to permit full deduction of housekeeping and child-care expenses for working parents; maternity benefits which would [...] guarantee a woman's right to return to her job after childbirth; revision of divorce and alimony laws, [...] and a constitutional amendment withholding Federal funds from any agency, institution or organization discriminating against women. (24)

This wave was inspired by the Civil Rights movement and included results such as the "Equal Pay Act" from 1963 as well as the affirmation of safe, legal abortion by the decision in "Roe v. Wade" (1973) by the Supreme Court⁶. Third-wave feminism was defined by Rebecca Walker in 1992 and can be understood as a response to second-wave feminism, one that specifically focuses on intersectionality and the inclusion of minority identities. Susan Archer Mann and Douglas J. Huffman outline four primary elements of third-wave feminism:

intersectionality theory as developed by women of color and ethnicity; postmodernist and poststructuralist feminist approaches, feminist postcolonial theory, often referred to as global feminism; and the agenda of the new generation of younger feminists. (57)

This increased inclusion of intersectional identities has continued into the present, fourth wave of feminism. This fourth wave is ongoing, and thus it is impossible to identify which goals and problems will be the most salient when we move beyond it (Chamberlain 462), but it is distinguished by the immediacy of communication and internet activism through online platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and most recently TikTok. The Disney films analyzed in this

⁶ "Roe v. Wade" was overturned in the "Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization" case in the Supreme Court on June 24th, 2022.

dissertation appeared in 2009 and 2010, shortly before 2011, which Kira Walker declared as the beginning of the fourth wave of feminism in her “Guardian Short” *All the Rebel Women* (2013).

TKThe relationship to feminism in the GDR was quite different from that of the United States. As opposed to the individual nature of feminist movements in Western societies, women’s rights in the GDR progressed as the progression of the collective. Not only did the constitution of the GDR promote equal rights of work and payment between the genders, state support reinforced the dual importance of women in the workforce and as mothers. As Myra Marx Ferree outlines, the GDR was rather successful in facilitating women’s rights and abilities to enter the workforce, noting that “by 1989, 91 percent of East German women of working age were employed” (91)—a result which she attributes to “the GDR’s continuing labor shortage [...] and to the ideological commitment to women’s equality, understood as bringing women out of the home and into ‘productive’ work.” (92) For the GDR, equal treatment of women and men meant equal access to the workforce. However, Ferree reminds us that the “evidence of formal equality was used to repress any discussion of gender inequality and to persuade women that the problems they continued to experience were their personal shortcomings.” (92) These continued problems referenced by Ferree included unequal pay, even with full-time jobs, between men and women as well as gender segregation in careers. “Women were 77 percent of all workers in education and 86 percent of those in health and social services.” (Ferree 92) The ‘equality’ of access to training and education aligned with the goal of creating “socialist personalities” “in connection with the SED’s proclamation of the ‘*Aufbau des Sozialismus*’ (establishing socialism).” (Brock 222)

In “Producing the ‘Socialist Personality’?”, Angela Brock outlines the three phases of the GDR educational system. A large factor in the production of the ‘socialist personality’ came at the end of the 1950s when “Walter Ulbricht announced the ‘Ten Commandments for the new socialist human being’, intended to give shape to the moral countenance of GDR citizens.”

(Brock 223) Brock outlines a shift in the use of the term “socialist personality” from a “paragon of socialist morality” in the 1950s to a “tool that helped mold society into the required socialist shape” in the 1960s (224). She notes, too, that when Erich Honecker rose to leader in the GDR in 1971, the “socialist personalities” were presumed to lead the *sozialistische Lebensweise* (socialist way of life, Brock’s translation) with “socialist awareness” and “sozialistisches Bewußtsein” (socialist consciousness, Brock’s translation) (224). At the same time of this shift,

the GDR introduced specific, targeted policies to facilitate women’s combining paid employment with motherhood. These policies were explicitly intended to stop the decline in rates of childbearing without resorting to coercive measures. (Ferree 93)

These supportive measures included access to abortion in the first trimester, free birth control, paid leave for childbirth, housing for unmarried mothers, as well as the expansion of childcare availability (Ferree 93–94). These policies, although progressive, firmly place women into the role of caretaker and mother and, Ferree notes, men and fathers had to petition to receive leave for childcare. “The gendered language of the law reflected a gendered mode of thinking that not only defined women as mothers but also absolved men of any formal responsibilities as fathers.” (94) **TKFulbrook also refers to the one-sided increase in responsibilities for women’s roles in the GDR, noting that “The alleged ‘emancipation of women’ in the GDR was for all sorts of reasons at best lopsided and partial.”** (141) Ferree notes that the benefits of

Muttipolitik (“mommy politics”, Ferree’s translation) came to be questioned in the context of a societal emphasis on work and employment in the GDR, and women were discriminated against regarding employment opportunities and promotions. **TK_As Fulbrook states, “Women were increasingly provided with the conditions necessary for full participation in the labour market, but neither men nor women were entirely emancipated from traditional gender stereotypes” (148). In East Germany, women’s rights appeared to be progressive and equal, but balancing the requirements of both the home and the workforce meant extra labor for women. Although there was no official women’s feminist movement in the GDR, women’s voicing of their discontent became important factors in the democratic movements leading to the collapse of the GDR. (Fulbrook 172)**

Mary Fulbrook’s chapter on gender points out the lower status of women in the GDR “The majority of women continued to lead extremely hard lives, concentrated predominantly at the lower levels of any hierarchy, where they had lower social status and less control over their work than did their male superiors.” (174) This has not only been the case in the GDR. Butler also questions this hierarchy, noting that focusing on the masculine/feminine binary alone ignores other elements of power within society, stating “the ‘specificity’ of the feminine is once again fully decontextualized and separated off analytically and politically from the constitution of class, race, ethnicity, and other axes of power relations” (*Gender Trouble* 6). Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term “intersectionality” in 1989, writing that “because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated.” (140) Any discussion of gender must also include a discussion of

race. This I explore in Chapter 2, in which I problematize the use of transformation in the adaptations of “Der Froschkönig” as a method of punishment or rehabilitation for characters who attempt to raise themselves above their societally enforced status. In the DEFA canon, the transformed characters often are kings or royalty. Both the princess of *Der Froschkönig* and her prince must transform in some way—he becomes a frog and she must perform as a male servant—before they can reach their happily ever after. In the Disney remediation, however, the transformation happens when the female protagonist poses as a princess when she is actually a Black woman with little financial or class power. For Disney, the transformation of Black and marginalized bodies as a tool for further disenfranchisement reflects the historical treatment of people of color and of white supremacy in the United States.

Within the United States, the appearance of *The Princess and the Frog* in 2009 came only one year after the first Black US president, Barack Obama took power. Obama’s presidency, as argus Luigi Esposito in “White Fear and US Racism in the Era of Obama: The Relevance of Neoliberalism,” “is condemned by millions of mostly White Americans not only as a threat to freedom and free enterprise, but a deviation from the ‘real’ (i.e., White) America” (3). Cheryl R. Kaiser et. al. examined Obama’s victory and questioned the perspectives of US-Americans regarding racial injustice after the election, finding that “participants showed the anticipated decrease in their perceptions of how much further the US needs to go to achieve racial equality” (557). They concluded that, despite persisting racial disparities, “racism was less of a problem and that anyone can achieve success through effort and perseverance.” (558) This perception of success through hard work (despite racial inequities) is reflected in the motivating goal of the main character in the *Princess and the Frog* who is taught by her father that she can

achieve her capitalist-oriented goals through working hard and persevering. Ultimately, this proves untrue in the fairy tale when the female protagonist marries rich and is able to then achieve her goals at the side of her husband—while continuing to work hard.

Anger, the enactment of which I focus on in Chapter 3, appears to be a decidedly difficult emotion to define, and here I turn to emotion wheels and philosophy. Aristotle's explanation of *orgē* (anger), as analyzed by W.V. Harris in "The Rage of Women," contends that power over another is necessary for anger to occur (123). *Orgē*, according to Aristotle, is "a desire accompanied by pain for an imagined retribution" (Rhetoric. 1378a31–33, cited in Nussbaum). There are a multitude of different proposals regarding the primary emotions in humans. In the 1980s, Robert Plutchik proposed that there exist eight primary emotions: anger, fear, sadness, disgust, surprise, anticipation, trust, and joy, which he arranged on a flower-shaped color wheel. The terms in between the petals on this paradigm are the sum of the two emotions surrounding them—anger plus anticipation equals aggression, whereas anger combined with disgust equals contempt. For the analysis of fairy tales, anger, aggression, and contempt are displayed across all gender performances, but the ability to enact these emotions upon another is accepted or punished along a similar hierarchy as that of gendered power dynamics.

Disney and Pixar added their own emotional paradigm to the mix in 2015. The film *Inside Out* (Pete Docter) featured the anthropomorphic emotions of sadness, joy, fear, disgust, and anger. These emotions were portrayed as characters inside the main character's head who controlled her responses to everything that happened in her life. Anger, in this film, is portrayed as masculine, despite being one of the emotions of a young girl. He is red, short, and the top of his head lights on fire when he has outbursts. Fear is also portrayed as male character with male

voice actors, while the other three emotions—sadness, joy, and disgust—are female characters with female voice actors. With this film the Walt Disney Company firmly illustrates anger as a masculine characteristic.

In Dawn England, Lara Descartes, and Mellissa A. Collier-Meek's "Gender Role Portrayal and the Disney Princess" the scholars analyzed the Disney princess movies—the ones featuring a female main character who either marries a prince or enters a romantic relationship with a prince-like figure—by coding how often gendered behavior was depicted for the male and female characters in the film. Their study analyzed the behavior of princesses from Disney's first animated feature film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (David Hand, Perce Pearce, William Cottrell, Larry Morey, Wilfred Jackson, and Ben Sharpsteen 1937) to the 2009 *The Princess and the Frog*. They concluded that the male characters in Disney's princess films have become portrayed as more androgynous since the 1930s. The authors employed existing content-analysis research from fairy-tale scholars on gender and animated film to create lists of masculine and feminine behaviors. Neither of these lists include anger as a trait alone, but the masculine list of traits does include aspects where men have more power and aspects that would result from the action of anger as defined by Aristotle. The masculine behaviors they identified include "curious about the princess", "physically strong", "assertive", "inspires fear", and "brave" (559). Each of their behaviors include a description, such as with assertive:

insistence upon a right or claim, the action of declaring or positively stating. Assertiveness included polite assertiveness with a hint of aggression. Assertiveness was a strong, direct assertion of a position or idea. (559)

The behaviors coded as masculine almost all have to do with an element of asserting power, which aligns with my power hierarchy. On the other hand, the feminine characteristics as

defined by England et. al. include terms that define them as powerless, including “physically weak”, “submissive”, “ashamed”, and “collapses crying” (559). England, Descartes, and Collier-Meek set out to test three hypotheses:

The first hypothesis considered the gender of the character, with the expectation that the prince and princess’ gender role portrayals would differ [...] [o]ur second hypothesis was that the princes would perform more rescues than the princesses, and the princesses would be rescued more often than the princes. The third hypothesis involved changes in the Disney Princess films over time. We expected that the gender role portrayals [...] would become more egalitarian over time. (England et. al. 557)

I am primarily interested in their first two hypotheses—that the gender role portrayals between princes and princesses would differ, and that the princesses would display more traditionally feminine than masculine characteristics, and vice versa. (557) In analyzing these nine Disney princess films, the authors found that the prince characters portrayed an approximately equal amount of masculine and feminine traits, whereas the princess characters leaned more feminine, with 65% of their characteristics falling on the feminine side of the lists. In the top five characteristics for princesses, assertiveness was the second most common characteristic—alongside affectionate, fearful, troublesome, and athletic. However, this assertiveness was mostly directed at animals, like the princess’s assertive throw in “Der Froschkönig, oder der eiserne Heinrich”. England, Descartes, and Collier-Meek only mapped out the princess’s assertion over animals in the princess movies from the Walt Disney Company, but as I demonstrate in my analysis of the “Der Froschkönig” in this dissertation, this assertion and power over animals extends beyond the Disney canon.

Thus, employing the theories above, I develop a hierarchy of power as seen in the Grimm fairy tales and their cinematic adaptations in the United States and East Germany. Male

protagonists exist at the top of the hierarchy, enacting their power on the villains who then enact their power on the female protagonists. Female protagonists may exert power, but they may only do so without punishment when that power is enacted on animals. This directionality of power within the hierarchy plays into the performance of gender roles according to Butler. This punishment of stepping outside of the expected gender behavior is supported by Butler's assertion that gendered performance is reinforced through social sanctions.

Historical Backgrounds

At the start of the decade in which Hanne Castein declared the presence of a "*Märchenwelle*" or "fairy-tale wave" (195) in East Germany, Alison Lurie published "Fairy Tale Liberation" (1970) in the *New York Review of Books*. Her positive position sparked a debate—most notably Marcia R. Lieberman's "'Some Day My Prince Will Come': Female Acculturation through the Fairy Tale" (1972)—in response to her claim that "the traditional folk tale [...] is one of the few sorts of classic children's literature of which a radical feminist would approve" (383) and that the best preparation for women's liberation is to buy "at least one collection of fairy tales." (Liberation 6) She followed her praise of the fairy-tale form with "Witches and Fairies" in 1971—the same year as the appearance of Anne Sexton's *Transformations*, a volume of retold fairy tales emphasizing the role of women and women's sexuality. Heavily opinionated—Lurie's take on Andersen calls his tales "kinky" and claims they are good "if you like crying"—her reviews of the Brothers Grimm, Perrault, and Andersen focus on the relative equality of the female characters as proof of their feminist merit. Lurie's second review focuses on the question of canon, noting

that the tales that “we”—in her audience, Americans of the 1970s—know best are those of the passive princess.

Lurie specifically notes that the tales critiqued by Marcia R. Lieberman are those that have been popularized by the Walt Disney Corporation in their feature-length fairy-tale films. The passive princesses of the Disney canon include those of the feature-length films from the early stages of the Walt Disney productions, i.e., *Cinderella* (1950), *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), and *Aurora* (1959). However, as Lurie discusses in her “Witches and Fairies,” these princesses are representative only of a selection of tales from the greater corpus of female-centered fairy tales. And though Lurie argues that there exist many stories of female empowerment and equality within the larger fairy-tale corpus, it is impossible to ignore the role of film adaptations when considering which selections of tales or which of their variants become the crystalized version in a society. Indeed, as Zipes states in “Breaking the Disney Spell”, “[t]he animators sought to impress audiences with their abilities to use pictures in such a way that they would forget the earlier fairy tales and remember the images that they, the new artists, were creating for them.” (342) Zipes makes a compelling argument for “the Disney version” as the crystalized version in the United States.

This shifts the discussion to a question of canonization and the role of institutions—in this project, Walt Disney in the United States and DEFA in East Germany—in whether feminist values are reflected in the most accessible corpuses of fairy tales in each society. This is especially apparent in comparison with the East German fairy-tale film tradition. During a time in which Disney was not producing fairy-tale film—they would return to the genre at the end of the 1980s—East Germany experienced a renewed acceptance of the Grimm tales. This has been

attributed to multiple reasons, including that embracing the Grimm tales as part of East Germany's cultural history supported the claim that East Germany was an equally valid German country as West Germany. This embrace of German cultural history also occurred at a time when, according to Di Napoli in "Thirty Years of Children's Literature in the German Democratic Republic," East Germany had been attempting to stem the tide of emigration. Of course, DEFA had been producing fairy-tale films to greater or lesser success since 1956.

Fairy-Tale Films in the GDR

Stories of kings, princes, and spoiled princesses may seem contradictory to the ideologies of the GDR, and by all rights, in a socialist society, kings and pigmuckers *should* enjoy equal screentime. **TK_Indeed, as Wolfgang Emmerich explains in *Kleine Literaturgeschichte der DDR* (1996), "da die DDR sich erklärtermaßen als seine Gesellschaft im wissenschaftlich-technischen Zeitalter verstand, hätte der Mythos eigentlich keinen Platz in ihr haben dürfen." (Emmerich 341) (since the GDR avowedly understood itself as a society in the scientific-technical era, mythology should not have been allowed any place within it, my translation)** Although fairy tales were also initially rejected by the ideologically antifascist GDR due to the abuse of the Grimm's tales by National Socialism in order to promote nationalistic ideals, authors and filmmakers in both East and West Germany—including Günter Grass, Helma Sanders-Brahms, Stefan Heym, and Kerstin Hensel—found in fairy tales an opportunity to reach audiences through an easily accessible, well-known medium. Because they were consciously used as ideological vehicles to promote socialist values, the fairy-tale films of the German Democratic Republic reflect the cultural and political changes within the socialist regime both in the

conscious, intended lessons promoted by canon and adaptation choices and through the subversive messaging that made it past the censors.

As a genre generally believed to be for children, fairy-tale film was an easy genre for filmmakers to find an audience, especially in a regime with “a children’s literature taken seriously by the state” (Di Napoli 281) and where the genre was “intended by the state to mirror national progress and goals” (Di Napoli 282). As they did for children’s literature, the former GDR also invested far more in their children’s film than the other half of the divided Germany. In the Federal Republic of Germany children’s entertainment was relegated to public television and other non-popular distributors which “pushed the genre into a shadow zone of visual, technical, and artistic incompetence” (Silberman 108). Di Napoli identifies four distinct phases for the GDR and children’s literature: 1945–1949, living under the authority of the Soviets; 1950–1960, when the GDR as a nation came into existence and began legislating a children’s literature meant to further the state’s ideals and goals; 1961–1970, when the GDR sought to stabilize society and stem the emigration of East German citizens to the west—including building the wall and the growing economic prosperity following; and finally 1971 to publication of Di Napoli’s article in 1984, a period that saw East Germany’s reentry into the international world. Children’s film and fairy-tale film followed a similar trajectory. To improve the quality of children’s films while “assuring a high pedagogical level and [...] monitoring the political value of the films” (Niemeier 195), a selection of DEFA artists created a special working group followed by a children’s film dramaturgy group (*Kinderfilm-Dramaturgengruppe*.)

This extremely formal process in developing standards for children’s film resulted in some awkwardly didactic films which eventually contributed to a well-established and beloved

film genre. In her monograph, *The Politics of Magic: DEFA Fairy-tale Films*, Qinna Shen details the progression of how filmmakers in the GDR approached adapting fairy tales to the silver screen. “In its earlier decades, DEFA fairy-tale production was marked by a negotiation between inheriting tradition and updating it to fit the current sociohistorical reality.” (Shen 21) She discusses how the first adaptation of a Grimm tale, the 1956 *Das tapfere Schneiderlein* (*The Brave Little Tailor*, Helmut Spieß), received strong criticism for changing the ending from a royal marriage to that of one with a gardener’s daughter. *Das tapfere Schneiderlein* violated “the taboo of ‘tampering with’ the Grimm canon” (Shen 22). This reflects a general fealty to the popular version—usually that of the Grimms—in the 1960s which mirrors Di Napoli’s analysis of the GDR’s attempts to stabilize society in that decade. After nearly two million East Germans fled the GDR for the West, the GDR began building the Berlin Wall overnight and into the morning of August 13, 1961, effectively locking their citizens in without warning. Within children’s literature, Di Napoli notes an increase in the amount of literature dealing with a divided Germany, works with a greater commitment to the country—“as if the newly closed border suddenly strengthened the people’s resolve to make it all work” (Di Napoli 293)—and a new tone of isolationism reinforcing the ties with the Eastern bloc. Where the DEFA films of the 1950s received criticism because of the awkward, heavy-handed socialist messages pushed into the plot (Niemeier 194), the films of the 1960s worked within an already-established genre and ideological ground rules while also allowing for experimentation and specialization.

However, in 1971, fairy-tale filmmakers once again began to deviate from the revered traditional versions of their tales in order to further illustrate the aspects of socialist life expected by and acceptable to the regime. Di Napoli notes that “[literary] authors began to turn

to the distant past for inspiration” invoking a “renaissance of classical legends and a revival of Germany’s own national treasures, the medieval epic and the romantic fairy tale.” (296) The rise of acceptance for the fairy tale with the *Märchenwelle* was part of the larger growth in popularity of Romantic motifs in the GDR as a desire to flee into Romanticism. The expatriation of Wolf Biermann in 1976 marked a turning point for artists in the GDR. For Chrissta Wolf and others, “[d]er Humanismus und Egalitarismus der Aufklärung und der Französischen Revolution schien[...] gescheitert, zumal in Deutschland.” (Emmerich 338) (the humanism and egalitarianism of the Enlightenment and French Revolution appeared to have failed, my translation) Turning toward Romantic themes was a manifestation of not only trauma, but also “die Wiederkehr von Hoffnungen und utopischen Entwürfen, die in der akteuellen Erfahrungswirklichkeit nicht zu verorten sind.” (Emmerich 342) (the resurgence of hope and utopian plans that are not to be located in the current realities of experience, my translation) Within this revival also came the folksy fairytale, the acceptance of which also occurred in the realm of film. Because of the fairy tale’s inherent folksiness, as well as the popularity of children’s films in a film landscape that didn’t require attendance to be economically sustainable as Shen notes, positive changes to the referent texts—such as the thirteenth fairy in the 1971 adaptation of “Dornröschen” being named “the Fairy of Diligence” (Shen 22)—received positive reviews rather than the criticism from previous decades.

TK_The *Märchenwelle* coincided with the “heyday of Soviet animation” (Kononenko 272), a genre which drew heavily from folklore for the source material. Natalie Kononenko notes that animation is generally not seen as “purveyors of a Soviet socialist message” (273). For East Germany, participation in this folklore revival included co-productions with the Czech

Republic and other eastern bloc states. Most notable of these productions is *Drei Haselnüsse für Aschenputtel* (Václav Vorlíček 1973), which was filmed in both Czech and English and then dubbed to only German or Czech for the respective countries.

Di Napoli's discussion of children's literature naturally also touches on the tradition of fairytales in the GDR. The fairy tale's connection to National Socialism led to an initial rejection of the generic usage not only in what would become the GDR. The abuse of the fairytale by the National Socialists to promote nationalistic ideals, as well as the parallels between the violence in fairytales and the suffering inflicted in the Nazi death camps (Arnds 423) led to the Allied forces banning the publication of the Grimms' tales in 1945. Indeed, within the GDR, though there were select tales that appeared in literature and film, the misuse of the tales by the National Socialists, the traditional magic and imagery which seemed to contradict the tenets of socialist realism, meant to uphold the values of the regime, as well as the friction of using royalty in a state where all were meant to be equal, meant the fairy-tale form was less than ideal. Those that were published had a multitude of changes forced upon them to make them 'pass':

In der ersten Gesamtausgabe von 1952 wurden u. a. den frommen Märchenheldinnen die Nachtgebete und andere christliche Praktiken gestrichen, Grausamkeiten der Märchen-Bösewichter wurden gemildert, und einigen Märchen wurde sogar ein neues, didaktisch-affirmatives Happy-End aufgezwungen. (Castein 195)

In the first full edition from 1952, among other things nightly prayers and other Christian practices were taken from the devout fairy-tale heroines, gruesomeness of fairy-tale villains was mellowed, and some tales even had a didactively-positive Happy Ending forced upon them. (my translation)

Where the Grimms made their tales more violent (Tatar 10), the tales in the 1950s in the GDR removed the violence and developed new happy endings. In the 1960s, the GDR began to see

new fairy tales written and published, not just rewrites and editing of the previously published 'classics.' The fairy-tale genre allowed for authors to cross over previously closed-off thematic boundaries and employ the tale to subversively critique the regime of the GDR. As Di Napoli suggests in his article, the acceptance of fairy tales in the GDR was tied to the necessity to restore a literary past to children's literature in the GDR and colored by the desire to be seen as a legitimate, independent (East) Germany.

Despite the fascist associations of the fairy tale, DEFA fairy-tale film came to be a celebrated method to reach both adults and children with socialist ideology:

"Although the number of DEFA fairy tale films comprised a relatively small corpus amongst their children's films, these tales of kings and queens who must learn lessons about the value of hard work came to epitomize the high quality of DEFA's children's productions more generally. Party functionaries as well as East German audiences embraced fairy tale films as part of GDR history, even describing them as adaptations of 'our' stories." (Blessing 249)

The energy and resources put into this genre in the former GDR has left a large corpus of fairy-tale film. The adaptation decisions I evidence in this corpus provide even more insight on what the writers, directors, and state officials of the time perceived as necessary portrayals of behavior for the viewers of the GDR to see in these beloved tales.

Fairy-tale Films in the United States

In the German context, it would appear that the declared equality, especially in terms of working and contributing to society, of the sexes in East Germany was (unsurprisingly) reflected in the state-sanctioned fairy-tale film. The princesses of these films are drawn into action through the adaptation of their tales. No longer does the princess in "Der Froschkönig" sit back and simply do as her father and the frog command in the 1988 DEFA production—she must

fulfill her promise in full by going after the transformed prince and acting as his servant to finish breaking the curse. She moves from passively accepting what the men around her command to actively developing her own autonomy in the curse-breaking process. This shift from the passivity of the source material to the active autonomy of the princess in the film occurs later in the Disney canon than it did in East Germany. After the gap in which the Walt Disney Company was not making fairy-tale films, the princesses of the Walt Disney Company take on more autonomy in their choices and are no longer defined solely by their relationship to love and finding their happily ever after in a prince. When the studio returned to fairy-tale adaptation in 1989 with *The Little Mermaid*, they began a subtle shift from the portrayal of the importance of love and happily ever afters to portraying familial relationships. Of late, those subtle shifts have turned far less subtle, with princesses, such as *Moana* in 2016, fully escaping the love-story Disney treatment. This evolution has loosely followed the various waves of feminism in the United States, beginning with resistance to the first and second waves by prioritizing monogamous happily ever afters and ending with Disney's heroines rejecting marriage in preference to familial relationships in the fourth wave. Both Disney films analyzed throughout this dissertation appear shortly before the beginning of the fourth wave of feminism in the United States and feature these elements of familial loyalty and a reduced emphasis on the romantic relationship. *The Princess and the Frog* emphasizes the relationship of the female protagonist with her father, and throughout the film she attempts to honor a promise she made to him. *Tangled* follows Rapunzel as she discovers her true identity and her real family.

The first feature-length film in the Disney canon, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), sets the pattern for how the princesses in their films are 'supposed' to act. Snow White is

beautiful, soft-spoken, and relies on her romantic interest to save her. The plot features changes from the source material that, according to Jack Zipes, framed the princess's life in terms of male intervention and was "peculiarly American" (Breaking 347). As Zipes discusses, introducing the prince at the beginning of the tale highlights the importance of his "manipulation and intervention" in her life. Within the lyrics of the film music, Snow White's "I want" song "I'm Wishing / One Song" impresses her passivity further on the listener. She sings, "I'm wishing for the one I love to find me today." Her primary motivation, revealed in the song, is to be found by her prince and indicates early on in the film her general passivity. This passivity continues for the next two princess films in the Disney Canon. In *Cinderella* (Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, Hamilton Luske 1950) and *Sleeping Beauty* (Wolfgang Reitherman, Eric Larson, Clyde Geronimi, and Les Clark 1959) the female protagonists also wait for things to happen to them and for the people in power that surround them—their princes and the older women rulers or stepmothers—to determine the course of their lives. This passivity "marked a step backwards in terms of feminist progress" as "all three princesses are essentially treated as property in their respective films." (Pérez 72). The early Disney princesses are heroines to whom things happen, ones who have not yet benefitted from second-wave feminism's questioning of traditional gender roles.

Indeed, from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* onward, Disney has continued to develop a pattern for its fairy-tale heroines to play the role of damsel in distress. Despite this princess predisposition, however, there has been a subtle shift in the underlying Disney themes. Like the fairy-tale films of the GDR which portray the heroine's sex life only in the context of a loving relationship with the male protagonist, Disney's early fairy tales emphasized the "happily ever

after” within the context of a final, monogamous relationship—often portrayed through a final kiss. “[I]n the end these tales suggest that a woman’s happiness is measured not by her identity, but by what society says she is able to provide for a man: a home with children.” (Pérez 74) Each of the films establishes early on that their princess is able to maintain a home—Snow White comes to the dwarves’ dirty house and immediately begins homemaking, Cinderella joyfully goes about the household tasks laid down by her stepmother, and in *Sleeping Beauty*, the young princess is raised in a modest cottage where her fairy godmothers have no skill in housekeeping and she takes on that work.

These first princesses very much fit the “damsel in distress” stereotype. Though she is older than her Grimm counterpart and shows initiative in her wish for her prince to come, Snow White still relies on him to not only take her away from her woes, but also to wake her from death with true love’s first kiss. *Sleeping Beauty*’s Aurora, like Snow White, gets to meet her prince before she falls into a deathlike sleep, but all of the action is reserved for the prince as he eventually defeats Maleficent. The passivity of the princess persists through the 1980s prior to the third wave of feminism in the United States.

David Whitley reads the films of the late 1980s and early 1990s with an eye to the home- and house-making element of the films. Ariel’s (*The Little Mermaid* 1989) and Belle’s (*Beauty and the Beast* 1991) plots move them beyond the homes of their families and allow them “to fulfill an aspirational role—beyond the domestic environment—that is more in sympathy with contemporary mores and social practices.” (41) The heroines aspire to find fulfillment beyond their homes, but ultimately remain in the homes of their fathers and maintain their loyalty to family. The first princess protagonist after *Sleeping Beauty*, Ariel (*The Little Mermaid* 1989),

takes initiative in acquiring the means of meeting her prince. The first film to appear at the start of the Disney Renaissance—the period between 1989 and 1999 when Disney returned to adapting well-known and beloved stories (Pallant 89)—*The Little Mermaid* brings in a tale completely edited from its literary referent. The film sets up the mermaid as a youngest daughter rebelling against her father’s prejudice against the human world by collecting human artifacts. After meeting and rescuing a human prince, she rejects her father’s rules and signs a contract⁷ with a witch to exchange her tail for legs—but she still relies on the prince to fight the final battle against the evil sea witch. Despite the changes, the plot does, however, maintain a similarity to Hans Christian Andersen’s version in that the mermaid makes the choice to leave her family, her father, and her sisters to live a mortal life with her prince. Unlike the maiden in Andersen’s tale, this mermaid does marry the prince and is not punished with years of servitude. While Ariel engages in active choices that guide the plot, her primary motivation for acting on her interest in the human world is to end up with her prince. Appearing one year after Butler’s “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution” Ariel engages in a performance of gender that reflects that of her predecessors’ motivations—love of a male character—but which also indicates the upcoming pattern of less-passive princesses in the Disney fairy-tale films of the 1990s.

The 1991 film, *Beauty and the Beast*, features a book-smart heroine who sees past the performance of the traditional ‘manly man’ and rejects his offer of marriage before falling for the gentle and loving heart of the ‘beast’ of the tale. In many ways, this film portrays the

7. Ariel’s ability to sign a contract on her own is significant as, prior to the Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1974, women were not guaranteed the right to open their own bank or credit accounts.

importance of looking below the surface—the societally respected man, Gaston, turns out to be the villain in the tale while the Beast who has been rejected by the same society because of his looks transforms into the love interest. Like the unexpected role reversal in the male characters, the heroine of the story, Belle, is motivated by her own knowledge and by loyalty to her family. *Beauty and the Beast* not only marks a break in the passive princess pattern from Disney, but also denotes a shift in the underlying values and kinship models endorsed by the Disney Company through the portrayal of princesses in the feature-length animated films. Belle rejects Gaston’s marriage proposal, knowing it would deny her both her independence and her relationship with her father. For her, the only person for whom she is willing to give up her independence is her father. When he is taken prisoner by the Beast, Belle offers herself up in his place. Even after she becomes emotionally involved with the Beast, it is seeing her dying father in a magic mirror that drives her to deny her own happily ever after—the ultimate goal of her princess predecessors—to save her father. She becomes the first Disney princess who doesn’t “[make] a blind commitment to the first prince who happens down the highway, penetrates the thorny barriers, and arrives *deus ex machina* to release her” (Rowe 217)⁸ Indeed Belle rejects both princes that she encounters in favor of familial loyalty. Though she continues the tradition of a rags-to-riches marriage as seen in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Cinderella*, and *Sleeping Beauty*, she also portrays motivations that expand beyond finding true love and marriage. In this film it is Gaston who plays the part of the antagonist, or the “witch” character.

⁸ Though Gaston can hardly be considered a prince in practice, he embodies the same characteristics of the princes that came before him. Like Charming (*Cinderella* 1950), Phillip (*Sleeping Beauty* 1959), and Eric (*The Little Mermaid* 1989), Gaston charges in, expecting to slay the evil—the Beast—in Belle’s life.

His offenses, however, are not against Belle but her father. In the end, though, there is a focus on the happy couple.

Belle's loyalty to her family remains the prevalent theme in the 2017 live-action version of the film. For the first time, family loyalty is a requirement for the happily ever after. With this, we see a shift in the kinship models projected by Disney; no more should the daughter just find a husband, but she should also remain loyal to her family and ancestry, a principle that remains present in the fairy-tale films following *Beauty and the Beast*. This is in line with the state of societal expectations and women's movements in the United States:

We were just coming out of what I have called "The Evil Eighties," a time when intense conservatism had become allied with strong antifeminism in our culture, making arguments about feminine ideals seem ill-mannered, even freakish. Reagan had just had his long run of power, the Equal Rights Amendment had run out of steam, women's activists were in retreat, women were being told they couldn't "have it all." (Wolf 2)

In *Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin* (Ron Clements and John Musker 1992), and *Mulan*⁹ (Tony Bancroft and Barry Cook 1998), the heroines actually do get to "have it all." They maintain their own separate identities and goals—Mulan even becomes a hero¹⁰ for her country—while also keeping their love interest and showing loyalty to their biological families. This shift shows a contrast to the early films in the Disney fairy-tale canon, in which the heroines embraced a replacement or chosen family when their biological one failed. For example, Disney's Snow White is orphaned with only her cruel stepmother, and she creates a substitute family among

⁹ Though not a fairy-tale film, *Mulan* is also based on a written story important to its home culture.

¹⁰ I use hero over heroine for Mulan, as she did her heroics dressed as a man, taking her father's place in the imperial army.

the dwarves and her prince. In the traditional tale, Snow White's mother is present at the beginning and wishes for a child.¹¹

The most obvious shifts to the family focus in Disney has come with the last three fairy tale films: *The Princess and the Frog*, *Tangled*, and *Frozen* (Jennifer Lee and Chris Buck 2013).¹² Each of these films feature heroines who have lost their families in one way or another, and their plots resolve to highlight their continued loyalty or return to the biological family. I utilize *The Princess and the Frog* and *Tangled* to illustrate the dynamics of power enacted upon the princess protagonists of these two films. Though the father in the Grimms' "Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich" plays a similar role in guiding the main character's moral and life decisions, he does that from a position of power as king and as an adult. In Disney's version, the main character's motivation for her life is to fulfill the dreams of her father, who is no longer living during her adult life. There is once again variation extended from the traditional Grimm tale into the Disney product, as the main character is transformed into a frog herself for the majority of the plot. In *The Princess and the Frog*, Tiana's motivation for her hard work in pursuit of opening a restaurant is based in her loyalty and respect for her deceased father. In *Tangled*, Rapunzel is returned to her family because of her insistence on viewing the "floating lights"—the paper lanterns her family have lit every year on her birthday after being stolen away from her crib—to which she is inexplicably drawn. Contrary to the traditional Rapunzel

¹¹ Sheldon Cashdan provides an analysis of the necessity of the good mother at the start of tales in terms of the psychological development of the child. The good mother becomes the representative of the good aspects of the child, while the witch or stepmother figure portrays the negative psychological traits that the child fears. In defeating the witch, the child defeats their potential negative traits. The mother must die in order to provide space for the witch as well as to provide an unadulterated good mother figure. Disney, leading up to *Frozen* (2014), maintains this dichotomy even through the family-orientation shift.

¹² *Frozen II* (2019) is also a princess film, but as it is both a sequel and not based on a literary referent.

tale, this Rapunzel is not destined to find her prince through the trials of pregnancy, desertion, and the prince's blindness. Instead of true love, she is destined to recognize a symbol of her childhood in her own artwork and to realize that she is the lost princess that she had heard about on her excursion into town. Disney's fairy-tale heroines of the 2000s do not need men to save them. Each is perfectly capable of saving herself and making the choices that guide her to her dreams. Contrary to the earliest Disney princesses, the princesses of the fourth wave of feminism not only 'have it all,' they often actively choose to not marry, instead focusing on their familial relationships.

Literature Review

In order to analyze the adaptations of the Grimm fairy tales into their respective cinematic versions, I first situate my own methodology for this project in the realm of folklore and adaptation studies. I then discuss previous research in fairy-tale studies and feminist- and gender-oriented fairy-tale interpretation. I provide an overview of research on the films of the Walt Disney Company and DEFA, leading each into a more specific discussion of the research concerning fairy-tale films. Finally, I work through scholarship which focuses on the two tales central to my own analysis, "Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich" (1812) and "Rapunzel." My study addresses many of the themes and analyses provided in the literature below, but it moves beyond the current scholarship available in the direct comparison of tales represented in both the DEFA and Disney canons.

Adaptation has been widely studied and theorized in the fields of both literature and folklore. Most useful in this work and discussed above is Linda Hutcheon and Siobhan O'Flynn's

A Theory of Adaptation (2013), which provides a thorough study of adaptation studies, specifically regarding the adaptation from the literary into the cinematic, as well as across other media such as opera and video games. Folklore studies focuses more on the oral dissemination of stories, and Lynne S. McNeill's *Folklore Rules* (2013) provides a productive foundational introduction to the field and provides categories for analyzing different folklore types as well as a discussion of "conservation" and "dynamic variation" to describe what is maintained and edited, respectively, in the dissemination of folklore. Although the Grimm tales as they have been codified do not necessarily show dynamic variation in that they are passed from person to person, the term—with conservation—is useful when referencing what is and is not changed throughout the seven editions. In terms of how to analyze adaptation, Christina Bacchilega's *Fairy Tales Transformed? Twenty-First Century Adaptations and the Politics of Wonder* (2013) introduces the term "fairy-tale web," addresses the multimediality of fairy-tale adaptation, and reads adaptations as a web of texts that interplay with each other.

In addition to Bacchilega's term *fairy-tale web*, fairy tales have an extensive history of scholarship, both specific to German studies and beyond. Max Lüthi's (1979) discussion of the history of the term *Märchen* from the Middle High German "maerlîn" to its use in modern German and into other languages as a way to refer to the German-originating tales such as those of the Brothers Grimm is useful in defining the tale itself. Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment* (1977) provides analysis on the usefulness of fairy tales in the development of a child into an adult. Maria Tatar's work within the fairy-tale realm is prolific, including two editions of *The Classic Fairy Tales* (1999, 2017), each featuring variations on canonical fairy tales such as "Bluebeard", "Hansel and Gretel", and "Cinderella" as well important research within

fairy-tale scholarship. Tatar's *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales* (1987) is particularly useful for tracing the trends of the Grimms' editing of the *KHM*, specifically Chapter 1, "Sex and Violence: The Hard Core of Fairy Tales" which outlines the three phases of the Grimms' edits. Ruth B. Bottigheimer draws connections between the Grimm tales and societal expectations of behavior in *Grimms' Bad Girls and Bold Boys: The Moral and Social Vision of the Tales*.

Another scholar with abundant research in the realm of fairy tales, Jack Zipes provides a rich and wide variety of scholarship, including historical discussion of the genre in *Fairy Tale as Myth/Myth as Fairy Tale* (1994), which outlines the rise of the fairy-tale genre in the 17th and 18th centuries, as well as *The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre* (2012), which directs an interdisciplinary lens at the dissemination of fairy tales. In *Breaking the Magic Spell* (2002), Zipes examines and analyzes the interaction of the fairy tale's roots in folklore and orality, tracing the use of the genre through its rise in German Romanticism through the appropriation of the tale in mass media and commodification.

Zipes' *Don't Bet on the Prince: Contemporary Feminist Fairy Tales in North America and England* (1989) provides a collection of feminist fairy tales which "draws attention to the illusions of the traditional fairy tale by demonstrating that they have been structured according to the subordination of women" (xi). Like Tatar's *The Classic Fairy Tales*, Zipes provides a collection of fairy tales before providing feminist literary criticism from Marcia K. Lieberman, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, and Karen E. Rowe. Donald Haase's edited volume *Fairy Tales and Feminism: New Approaches* (2004) provides a broad overview of feminist fairy-tale scholarship. His detailed introduction outlines the history of feminist scholarship on fairy tales, beginning with Alison Lurie's 1970 review claiming that fairy tales would be one of the few

examples of classic children's literature that showcase feminist merits. Sheldon Cashdan's *The Witch Must Die: How Fairy Tales Shape our Lives* (1999) develops analysis on the implications of the requirements of death for the female antagonists in fairy tales, outlining how the punishment for the witch often reflects her crime and serves as a means for the child to psychologically overcome the fear inspired by the antagonist. Jeana Jorgensen's quantitative approaches to bodies in the Grimm corpus draws on her coded database on bodies and their descriptions in fairy tales. Her articles, "Quantifying the Grimm Corpus: Transgressive and Transformative Bodies in the Grimms' Fairy Tales" (2014) and "The Most Beautiful of All: A Quantitative Approach to Fairy-Tale Femininity" (2019) draw on her dissertation research to provide quantitative research on the Grimm corpus.

Scholarship on fairy-tale film crosses multiple traditions. *Fairy Tale Films: Visions of Ambiguity* (2010), edited by Pauline Greenhill and Sidney Eve Matrix, offers analysis from multiple scholars that spans films across the western world and from the advent of fairy-tale film into modernity. Specifically, they concern themselves with "what new and old meanings and uses the filmed version brings to audiences and sociocultural contexts." (3) In the field of fairy-tale film, too, Zipes makes a significant contribution to the field. His monograph *The Enchanted Screen: The Unknown History of Fairy-Tale Films* addresses developments in subcategories of the fairy-tale film in Part I and moves on to analysis of specific tales and tale types in Part II. Part III includes the chapter "Between Slave Language and Utopian Optimism: Neglected Fairy-Tale Films of Central and Eastern Europe", which addresses DEFA fairy-tale film among other Eastern European fairy-tale films in terms of their difference to the Disney examples.

Film scholarship on the Walt Disney company ranges from historical approaches discussing Walt Disney's life and his early shorts to analyses of women in Disney's animation. Richard Schickel's *The Disney Version* (1997) provides a history of Walt Disney's rise to fairy-tale power in the United States. *The Disney Version! Popular Cinema and Literary Classics* (2016) edited by Douglas Brode and Shea T. Brode offers a collection of essays which compare the referent tales to their adaptations in Walt Disney's films. Though not fairy-tale specific, the volume includes Peggy A. Russo's "Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah: The Re-enslavement of Uncle Remus", which analyzes the misappropriation of Joel Chandler Harris's Uncle Remus character for the *Song of the South* (Wilfred Jackson and Harvey Foster 1949) film. Amy M. Davis's *Good Girls & Wicked Witches: Women in Disney's Feature Animation* (2006) outlines the historical portrayal of women as both villain and protagonist in the Disney canon. In her introduction, Davis discusses the difficulty of researching Disney and their resistance to academic research in their archives (2). She also provides a slightly different categorization of the eras for Disney films, naming 1937–1967 as the "Classic" years, 1967–1988 as the "Middle" era, and 1989–2005—shortly before this book was published—as the "Eisner" era (v). The editors of *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture* (1995) were required to remove the name "Disney" from their working title for the volume after being told that "Disney does not allow third-party books to use the name 'Disney' in their titles" (4). Their experience with the Disney company is reflected in the essays within, including Jack Zipes' critical analysis of Walt Disney's "American grit" in his appropriation of fairy tales (332, cited from the chapter's appearance Tatar's *The Classic Fairy Tales*).

Scholarship on DEFA film has had a rich history from both inside and outside of Germany. **TK_ Within Germany, much of the scholarship since 1998 is thanks to the rich collection and support of the DEFA Stiftung. This includes Frank-Burkhard Habel's *Das große Lexikon der DEFA Spielfilme*, which provides an in-depth listing of the DEFA films from 1946 to 1993 as well as numerous photos. A beautiful volume specifically on fairy-tale film is *Die DEFA-Märchenfilme*, a collaboration between the DEFA-Stiftung and Franziska Münz. The volume includes color photos and anecdotes on the development and creation of the films. *Zwischen Marx und Muck: DEFA-Filme für Kinder* edited by Ingelore König, Dieter Wiedemann, and Lothar Wolf includes essays discussing the development of children's films in the GDR as well as discussions on the pedagogical merits.** Scholarship from outside of Germany has been, unsurprisingly due to prohibitions on access, most strongly developed after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Seán Allan and John Sandford's *DEFA: East German Cinema, 1946–1992* (1999) is a welcome contribution to the study of DEFA film, providing an introductory survey of the DEFA film corpus through contributions from multiple scholars as well as an interview with director Kurt Maetzig. Allan's and Sebastian Heiduschke's edited volume from 2016, *Re-imagining DEFA: East German Cinema in its National and Transnational Contexts* continues from this initial introduction, examining the explosion of interest in DEFA film and East German cinema after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Marc Silberman, one of the limited number of US-American scholars working on DEFA film before the fall of the Wall, has made many contributions to the scholarly understanding of DEFA cinema, not the least of which is his and Henning Wrage's edited volume, *DEFA at the Crossroads of East German and International Film Culture: A Companion* (2014), which brings together essays on the international networks of DEFA cinema. In recent

years, volumes such as Kyle Frackman and Faye Stewart's *Gender and Sexuality in East German Film: Intimacy and Alienation* (2018) as well as Frackman's *Coming Out* (2022) have focused on queer and feminist interpretations of East German film.

Scholarship on fairy-tale film in the DEFA canon has been included throughout the scholarship on DEFA films more generally, often through the lens of children's films, such as Benita Blessing's "DEFA Children's Films: Not Just for Children" in Silberman and Wrage's *DEFA At the Crossroads of East German and International Film Culture*. Individual contributions on the fairy-tale films produced by DEFA have appeared as part of the *Marvels & Tales* journal, including Claudia Schwabe's discussion of the continued popularity of DEFA's "Aschenputtel" (Cinderella) adaptation in her "The Legacy of DEFA's Three Hazelnuts for Cinderella in Post-Wall Germany: Tracing the Popularity of a Binational Fairy-Tale Film on Television" (2017). Finally, and possibly most important for this dissertation, Qinna Shen's *The Politics of Magic: DEFA Fairy-Tale Films* (2015) provides the first monograph dedicated to the analysis of DEFA fairy-tale film in context of GDR politics. Shen's monograph outlines the progression of DEFA's fairy-tale adaptations, connecting the films with their socio-political context in the GDR. In her introduction, she notes that "a comparison between DEFA and Disney could reveal what Disney did right and what went awry." (40) Although my goal in this dissertation is not to reveal what went awry, I draw on Shen's approach of comparing the DEFA films to their literary counterparts and the political contexts in order to provide a comparative study of the power dynamics adapted across these three contexts.

Chapter Outline

The chapters in this dissertation progress thematically to analyze the power dynamics in fairy tales and their film counterparts, each adding onto the previous and integrating further theoretical methods. Chapter 1, “*Sex, Lies, and Growing Up: The Transition from Sexuality to Deceit as a Marker of Female Adulthood*” applies the method most directly by first analyzing the misbehavior of the princess in terms of her entry into sexuality and adulthood in the Grimms’ “*Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich*” and “*Rapunzel*” before turning to the corresponding moment in their adapted films. Supported by Orrin Robinson’s discussion of pronominal shifts referring to young girls in the Grimm tales, I first identify how the Grimm editions feature varied portrayals of the sexual awakenings of the princesses in these two tales—each princess meets a prince and is proven in the tale to have slept with him in some way or form, but the Grimms edited out the direct references to sexuality over the seven editions of the *KHM*. My analysis illustrates how female sexuality, or rather, female abstinence, becomes less of a marker of feminine goodness than the protagonist’s ability to keep their promises and tell the truth. In the Grimm tales as well as in *Tangled*, *Rapunzel oder der Zauber der Tränen*, *The Princess and the Frog*, and *Der Froschkönig* the ability to lie and deceive aligns the protagonist more with the behavior expected of a villain, and she is punished for her lies before she is allowed to achieve her goals and receive her happily ever after.

In the second chapter, “*Verwünscht und verwandelt: Transformation and Race*”, I incorporate theories of intersectionality and class conflict to complicate the power hierarchy. The dynamic plot points analyzed in this chapter are the variations on the transformation found in the Grimm tales as compared to the East German and US-American examples. This chapter centers on transformation in the Grimms’ “*Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich*”, Disney’s

The Princess and the Frog, and DEFA's *Der Froschkönig*. Reading human/animal transformation as a means to reinforce status in reference to class, I analyze DEFA's transformation of royal and privileged bodies in contrast with Disney's transformation of marginalized bodies. DEFA employs transformation as a way to remind royals of the equality across classes and the need for collaboration to achieve societal goals. Disney, however, uses marginalized bodies and transforms them into animals—pushing them further down the power hierarchy. For the Walt Disney Company, including a Black princess in *The Princess and the Frog* should be a step toward diversity and inclusion, but because the film ignores the realities of race in the setting of 1920s New Orleans, it is instead a reification of previous racist practices that attempt to rewrite or romanticize the history of race and class in the United States. I connect this reification to a previous film from Disney, *Song of the South* (Wilfred Jackson and Harvey Foster 1949), which features “[t]he kindly story-teller Uncle Remus [who] tells a young boy stories about trickster Br'er Rabbit, who outwits Br'er Fox and slow-witted Br'er Bear.” (IMDB *Song of the South*)

Disney recently announced that the theme park ride “Splash Mountain” which features *Song of the South* would be changed to instead feature *The Princess and the Frog*. Within this decision, I see the Disney Company attempting to address criticism levied at *Song of the South* (and at “Splash Mountain”) for their racist depictions of Black people by simply replacing one romanticized portrayal of race relations with another. With their remediation of “Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich” into *The Princess and the Frog* (and then into “Splash Mountain”), they attempt what Crenshaw critiques as “simply including Black women within an already established analytical structure.” (140) This chapter complicates the power hierarchy by analyzing transformation through an intersectional lens for race and class.

Chapter 3, “*In ihrem Zorne: Anger and Power*” moves to an interdisciplinary analysis of power by incorporating theories from philosophy and psychology on the portrayal of and motivations for anger in fairy tales. Alongside Harris’s and Martha Nussbaum’s interpretations of Aristotle’s discussion of *orgē*, or anger, I analyze how anger works in the “Rumpelstiltskin” (ATU 500) tale from the Grimm corpus, identifying how, in enacting his anger on himself, the Grimms illustrate that he has no power over the other characters in the tales. Here, the culturally opaque element is indicated by the Grimms’ reduction of the deadly force in “Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich” in the latter editions of the *KHM*. I then move into close readings of first the Grimm, then the DEFA, and finally the Disney versions of “Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich” and “Rapunzel,” analyzing the ways in which anger is portrayed in each of these, finding that anger in these films moves beyond what is present in the Grimm canon.

Conclusion

In analyzing adaptations of power in fairy tales from their Grimm referents to the cinematic remediations of the Walt Disney Company and DEFA, this dissertation identifies and analyzes the cultural “ingredients” that are edited, added, or removed in the new versions of the tales. This dissertation also addresses a gap in scholarship by developing direct comparisons between the DEFA and Disney film adaptations of “Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich” and “Rapunzel.” In focusing on the hierarchy of gendered power in these tales, this work increases the body of work for these tales while also highlighting how fairy-tale films reflect the values and struggles prevalent in the societies and contexts in which they appear.

I analyze the adaptation of power in the fairy-tale films of the GDR and the United States and the development of their portrayal of women and female characters alongside the political contexts of their respective societies. Drawing on theories in gender, feminism, and adaptation studies, the three chapters of this dissertation explore how the princesses and female protagonists in these two adapted tales reject the expected gender performance in lying or deception, the rejection of racial and class constraints, and the action of anger. Each of these princess protagonists acts in ways contradictory to the dynamics of the gendered power hierarchy developed in the course of this dissertation and, as a result, they are placed into an expanded period of suffering where they learn to perform according to expectations. The fairy-tale film provides a safe space for challenging gender-performance expectations while also reinforcing for the viewer that there are consequences to these challenges. Like Butler's depiction of the safety of a non-conforming gender performance in a theater, the distance of the viewer from the characters in the film allows the viewer to "maintain one's sense of reality in the face of this temporary challenge to our existing ontological assumptions about gender arrangements." (Butler 527) The misbehavior of these female protagonists regarding gender performances is safe to experience on screen but could become dangerous when played out in reality.

These female heroines provide examples for the viewers of their tales for both the potential misbehavior of the women in their respective societies and the consequences that may come of them. While Rapunzel is punished by bearing twins in isolation in her Grimm referent tale, in the former GDR she is locked up and further removed from society. In the United States, she faces the threat of being dragged from her recently discovered connections

by the angry Mother Gothel. Although the young princess in the Grimms' "The Frog King" sees an immediate reward for her naughty behavior toward a potential suitor, the women in both adaptations by DEFA and the Walt Disney Company are brought into a further period of isolation and suffering in which they must spend an extended amount of time with their unattractive suitor. My findings align with previous analyses of the adaptations of these tales in East Germany and the United States in that these fairy-tale films fulfill a pedagogical and didactic function that allows both children and adults to experience and visualize behaviors that comply with the gendered norms and expectations of their respective contexts as well as the consequences for acting contrary to those norms. Through the framework of adaptation studies, cultural opacity, and canonical change, it is possible to see how the changing attitudes toward gender performance develop into a simultaneous expectation of more freedom and choice while still constrained within the social sanctions and taboos through the use of punishment and suffering.

Chapter 1: Sex, Lies, and Growing Up: Female Adulthood and the Shift from Sexuality to Deceit¹³

“Hast du schon lügen gelernt?”

—Mother Gothel, *Rapunzel oder der Zauber der Tränen*

What is the difference between the maiden and the crone? Beyond age, it is the behavior of women that determines their portrayed “goodness” in the *Märchen* genre. Young, beautiful, maidens—indicating their virginal status— are pure, demure, tell the truth, and then receive the happy ending afforded to the ‘good’ girls. Meanwhile ‘bad’ women are hyper-sexualized, lie, and use deceit and anger to oppress those they believe to be below them. The counterparts to two of these elements in particular—women’s sexuality and their honesty—come to the fore as the strongest markers of their goodness in the fairy tales and fairy-tale adaptations considered in this study. As female fairy-tale protagonists often deal with puberty concomitant to the progression of their plot lines—their reward, in contrast to the masculine protagonists awarded power, status, and the continuation of their bloodline¹⁴, is often marriage and children—the interaction of women’s entry into adulthood with what marks them as ‘good’ or ‘wicked’ as adults offers insight into the expectations of society when these tales appear in their respective

¹³ Portions of this chapter appeared in *The German Quarterly* Vol. 92, No. 2, German Fairy Tales and Folklore in a Global Context under the title “Pregnancy, Purity, and Body Autonomy in ‘New Originals’ of ‘Rapunzel’”.

¹⁴ These female protagonists also receive power and status, but only through the virtue of marrying that specific prince—their power comes through their husband’s power, and it can be taken away if the marriage dissolves. Masculine protagonists, on the other hand, generally have power as their birthright and by marrying the princess they are then able to access the power.

canons. What previously served as a prohibition of sexual behavior in the Grimm variants of these tales has developed into a prohibition of lying and deceit for the female protagonists as they enter into puberty and adulthood in their East German and US-American cinematic adaptations.

While the interaction of sexuality and deceit can be found in the traditional tales, it is in their adaptations that it is possible to see the importance of the connection between lying, sex, and the entrance into adulthood for female protagonists. Within the cinematic tales of “Rapunzel” and “The Frog King” from DEFA in the GDR and the Walt Disney Company in the United States, the knowing deceit of the heroines becomes the cause of their loss of autonomy. The Rapunzels of these cinematic universes withhold information about the involvement of their ‘prince’ figure from Mother Gothel, and she attempts to further increase their isolation from the world. The ‘princesses’ of the “Frog King,” on the other hand, knowingly disregard the terms of their promise made to the male figures in their life and must spend time atoning for that deception and embracing the lessons of that promise.

In this chapter I analyze the emphasis on truthfulness and loyalty as markers of ‘goodness’ for a young woman in the GDR at the end of the twentieth century and the United States at the start of the twenty-first. I identify points of change in the treatment of sexual activity and punishment from the traditional Grimm tale upon which these adaptations have been developed and reveal how the prohibition of sex becomes culturally opaque in both the GDR and the United States and how that is reflected in the adaptations of “Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich” and “Rapunzel” in their respective cinematic traditions. Following a discussion on the intersections of sex, love, and monogamy in the GDR and the United States, I

then move into a discussion of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's edits on the traditional tales in which they minimized descriptions of sexuality across the seven editions of the *KHM*. These edits—in combination with Orrin Robinson's analysis of the pronominal shifts from "es" to "sie" used for female protagonists in the Grimms' tales—reveal the points of comparison that I analyze in the changes made to the narratives in the four films treated in this study.

In the "Rapunzel" of the Grimms, there is a direct connection between her sexual activity and the punishment of the maiden—she reveals her own sexual transgression with the prince and then bears twins while banished in the desert. Although the direct reference to her sexual activity does not appear in the later editions of the *KHM*, the effects of Rapunzel's sexuality remain a central part of the punishment she endures. In both *Rapunzel oder der Zauber der Tränen* (Ursula Schmenger 1988) and *Tangled* (John Musker and Ron Clements 2010), however, there is no pregnancy, and the punishments reflect her purposeful deceit. In "Der Froschkönig," the Grimm tale already incorporates themes of truth and loyalty—the young princess must uphold her promise to the frog to receive her reward. The princesses of the Grimm tales do not face punishment for their deception, but the heroines in both *Der Froschkönig* (1988) in the GDR and *The Princess and the Frog* (2009) in the United States do. This upholds the power hierarchy outlined in the Introduction of this study; in the Grimm tale, the princess believes the prince to only be a frog—as an animal, he is at the bottom of the hierarchy of power—while the princesses of the Disney and DEFA movies act deceitful to powerful men (their father and the transformed prince or king) with full knowledge of the man's powerful status. Because of their deceit, the heroines in the two films face extended time in the fourth stage of Burkert's "Maiden's Tragedy"—or the period of intense suffering as laid

out in the Introduction. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the use of transformation to end their suffering—for the prince in the Grimm and DEFA tales and for both the prince and princess in the Disney adaptation—as the reward for the protagonist’s truth and loyalty.

Connecting the edits of the Grimm Brothers throughout the multiple editions of the *KHM* to similar thematic changes in the cinematic variations of DEFA and Disney, I demonstrate how the fairy-tale films of “Rapunzel” and “The Frog King” continue to diminish the importance of sexual awakening as the marker of female adulthood and instead emphasize the role of lying and deception as an indication of growing up. Applying the hierarchy of power outlined in the Introduction to the acts of deceit and lying, the adaptations of “The Frog King” and “Rapunzel” in the DEFA and Disney corpuses demonstrate that female protagonists are punished for their deceptions against male characters. As the heroines enter adulthood, their employment of deceit is punished, maintaining their status as maiden and not villain. Between the two cinematic traditions, each treats female truthfulness similarly—when female protagonists learn to lie, that is when they have entered into the world of adults. Sexual readiness or activity plays a secondary role.

Youth and Female Sexuality

While sex in the United States remains a taboo topic, whispered and only hinted at, the GDR’s official stance on sex—or at least, the approach touted in public discussions and literature on sexuality and sex—was that sex and love went hand in hand. “Sex advice books simply assumed that their readers were in a loving, heterosexual, monogamous relationship, and other publications continually stressed that sex without love was an empty activity, at best

meaningless and at worst actively damaging.” (McLellan, *Love* 83) This assumption of heterosexual monogamy is complicated by the legalization of homosexuality (Fulbrook 164) and the increased discussions of “not only lesbian relations but also different patterns of heterosexual relationship[s] and types of partnership” (Fulbrook 166) in the late 1980s. These public discourses can be seen in the films from both the US and the GDR and their approach to sex. In the DEFA films, protagonists engage in sex within a relationship—or at least within a loving context—while the antagonists, particularly the female antagonists, participate in sexual activity outside of loving monogamy.

We see sexual behavior outside of love portrayed by villains in the GDR, which can lead us to infer that sex itself is what is being vilified. In the traditional fairy tales, this was the case. Women who had sex—whether they were protagonists or antagonists—were punished. Sex went hand in hand with bad/wicked deeds. As time goes on and new interpretations/remediations appear, however, the role of sexual activity changes and the protagonists in the tales are not punished because of the sex they have, but because they embrace other traits of the villains in the tales—particularly lying and deception. By embracing the traits and actions reserved for those higher in the hierarchy of power and gender—the villains—they subvert their expected gender roles and are then punished.

As Josie McLellan outlines in *Love in the Time of Communism*, the realities of sexuality and sex in the GDR were, like many other aspects of life, at odds with the state-supported ideology. Although books like Siegfried Schnabl’s *Mann und Frau Intim* encouraged sexual pleasure—especially female sexual pleasure—“like an unruly and vigorous plant, sexuality was something to be pruned, controlled, and tied back.” (McLellan 85) McLellan’s connection to

plant life, though not directed at fairy tales and fairy-tale film in particular, connects to the Rapunzel tale in which the sorceress tries and fails to contain the young girl's development into puberty and her sexual awakening. Rapunzel, named for the plant of the same name in German—Rampion, in English—is confined in her tower and prevented from exploring her sexuality until the prince enters. And yet, Rapunzel's journey in the GDR remains contained within the constraints of a loving, monogamous relationship—her sexuality is not unruly and thus she is punished not for her sexual awakening, but her suffering comes as the result of the deception she orchestrates.

In the German Democratic Republic, however, female sexuality was also embraced as a signal of the strength and power of the nation. As Faye Stewart demonstrates in "Nicht so schnell: Female Sexuality and Socialism in DEFA Youth Films," "[w]hether in their roles as unruly daughters and rebellious teenagers; as nurturers and mothers; or as students, workers, and vacationers, female youth in East German films conveyed social hopes and anxieties while also functioning as politicized ciphers." (Stewart 36) Examining five non-fairy-tale examples of DEFA's youth films, she outlines a dichotomy between the virginal girl as a symbol for the East German socialist state, solidarity, and incorruptibility and the non-virgins who "embody challenges to socialist morality through bourgeois values or the allure of the West." (36) While this dichotomy of the sexed and unsexed female places the sexed female at odds with the socialist state ideologies, in reality the reading of morality based on sex is incompatible with the GDR's legislation and support of women, which included support for single mothers. While the sexuality of unmarried and young women may be portrayed in such a way, the reality is that the problems they create are centered less on the fact that they are sexually active, and more on

their duplicitous actions. Stewart's reading connects to the maiden/witch dichotomy, placing the sexually active girls in the role of witch. In the fairy-tale films of this study, my reading demonstrates that the role sexual activity plays in the moral "goodness" of the women is connected more to their truthfulness and loyalty.

In the cinematic culture of the GDR, the female archetypes of the virgin and the promiscuous girl were not just products of 1950s postwar morality but persisted over the decades. Idealized depictions of innocent girls in films of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s betray a lasting interest in linking young femininity with abstinence, nature, and the color white. Chaste girls become emblematic for socialist ideals, and, by extension, the socialist nation. By contrast with this ideal, youthful female promiscuity takes on pejorative hues in DEFA films, where female-embodied erotic desire is aligned with decadence, selfishness, and capitalist influences. Examining these two archetypes in conjunction reveals that the young female prude and slut are not discrete types but rather symbolically and ideologically intertwined. (Stewart 37)

The two DEFA films analyzed here, *Rapunzel oder der Zauber der Tränen* and *Froschkönig* appeared in 1988, near the end of the canon of DEFA films. The two female protagonists have very different portrayals of their relative goodness in their Grimm iterations—the princess in "Der Froschkönig" is a naughty girl who must learn to keep her promises while Rapunzel remains pure, good, and hardworking until the appearance of her prince and thus her sexual awakening—yet in the DEFA versions each is given equalized treatment and the chance at redemption after the arrival of her prince. Indeed, DEFA's Henriette does not even get the chance to sleep with her prince, unlike the princess in the first edition of the Grimm tale. Both East German princesses go through trials of the elements to regain their princes, but their "badness" is not centered on their sexuality. Although Rapunzel's punishment appears to come as a direct result of her sleeping with her prince, Henriette was a naughty princess even without her sexual awakening. Their common transgression is the duplicity of their interactions with their male counterparts and other adults in their lives. What makes them naughty—and thus

necessitates their separation and eventual journey to regain their prince—is that they do not remain truthful or loyal to the promises, explicit or implicit, that they have made.

Comparing this to an earlier “princess” film, DEFA’s *Schneewittchen* (Kolditz 1961), this contrast becomes clearer. With a multitude of narrative and visual similarities to the animated Disney film from 1937¹⁵, *Schneewittchen* nonetheless required little editing from the Grimm telling of the tale for the sake of cultural transparency in the GDR. Within her film, Snow White remains truthful and loyal, if a little unsavvy in her dealings with strangers, and her suffering is catalyzed by her stepmother’s, the queen’s, jealousy. As in the other princess films, her problems begin when she reaches sexual maturity, but her punishments and suffering are neither caused by her exploration of that sexuality nor by her duplicity. She, instead, remains truthful and good throughout the film. In this film, Snow White’s innocence is countered by her stepmother, who serves as “a character foil to the innocent teenager as a sexually assertive, experienced, or permissive competitor for the affections of a male love object.” (Stewart 38) In this manner, *Schneewittchen* aligns much more closely with Stewart’s reading of the role of sex and sexed female protagonists than *Rapunzel* or *Froschkönig*.

McLellan notes that “sex between young people who loved each other could not be wrong, whether or not they were married” (206)—a connection between love and sex that Stewart situates with McLellan’s commentary on the “post-reunification romantic narrative that ‘the GDR had enabled a natural, uncommercialized sexuality, unsullied by the demands of capitalism’ [McLellan 206].” (Stewart 42) When sex in the context of love is not socially

¹⁵ This includes the prince meeting Snow White early in the narrative, the naming of the dwarves, and the use of purple for the stepmother’s gowns.

prohibited and love does not necessitate the commercial need of a wedding and a marriage, it follows that the sexual awakening of the female fairy-tale protagonists in these films is not the reason for their punishment. Henriette's and Rapunzel's pairings come from love and eventually end in marriages rooted in GDR socialist values. Instead, the corruption of their loyalty and truthfulness can be blamed for the suffering and trials in their respective plots. Even in the cases of the female antagonists, this corruption of their values through duplicity—in addition to their potential for promiscuity, vanity, jealousy—becomes a further indicator of their “badness” in contrast to the protagonists’ “goodness.”

Contrary to the acceptance of female and youth sexuality portrayed in the films of the GDR, in the US, Disney's sexualization of the protagonists in their films is an—arguably—more subtle strategy for imbuing morals surrounding sexuality in the United States. In the romantic princess films—again defined here as films which feature a protagonist princess who ends her tale in a monogamous relationship with a man—sex between young lovers is a strict taboo, with the final kiss representing the ultimate display of true love. The kiss represents the sexual awakening of the princess through a symbolic gesture of true love and monogamy. In the classic Disney films of first-wave feminism, this kiss is a literal awakening—Snow White awakens from the poisoned apple and Aurora (*Sleeping Beauty* 1959) awakens from her enchanted sleep. In the later films—such as *The Little Mermaid* (1989) and *Cinderella*¹⁶ (1950)—this first kiss occurs at the wedding of the two prince and princess. The chastity of the “true love's kiss” contrasts with the hypermasculine and hyperfeminine visual portrayal of the lovers. Wearing

¹⁶ Cinderella and her prince almost kiss after the “So This is Love” song sequence but are interrupted by the clock beginning to strike midnight. The fairy godmother's imposed boundary on the magic that brings the two character's together also saves them from becoming sexual before their marriage.

predominantly pink and sporting extremely tiny waists, large eyes¹⁷, and long, voluminous hair, the “Disney princess” portrays femininity and innocence to the extreme. In contrast, the villains of the tales—such as the voluptuous Ursula (*The Little Mermaid* 1989) or the gray-haired and wrinkled Mother Gothel (*Tangled*) offer examples of what is ‘unfeminine’ and ‘undesirable’ for women. These villains, who act in ways contrary to the socially sanctioned gender roles, shift to the middle of the power hierarchy as they are portrayed as sexually active (in the Grimms’ literary tales) or deceive those around them. The Disney characters’ hyper-gendered appearances in contrast to the chaste “true love’s first kiss” at the conclusion of Disney’s romantic princess films reinforces the lesson that the role of women is to be sexy but not sexed.

The Linguistic Edits

Much of the research on the textual and editorial history of the Grimm brothers’ tales—including work from Maria Tatar (*Hard Facts*), Ruth Bottigheimer, Jack Zipes, and Hans Rölleke—has focused on complicating the readings of women and the appropriated words of the female storytellers from whom the Grimms sourced (some of) their tales. As Donald Haase argues in his introduction to *Fairytales and Feminism* (2004), the scholarly work on the linguistic edits made by the Grimms over their seven editions of the *KHM* reflect an increasing focus on the use of gender toward the purpose of socializing children, particularly on weakening the strength of

¹⁷ In a study picked up by Vogue, Seventeen, BuzzFeed, and other popular news outlets, the comedy production company Above Average showed how the eyes of many of the Disney ladies took up a wider space than their waists. The size of women’s waists in Disney films also became the subject of public scrutiny in connection to the 2015 live-action remake of *Cinderella*, when promotional materials revealing an impossibly tiny waist of the star, Lily James, provoked questions as to whether the images had been digitally altered. In truth, James had undergone a liquid diet while filming because she could not digest solid food in the costume (<https://www.businessinsider.com/cinderella-lily-james-controversy-tiny-waist-diet-2015-3>)

female characters. Ruth Bottigheimer's *Grimms' Bad Girls and Bold Boys: The Moral and Social Vision of the Tales* remains a particularly insightful close analysis of the Grimm tales in the context of the nineteenth century.

Orrin W. Robinson's 2007 article "Does Sex breed Gender? Pronominal reference in the Grimms' Fairy tales" illustrates the connection between the Grimms' choice of pronouns for their female characters and the same characters' reading as "good" or "bad" through a shift between feminine and neutral pronouns. In many cases —such as "Rapunzel" and "Die Gänsehirtin am Brunnen" (The Goose Girl at the Well)—the source text from which the Grimms took their variations of the text make no pronominal distinctions. (118) The shift from "es" (it) to "sie" (she) is a Grimm addition to the text. The use of grammatical versus biological gender in the Grimm versions as an indication of the perceived "good" of the character also intersects with the implications of the girl's sexual awakening:

[T]he Grimms' usage of the pronouns "es" and "sie" to refer to girls is neither random nor tightly related to accompanying nouns that refer to the same girls. Instead, the more positive pronoun, "es," frequently refers to young, unsexed, nice and/or good girls, while the pronoun "sie" frequently refers to older, sexed, naughty, and even bad girls and women. (115)

Robinson notes that this phenomenon could be attributed to the grammatical diminutive associated with words such as "das Mädchen" (the [little] girl) or the neutral "das Kind" (the child), but points out how in the case of diminutive male characters—ie: "das Schneiderlein" (the [little] tailor)—the Grimms deliberately switch back to the masculine "er" rather than using the grammatical pronoun matching the neutral referent. (109) Though he notes examples where his categorization fails—specifically KHM 43, "Frau Trude"—the Grimms regularly

distinguished between the feminine “*sie*” and the neutral “*es*” for their older, sexually active women and the younger, innocent ones, respectively.

In their retelling of Schulz’s “*Rapunzel*,” Jacob and Wilhelm made distinct choices on pronoun usage that provide insight into their viewpoint on *Rapunzel*’s gender, sexuality, and purity. Until the point when Gothel locks *Rapunzel* in the tower—at approximately age twelve—the Grimms use the neutral pronoun “*es*” for the girl. With no feminine referent other than the name “*Rapunzel*,” the girl becomes a woman in the Grimms’ description of how the witch enters her tower. “*Rapunzel* hatte lange, prächtige Haare, fein wie gesponnen Gold. Wenn *sie* nun die Stimme der Zauberin vernahm, so band *sie ihre* Zöpfe los...” [*Rapunzel* had long, magnificent hair, as fine as spun gold. When *she* heard the sorceress’s voice, *she* would untie *her* hair...]. (qtd. in Robinson, 111) Because the Grimms’ source text from Friedrich Schulz uses only the feminine “*sie*” for *Rapunzel*, “[t]he Grimms’ pronominal change signals a significant change in *Rapunzel*’s status from unsexed to sexed and links the tale’s narrative development with her personal one” (Robinson 119). When her pronoun switches from “*es*” to “*sie*,” Robinson indicates, this is the point at which *Rapunzel* has become eligible for marriage, or sexually mature. Like the girl in “*Die sechs Schwäne*” (*The Six Swans*), *Rapunzel*’s shift from “*es*” to “*sie*” also occurs when a male character expresses interest in her¹⁸. This pronominal shift also corresponds to when *Rapunzel* begins her deceit in hiding the relationship with the prince from the sorceress. This entrance into adulthood through her budding sexuality and the shift of her pronoun from “*es*” to “*sie*” is also marked by her learning to lie.

¹⁸ In attempting to break her brothers’ transformation, the girl in “*Die sechs Schwäne*” refuses to speak to the king at this time or answer his questions—a lie of omission.

The king's daughter in "Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich" remains "sie" or *she* throughout the tale. This does not necessarily contradict Robinson's pronoun analysis. For one, the young princess is not referred to as a girl (*das Mädchen*) like the other young heroines, but rather is called a king's daughter (*eine Königstochter*). The referent is grammatically feminine, and in this case the Grimms utilize the feminine "sie." From the start of the tale the daughter has both been noticed by a potential suitor and begun her deception of not planning to keep her promise. The pronominal shifts in the Grimm tales provide further support to the argument that the maiden in question has begun the process of growing up and exploring the limits of her performance of woman. When the Grimms shift from "es" to "sie," it correlates not only with the maiden's ability to engage in sexual activity, but also with her exploration of deceit and lies.

Rapunzel

Named for a plant that self-impregnates by splitting in two and twisting like the braids of a young woman, the eponymous heroine of "Rapunzel" has developed from a girl innocently shedding her sexual purity to one entering adulthood by learning to be untruthful. Beginning with the Grimms' own edits—in which they expanded the length of the tale, removed references to sexual activity, and conserved the severity of the punishment for the protagonist's transgressions—to the modern cinematic adaptations explored in this chapter, the "Rapunzel" tale has replicated a shift in the importance of female purity as reflected by sexual purity. In the new cinematic adaptations of "Rapunzel," the portrayal of pregnancy (or lack thereof), the development of the protagonists' deception, and the representation of body autonomy reveal that truthfulness and loyalty have become more important indicators of female 'goodness'

within the fairy-tale context than the reliance on virginity and sexual purity present in the literary predecessors and contemporaries of the Grimms' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*.

The Grimms' "Rapunzel" begins with a woman who needs an herb or vegetable growing in the garden of a magic woman, referred to as a fairy, sorceress, or Mother Gothel. In many retellings, the need is for the vegetal "Rapunzel" (*campanula rapunculus* or rampion, a wildflower once popular in Europe because of its leaves and roots). The name is also "associated with evening primrose, which was once nicknamed the 'king's cure-all,'" an association that becomes relevant in the 2009 Disney film when the magic of the magical flower that healed the queen transfers to the baby, Rapunzel, that she bears. (Warner 334) In the traditional tale, the woman's husband agrees to steal the herb for her, is caught, and bargains his unborn child away to save his life. The sorceress locks the little girl in a secluded tower with no way of entry save for the long hair she grows as she ages into a pubescent woman. The woman, named Rapunzel, thus remains protected from the outside world. One day a prince discovers the tower and climbs Rapunzel's hair. They canoodle for some time before Rapunzel gives away the secret of her relationship to the sorceress who banishes the girl to a wasteland and blinds the prince. Rapunzel gives birth to twins while the prince wanders blindly before her tears at their reunion heal his eyes. And then they live happily ever after.

"Rapunzel" is often used to illustrate how the Grimms built upon and edited their tale collections from the first volumes to the last due to a distinct change in dialogue that erases the direct reference to the protagonist's sexual activity with the prince (Tatar 18). In the first edition of the *KHM*, the sorceress's discovery of Rapunzel's tryst with the prince clearly points to the couple's sexual activity. Rapunzel asks about her changing body, indicating her pregnancy to the

reader: “Sag’ Sie mir doch Frau Gothel, meine Kleiderchen werden mir so eng und wollen nicht mehr passen” (Grimm 41 [1812]) (“Tell me, Mother Gothel, why are my clothes becoming too tight? They don’t fit me any more.”) (trans. Zipes, *Original* 39). In addition to directly referencing her pregnancy and thus her entry into sexuality, the question showcases Rapunzel’s ignorance of her own body and how she came to be pregnant. This ignorance indicates that Rapunzel’s physical entry into sexual maturity did not match her education on the matter: “in his quest for innocence, Wilhelm Grimm unfortunately managed to turn Rapunzel into a ninny” (Warner 331). In the later editions, after pulling the sorceress up with her hair, Rapunzel asks, “Frau Gothel, wie kommt es nur, Sie wird mir viel schwerer heraufzuziehen, als der junge Königssohn, der ist in einem Augenblick bei mir” (Grimm 68 [1857]) (“Frau Gothel, tell me why it is that you are heavier for me to pull up than is the young prince, who is up in a moment?”) Though this new question preserves the image of Rapunzel’s purity and innocence, it contaminates the logic of the tale and its ending as she makes no direct reference to the sexual nature of the prince’s visits. When Rapunzel later bears twins—an occurrence given merely a passing reference—the disconnect between the pregnancy and her relationship with the prince lowers the apparent severity of Rapunzel’s transgressions and leaves the reader with the impression that giving birth is yet another punishment along with Gothel cutting Rapunzel’s hair and banishing her to the desert.

For Maria Tatar, the removal of pregnancy and sexuality from the tales is part of a larger pattern in which the Grimms removed references to “certain conditions and relationships” (*Hard Facts* 7). Lack of references to sexuality was not uncommon in fairy-tale collections at this time, with Bettina von Arnim’s portrayal of childbirth in “Der Königssohn” being a detailed

exception to the rule. Edgar Taylor, the translator of the first version of the *KHM* into English in 1823 omitted tales, including “Rapunzel,” that portrayed many of these “conditions and relationships” (7). In 1846 Edgar Taylor’s relative, John Edward Taylor, did include the tale, changing Rapunzel’s name to Violet. He, too, avoided references to sexuality and childbirth, even though the prince finds the protagonist after several years with her twin children “who had lately been born” (“Violet” 327).

John Edward Taylor’s “Violet”—so named because of the flowers her biological mother longed to see and smell—circumvents direct reference to not only Rapunzel’s pregnancy, but also her mother’s, stating that “at length the good woman had hopes that their wish [for a child] would be granted” (“Violet” 321). As with the rampion of the Grimms’ tale, the mother feels she will die without violets. However, while the pregnancy craving engenders empathy with Rapunzel’s mother, the craving for violets, disconnected from pregnancy, appears short-sighted and superficial. Violets are often characterized based on their short span of beauty, and the ephemeral nature of the flower’s beauty serves as motivation for multiple transgressions into the fairy’s garden. The violet—in Kate Greenaway’s 1884 *The Language of Flowers* it stands for faithfulness, watchfulness, modesty, or rural happiness, depending on the color (42)—can also be read as a nod to the femininity of the child. Furthermore, Violet herself contrasts the prince’s youthfulness to Mother Gothel’s age, connecting to her floral namesake’s association with fleeting youth: “and she saw how young and handsome he was, she thought to herself, ‘he will surely love me more than *old* Mother Gothel’” (“Violet” 321, my emphasis). Youth as connected to purity and innocence becomes a driving force, supplanting references to sexuality as a loss of purity, in the cinematic retellings examined below.

Substituting Truth and Youth for Sexuality in Cinematic Retellings of “Rapunzel”

East Germany’s *Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft* (DEFA) remediated Rapunzel in 1988, combining it with the “Jungfrau Maleen” (Maid Maleen) tale to develop a plot which allowed the eponymous heroine to overcome her “heroine’s impotence” (Rowe 211) and take charge of her own adventure outside of the tower. Similarly, the heroine in Walt Disney Animation Studios’ 2010 *Tangled* takes control of her own future, seizing opportunities before her and using her long hair as a tool in her adventures. Though these cinematic adaptations premiered twenty-three years apart, they deal with the themes of pregnancy, purity, and body autonomy outlined above in the literary retellings in similar ways. In both of these “Rapunzel” remediations, the heroines escape pregnancy, truth is the indication of youth and purity, and they still are threatened with losing their bodily autonomy.

The 1988 DEFA film, *Rapunzel oder Der Zauber der Tränen* (Ursula Schmenger) opens on Rapunzel’s birthday shortly after she is locked in the tower. Rapunzel’s prince, Matthias, discovers the tower on the same day but is thwarted by the thorn bushes surrounding the tower. He retreats to watch Gothel’s strategy for entering the tower and then returns twice, reaching Rapunzel and pleading with her to leave with him. After his second visit, both Gothel and his friend Albrecht—who had followed Matthias by order of his father, the king—see Matthias leaving the tower. Albrecht reports on Rapunzel’s beauty to the king, who fears that his son will not marry the princess from a rich kingdom who is “hässlich von Angesicht und hässlich in ihrem Wesen” (ugly in face and ugly in spirit) (10:24). The king orders the tower bricked up with Rapunzel inside of it. Matthias rushes back, coming face to face with Gothel,

who has already confronted Rapunzel and cut off her hair. She convinces the prince she will let Rapunzel go if he leaves the tower, but as Matthias climbs down Rapunzel's cut-off braid, Gothel releases it from its tether and he falls into the thorns, which render him blind. At this point, the plot shifts into the "Jungfrau Maleen" story, where Rapunzel is coerced into taking the ugly princess's place in the wedding ceremony. In the Grimms' "Jungfrau Maleen" tale, Maid Maleen falls in love with a prince whom her father refuses. Her father locks her in a tower with her maidservant for seven years and, when the time is up, the two claw their way out of the tower with a knife. The princess to whom the prince was betrothed sends Maleen in her place to the wedding ceremony, and the prince discovers the switch when his bride—the other princess—is not wearing the necklace he had given her at the wedding. Within this part of the film, the "ugly of face and heart" princess attempts to deceive the prince by having another, beautiful girl, Rapunzel, take her place at the altar. They force Rapunzel to don the bridal gown and appear in the place of the princess, and over the course of the wedding, she asks the church steps to not break, the church door to not snap, and the necklace the prince places around her neck to not break because she is not the correct bride: "Kirchenstiege bricht nicht, ich bin die rechte Braut nicht." (1:11:09). After the wedding, the prince asks again after her words, but the ugly princess cannot repeat them. When she also cannot produce the necklace from the wedding, the princess accuses Rapunzel of stealing it and demands she be killed. Albrecht stops the princess from stabbing Rapunzel, and Matthias recognizes that the kitchen maid actually is his love. In joy, she wipes her tears on his face, healing his sight. This adaptation, in addition to combining the "Rapunzel" story with the "Jungfrau Maleen" story, sidesteps portraying the transgression into Gothel's garden, opting instead to have the magic woman tell the story to the prince and

thus avoiding potential connections to the biblical story of Eve in the Garden of Eden (see Getty 47–51) for the secular East German audience.

Walt Disney Animation Studio's 2010 animated musical film *Tangled* (Nathan Greno and Byron Howard) overturns the garden transgression differently, emphasizing the greed of Gothel and reducing the complicity of Rapunzel's father in trading away his child. Instead of a rampion, Rapunzel's mother consumes a magical flower distilled into a tea. The flower had bloomed where a drop of sunlight fell to earth many years before, and at that time Mother Gothel used magic to maintain her youth for years beyond her natural lifespan. When the queen falls deathly ill during her pregnancy the king's men search for the flower and take it to the ailing queen, who later gives birth to a golden-haired baby. Gothel attempts to steal a piece of the flower's magic back for herself by cutting off a lock of the baby's hair, rendering it brown and useless. She kidnaps Rapunzel and locks the child in a tower where the magic of Rapunzel's hair replaces the flower in retaining Gothel's youth.

The action of the film opens on the eve of the girl's birthday when she asks permission to see the unnatural lights that appear on her birthday each year and for which she has no explanation. Gothel, aware that they are a lantern ceremony from Rapunzel's parents, forbids this to her, noting Rapunzel's naïveté about the outside world. After Gothel leaves, Flynn Rider climbs the tower fleeing from the palace guards after he has stolen a crown. Rapunzel, proving herself more capable than Gothel had described her, uses her hair to tie him up and coerces him into helping her see the floating lights. As they adventure, Flynn falls for Rapunzel, choosing her over the riches of which he dreamt before. This reads anti-capitalist, but Flynn is ultimately rewarded with riches when Rapunzel is later revealed to be the kingdom's princess. After

Mother Gothel tricks Flynn and turns him over to the palace guards before bringing Rapunzel back to the tower, Rapunzel reflects on her experiences outside the tower, realizing Gothel lied and choosing to confront her. Gothel has Rapunzel in chains and attempts to leave with her when Flynn arrives. Gothel mortally wounds him, and Rapunzel begs to be able to save his life with her magic, promising to stay with Gothel forever. When she goes to heal him, Flynn cuts her hair, rendering it brown and nonmagical, sacrificing his life for her freedom. Unlike Gothel's peaceful transformation into a rosebush at the end of the East German remediation, this Gothel ages immediately, falls out of the tower, and dissipates into dust before hitting the ground. However, similar to the DEFA film, Rapunzel heals Flynn with her tears and reunites with her parents, takes her place in society, and assumes adulthood.

In the Grimms' "Rapunzel," they do not reveal the fate of Mother Gothel after the tearful reunion of the prince and Rapunzel in the desert. Gothel's punishment in the GDR and the United States is new—an example of the villain's punishment added by both cinematic traditions.

Sex, Lies, and Body Autonomy

Rapunzel's brief freedom and connections to her prince are portrayed in both films as situations in which she has choice and control within the relationship. *Tangled's* Rapunzel takes control of Flynn Rider's intrusion, knocking him out with a frying pan and using her hair to tie him up. She immediately recognizes the importance of the jeweled diadem he has stolen and uses that as leverage to convince him to help her. Rapunzel in the GDR also shows herself capable of handling the intrusion by her prince. After Matthias enters the tower, Rapunzel

astutely questions him on his motives and then agrees he may return as long as she has put a sign out that it is safe. Throughout the films, care is taken to show how each couple plays an active role in their relationship and in advancing the plot. **TKIn the United States, there is a surprising parallel in which the later Disney princess films from the fourth wave of feminism in the United States treated collaboration and mutually beneficial, autonomous relationships between their romantic leads in a similar manner. Both traditions portray this collaboration between their male and female protagonists as though it is expected.**

The directors of Disney's *Tangled* also actively aimed for the film to showcase Rapunzel and her prince figure as equal players, which is part of the reason that the title of the film references the heroine only abstractly, rather than by name¹⁹. Learning from criticism for including "princess" in the title for *The Princess and the Frog*, Greno and Byron emphasized the equality of the two main characters and agreed that *Tangled* "better captured the fact that the movie was about a duo." (Catmull 244) This decision breaks with the naming practices of Disney animation Studios' previous fairy-tale films in which the heroine was always mentioned in the title. It shows how romantic relationships in Disney princess films have changed to reflect trends in society since Snow White waited for her prince to come. As described in the Introduction, both films appeared after the second wave of feminism in the 1960s, which "led to a heightened awareness of patriarchy and the way it conceived women as domesticated, passive and dependent beings," a characterization with which both Rapunzels break (Smith 428).

¹⁹ See Wilcox, "Brothers Grimm" (2332) for discussion on the French, German and Italian translations of the film's title.

As in the previously discussed literary versions of “Rapunzel,” the heroine’s age upon entering the tower in the films is a crucial marker of what Mother Gothel is trying to protect. In the DEFA film, the plot opens on Rapunzel’s birthday, shortly after she has entered the tower. though Gothel is protecting Rapunzel’s youth, she is still expected to contribute as much as she can while in isolation, and Gothel sells her weaving at market. In contrast, and unlike the Grimms’ or Taylor’s protagonist, Rapunzel in *Tangled* spends her entire life in her tower, and the majority of the plot’s action occurs on Rapunzel’s eighteenth birthday, the marker of legal adulthood in the United States. Gothel’s goal in locking Disney’s Rapunzel away was never to protect the girl from sexual impurity, but to maintain her own access to eternal youth²⁰ by protecting the girl’s golden hair. Thus, Rapunzel’s struggle in the film, much like that of her eponymous predecessors, becomes one of reclaiming control of her own body and gifts, and these gifts are no longer focused on the sexual, but on the magical. In both films, Gothel’s insistence on shielding Rapunzel from the outside world is part of keeping Rapunzel from entering society and adulthood. For both versions of Rapunzel, Gothel’s role as the “step-mother and bad fairy [...] embod[ies] the major obstacles against this passage into womanhood” (Rowe 212) and, with it, adulthood for the heroines.

In the versions of “Rapunzel” from the Grimms and their contemporaries, Rapunzel is banished to the desert and bears twins, losing both her freedom of movement and bodily autonomy as punishment for her sexual transgressions with the prince. In the US and East

²⁰ This is reminiscent of Anne Sexton’s 1971 poem, “Rapunzel” which, like the Disney version of the tale, also features imagery of flowers, as in the line “let me hold your heart like a flower” (38, line 4). The poem also describes the valuation of youth, “a woman / who loves a woman / is forever young.” (39, lines 3–4), and the protection of young women’s purity against the opposite sex, “who locked her in the study / to keep the boys away” (35, lines 9–10). The poem also omits any reference to Rapunzel’s pregnancy, though her intimate relationship with the prince is clear.

Germany, Rapunzel's sexuality is no longer the defining aspect of her indiscretion. Though her transgressions are no longer coded as sexual, in the films Rapunzel still loses her briefly-won freedoms as a consequence of her deceit. Neither film includes the birth of twins as part of Rapunzel's punishment, continuing the removal of references to sexuality in the development of the tale started by the Grimm edits. Instead, both *Rapunzel oder der Zauber der Tränen* and *Tangled* show Rapunzel's transition from youth to adult through her capacity, and active choice, to deceive Gothel. Rapunzel's lying and deception are significant, as the female fairy-tale protagonist is traditionally portrayed as good and truthful in contrast to the villain's evil and lying nature.

In East Germany, Rapunzel's indiscretion is not revealed through the results of her sexual activity with the prince, though the rumpled bedclothes strongly imply that the couple consummated their love, but rather because she was caught lying. Gothel, questioning Rapunzel about her visitor, exclaims "hast du schon lügen gelernt?" (have you already learned to lie?) [34:14–34:16] after the girl dissembles in answering her questions. Her lying is an indication that she has tarnished the purity and innocence of youth that Mother Gothel had been attempting to protect, and Gothel first locks her in a cage and then abandons her in her tower as punishment. Her inclination and wish to lie develops at the same time as her awareness of her own body and beauty does—as Matthias, her prince, hacks his way through the thorny barrier surrounding her tower. Disney's Rapunzel lies when she asks Gothel to retrieve paints for her, hiding her plan to use Flynn Rider as a guide to leave her tower against Gothel's wishes. In this case, Gothel is concerned for her own access to youth, as Rapunzel's freedom puts the girl's magical hair at risk, while also increasing the chances Rapunzel will discover her deceit. At the

climax of the Disney movie, Rapunzel is in chains as Gothel drags her away, and she bargains a brief reprieve to save Flynn's life in exchange for her compliance in her captivity. Though she bargained to give up her bodily autonomy to extend Flynn's life, he too takes it from her, chopping her magical hair off before she has the chance to use it. Although the two Gothels' deceit of claiming to be Rapunzel's mother lasts the entirety of Rapunzels' lives in both films, Gothel in Disney's *Tangled* also deceives Rapunzel by blaming others for her own desire to exploit Rapunzel's magical hair. When Rapunzel realizes she is the lost princess and confronts her "mother," Gothel retaliates by tightening literal chains, threatening to never let the girl or her hair out of her sight again. In East Germany's DEFA film, Rapunzel's bodily autonomy is not overtly threatened, but her freedom of movement is limited twice. Gothel locks her behind a magical, soundproof barrier when Matthias comes to rescue her before his father's men brick up her window. For each of these cinematic Rapunzel characters, the result of their deception is the loss of bodily autonomy and freedom, illustrating who has power and control over the girls' body and autonomy.

In the DEFA film *Rapunzel, oder der Zauber der Tränen*, the shift from goodness and truth to badness and deception is depicted through the use of clothing. Rapunzel is dressed in light colors throughout the film—a long-sleeved blue dress with a large white collar under a white apron or a light blue skirt and white blouse—including after she has lost her virginity and slept with the prince. As she traverses the wilderness to reach the prince's castle, her white blouse and apron not only perpetuate the innocence of her presentation but reinforce her ability and willingness to work—a right guaranteed to women by the GDR constitution. Once she reaches the castle and is positioned in contrast to the princess of the "Maid Maleen" tale

which constitutes the latter part of the film, her clothing color becomes even more significant to her positioning as a 'good' girl. The princess chosen to wed the prince is ugly both inside and out—she fusses over her dresses, yells, and treats those around her rudely. She appears to be uncomfortable and unhappy with the white marriage clothing meant to represent her virginity and goodness. The accents on her clothing are black, directly in contrast with Rapunzel's pale blue. Donning first the white clothing and hat of the kitchen uniform, Rapunzel is called to deliver food to the ugly princess, now wearing a purple coverup, at which point she is coerced into standing in as the bride. When the ugly princess reappears after the marriage ceremony to complete the deception, she no longer wears the virginal white clothing from before the wedding. Instead, she is clad in a deep burgundy. Though this princess remains unsexed, her deception marks her transformation into a "bad" girl and her clothing choices reflect that. Faye Stewart connects the imagery of white clothing with chastity in *Für die Liebe noch zu mager?* (1973), noting the change from white to colorful clothing as an indication of lost virginity, "she often wears white or pink while she is a virgin [...] but prefers more colorful attire after becoming sexually active." (Stewart 41) Like the pronominal shifts from "es" to "sie" which indicate a female protagonist's entrance into adulthood and capacity to lie, even though the ugly princess in *Rapunzel, oder der Zauber der Tränen* has not lost her virginity after the wedding, this change of clothing from white to colorful signals a loss of innocence through the deception she manipulated.

Traditionally and in the retellings of Rapunzel discussed here, the punishments for lying and transgression are meted out by Mother Gothel. Coded as the villain by her age and aggressions against Rapunzel, she is not the sole antagonist of the DEFA remediation. The king

in this film also serves as antagonist, but he is able to be rehabilitated and keep his power at the end of the film. His decision to imprison Rapunzel places him in a position of power in which he is able to mete out punishment. His choice is brought upon not by Rapunzel's actions, but instead by the lies of her prince, Matthias, who deceives his family when they ask him where he is going as he sets out to see Rapunzel. In this case, Rapunzel suffers due to the greed of the king and his actions to guarantee his son's marriage brings him wealth. It is possible to read Matthias's father's villainization as a reference to Rapunzel's father's greed in the Grimms' variations of the tale—he was willing to trade his child away in exchange for the greens that would sate his pregnant wife. Each father figure is willing to sacrifice Rapunzel's freedom for their own desires. In the context of the German Democratic Republic, however, the king is more accurately read as a capitalistic counter-example to Rapunzel's folksiness. Matthias's choice to tell Rapunzel he was a hunter rather than a prince—"du wolltest einen Jäger nicht, wie viel weniger noch einen Prinzen" (you didn't want a hunter, how much less would you want a prince?) (1:19:14–1:19:16)—further supports the film's negative portrayal of royalty. Though royal characters contradict the anti-feudal ideology of the GDR, their inclusion was perceived as a necessary inconvenience to avoid "weaken[ing] their connection to genre conventions;" and they were tolerated because the "inherent humanist values could bridge that gap and justify the old tales" (Shen 20–21). In the traditional Grimm versions of Rapunzel, the prince is the only member of royalty, therefore adding the rest of his royal family is a significant choice for the film which incorporates "the same antifeudal, antibourgeois mantra" and the success of "love over wealth" of earlier decades of DEFA fairy-tale film (Shen 213). As is typical of villains in East German fairy-tale films, neither villain suffers a violent or painful punishment, but both learn

from their ways. The king repents of his capitalistic greed, allowing the young lovers to marry, and Gothel asks forgiveness for only thinking of herself before transforming into a rosebush.

In the cinematic adaptations of the Grimms' "Rapunzel," the film plots use lies as indicators of both the heroine's entrance into adulthood and the cause for Mother Gothel's anger at her. This contrasts with the traditional Grimm tale in which Rapunzel's sexual transgressions with the prince catalyze Gothel's rage. In the Grimms' "Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich," one of the primary themes also revolves around the truth, although in this case it is the truth surrounding one's intentions and keeping promises. Similar to the trajectory of the Rapunzel tale and many others over the edits of their seven editions of the *KHM*, the Grimms edited out references to the princess's sexuality and shifted more power to the male characters in the tale. The modern film adaptations from East Germany and the United States, *Der Froschkönig* (1987) and *The Princess and the Frog* (2009), respectively, also forego sexual implications in the plot, instead conserving the themes of loyalty to the family and telling the truth as the signals for the goodness of the women in the tale.

The Frog King and Forgotten Promises

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's "Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich" (The Frog King, or Iron Henry) is about the youngest daughter of a king. When she loses her golden ball in the well where she was playing, a frog agrees to retrieve it for her in exchange for her companionship. Believing that the frog would not be able to leave the water, the princess agrees to the deal and then runs away to the castle once she has her ball in hand. The frog comes to the castle the next day, and the princess's father tells her she must keep her promise.

Once inside, the frog asks to be lifted to the chair next to her, to eat from her plate, and to sleep in her bed. At each request, the king orders her to keep her promise. When she brings him upstairs into her room and lies down in her bed, rather than setting him down on the pillow next to her head, she throws him against the wall: “da nun wirst du mich in Ruh lassen, du garstiger Frosch!” (Grimm, 4 [1812]) (“Now you’ll leave me in peace, you nasty frog!”) (trans. Zipes, *Original* 15). When the frog fell from the wall, he was transformed into a handsome prince. With this transformation, “[d]er war nun ihr lieber Geselle, und sie hielt ihn werth wie sie versprochen hatte” (Grimm 4 [1812]) (“[w]ell now indeed he did become her dear companion, and she cherished him as she had promised”) (trans. Zipes, *Original* 15) and they slept together that night. The next day, a coach arrived with the prince’s servant, Faithful Henry. Because he had been so devastated when the prince was turned into a frog, he had ordered three iron bands wrapped around his heart to protect it. The bands crack loudly as they fall from his heart on their drive home, as once the spell was broken his heart was happy again.

The synopsis here is from the first published edition of the *KHM*—the edition with the least detailed descriptions and language usage, which was later heavily edited. As Maria Tatar notes in *The Hard Facts*, the Grimms edited out many of the suggestions of sex, especially for women, but did not edit out the violence or the rage (Tatar 8). Indeed, in the second edition, the princess and her frog-turned-prince no longer sleep together immediately after the transformation. Instead, they go to her father and are married.

The violence of the prince’s transformation, the implications of which will be discussed in Chapter 3, however, remains relatively unedited throughout the seven editions. Indeed, in the first through fourth editions, the text indicates that there may have been deadly intent in

the princess's throwing of the frog against the wall. In the first edition, after the frog hits the wall, the text states "Aber der Frosch fiel nicht todt herunter, sondern wie er herab auf das Bett kam, da wars ein schöner, junger Prinz." (Grimm 4 [1819]) (But the frog didn't fall down dead. Instead, when he fell down on the bed, he became a handsome young prince.) (trans. Zipes, *Original* 15) The use of "nicht/sondern" in this portion of the German text (and the use of but/instead in Zipes' translation) indicates that the princess—and thus the reader—expects the frog to not survive her throw. **TKAlthough this sentence could be read as an assessment of the situation by the narrative voice, the princess's accompanying yell that the frog will leave her in peace ("da nun wirst du mich in Ruh lassen") underscore her intent.** The Grimms maintained the „nicht tod(ter)/sondern“ formulation in their much-edited second edition, "Was aber herunter fiel, war nicht ein todter Frosch, sondern ein lebendiger, junger Königssohn mit schönen und freundlichen Augen." (Grimm 4 [1812]) (What fell down, though, was not a dead frog, but a living, young king's son with beautiful and friendly eyes [my translation]). In the editing history of the tales the second has been established as the one where Wilhelm took the most liberties and spent the most time adding to and smoothing the prose. Maintaining the phrasing showing that the princess expected the frog to die indicates that this implication was a purposeful choice, one that remained until the fourth edition. As I analyze in Chapter 3, this deadly intent against an animal aligns with the power hierarchy in context with that of Aristotelian anger—the princess is above the frog when he is in animal form and therefore has power over him.

In addition to removing the intention of deadly force from the princess, the Grimms' edits in the fourth addition give more power to the male characters. The first three editions

leave the father's words to provide external pressure on the young princess to keep the promise made to the frog. The princess only keeps her promise because her father commands it.

During the period in which the Grimms lived, mating and marriage were not based on love. Women, particularly those from the upper classes, were often forced to marry men for whom they did not care. Generally, the father represented the ultimate authority for patriarchal law and custom. In "The Frog Prince," the frog, perhaps symbolic of an old, ugly aristocrat, has the father's implicit approval. (Zipes, *Repulsive Frog* 115)

The frog relies on the father's will to ensure that this promise of sleeping in the princess's bed would be followed. In the fourth edition, however, the frog himself guilt-trips the princess into holding true to her word. After the princess sets the frog in the corner of the room rather than on her bed, he comes to her and says "ich bin müde, ich will schlafen so gut wie du, heb mich herauf, oder ich sags deinem Vater" (Grimm 5 [1840]) (I am tired. I want to sleep as well as you. Pull me up there or I will tell your father [my translation]). The prince here takes on much more responsibility than in previous editions, and for the first time takes an active role in pressuring the princess to stick to her word by invoking her loyalty and obedience to her father.²¹ His character is further centered in this version by providing his own backstory, explaining how he became a frog. After the princess has thrown the frog against the wall and he is transformed, he tells her "er wäre von einer bösen Hexe verwünscht worden, und hätte nur von ihr aus dem Brunnen erlöst werden können" (Grimm 5 [1840]) (he had been cursed by an evil witch, and could only been released from the well by her [my translation]).

Although the words "nur von ihr" indicate the princess's role as the "hero", the prince's backstory opens interpretation for him as the hero and main character. This reading of the

²¹ See Chapter 2 for a discussion on family loyalty.

prince and princess as both possible heroes in the tale has reverberations in the cinematic adaptations from East Germany and in the United States. In both film versions, the prince and princess figures have a backstory and purpose in their life, character development which is relatively common in the DEFA film productions but less so in the Disney history. For Disney, their prince figures have often been stock characters, like the princes in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Cinderella*—appearing only to take up the role of the hero and save the princess figure from her suffering. While the prince figures in Disney films up to the early 1990s were relatively flat, the company has begun to care more about the role of the prince and the attractiveness of their films for all genders as detailed above with the naming of Disney’s “Rapunzel” film.

Of course, it is also important to consider that, while Walt Disney Animation Studios did not produce fairy-tale films for thirty years, they did produce eleven other feature-length animated films between the release of *Sleeping Beauty* (Wolfgang Reitherman, Eric Larson, Clyde Geronimi, Les Clark) in 1959 and *The Little Mermaid* (John Musker and Ron Clements) in 1989. These films include *The Jungle Book* (Wolfgang Reitherman 1967), *Robin Hood* (Wolfgang Reitherman 1973), and *The Great Mouse Detective* (Burny Mattinson, John Musker, Ron Clements, and David Michener 1986), all of which center primarily on male protagonists. In 1985, Disney did produce a fairy-tale adjacent film, *the Black Cauldron* (Ted Berman and Richard Rich), which is loosely based on two novels in *The Chronicles of Prydain* by Lloyd Alexander from the 1960s. Although it contains similar elements as other Disney fairy-tale films, the movie’s modern novel referent and male protagonist place it outside of the fairy-tale film, which is why I do not include it. This focus on male-centered stories from the 1960s to the 1980s is intriguing,

as the lack of female-centered protagonists lines up almost exactly with the time period of second-wave feminism in the United States. As discussed in the Introduction, it's not until right before the start of third-wave feminism in the 1990s that Disney returned to fairy tales and to female protagonists with *The Little Mermaid* (John Musker and Ron Clements 1989).

In a derivation from the source material for the cinematic Rapunzel adaptations discussed earlier, the main character in the Grimms' "Froschkönig" tale directly engages in lying before entering adulthood at the end of her tale. Within the Grimm tales, the princess agrees to the frog's demands in order to recapture her golden ball:

deine Perlen, deine Edelgesteine und deine Kleider, die verlang ich nicht, aber wenn du mich zum Gesellen annehmen willst, und ich soll neben dir sitzen und von deinem goldnen Tellerlein essen und in deinem Bettlein schlafen und du willst mich werth und lieb haben, so will ich dir deine Kugel wiederbringen.
(Grimms 2 [1812])

Well, I don't want your pearls, your jewels, and your clothes," the frog responded. "But if you will accept me as your companion and let me sit next to you and let me eat from your little golden plate and sleep in your little bed and promise to love and cherish me, I'll fetch your ball for you. (trans. by Zipes , *Original 13*)

However, she never intends to keep that promise, as the princess believes the frog cannot make his way to the castle, a belief that is disproven by the frog when he appears at the door during dinner. It is then that she enters the fourth stage of Walter Burkert's "Maiden's Tragedy", the period of intense suffering (71), during which time she must endure her hatred and dislike for the frog by sticking to the terms of the promise she made.

Loyalty, Divorce, and Daddy Issues

The keeping of the well-side promise serves as the point of departure from the traditional Grimm version of “Der Froschkönig” for DEFA’s 1988 cinematic adaptation by Walter Beck, *Der Froschkönig*. The first third of the DEFA production conserves the traditional tale up to the transformation: the princess, Henriette, loses her golden ball in the well and the frog—a Claymation creature—appears and offers to retrieve it for her. Like her traditional sister princess, she agrees to his terms and then leaves him behind once he has retrieved her toy. When he appears at the castle, she reluctantly agrees to eating and drinking with him, but throws him against the wall when he asks to sleep in her bed. This triggers his physical transformation, but the film expands on the tale by denying Henriette marriage to the prince due to her lack of willingness to fulfill all the requirements. From this point, the film shares several similarities to other Grimm-tale adaptations from DEFA. Like Rapunzel, as well as Cinderella (*Drei Haselnüsse für Aschenbrödel*, 1974), the heroine of *Der Froschkönig* makes a dangerous journey to the prince’s castle and works as a servant after the traditional plot of her tale ends. Working under the name Heinrich—and therefore representing the “eiserne Heinrich” (Iron Heinrich) of the traditional tale—she serves the prince and fulfills her promise after the transformation.²²

Even more revolting than the “garstiger Frosch” (nasty frog) he was in the Grimms’ editions of the tale, the frog prince of DEFA’s *Der Froschkönig* is rendered less human—and thus less sexually appealing—to the young princess. The frog appears to Henriette after she has dropped her golden ball into the well in which he resides. The frog’s bulging eyes and bulbous

²² See Chapter 2 for a discussion of the connection between transformation, power, and class in the adaptations of “Der Froschkönig.”

body appear otherworldly and emphasize his unattractiveness for the young girl. Despite her disgust for the frog, ultimately her worthiness for her reward—marriage and the “happily ever after”—must be earned by sticking to her word. She must keep her promise to the frog to break the spell and is only able to enter into adult society through marriage by showing she can remain true. When he returns to the fountain where he first encountered the king’s daughter with her golden ball, he reveals that he knows her in her disguise as Heinrich, stating “Du hast schließlich gehalten, was du mir versprochen hast.” (you have finally achieved what you promised me) (1:02:27–1:02:32) Now that she has kept that promise, she no longer must suffer and is granted the marriage promised in the traditional Grimm tale.

Although Henriette’s lies are still controlled by the two male characters in the tale—her father and the frog king—she takes the responsibility to adhere to them from her own motivation. She wants to marry the prince and does everything in her power to make that happen. “The fairy-tale film emphasizes the importance of love and the request to keep one’s promise much more than the original version and also shows that adhering to authority (the princess’s father) is not sufficient.” (Kümmerling-Meierbauer 242) Through hard work and a little more deceit, she can achieve her own happiness.

The connection between keeping a promise and hard work is also thematized in the 2009 Disney film version of “Der Froschkönig,” *The Princess and the Frog*. Early in the film, the princess-figure, Tiana, makes a promise to her father to focus on “what’s really important” (5:45–5:48). This becomes Tiana’s entire identity, and she works on her goal of owning a restaurant at the expense of her own personal happiness and social life. It is the single time she wishes for a shortcut, going against her father’s wishes, that catalyzes her time as a frog. For

both Tiana and Henriette, fulfilling their promises in the context of their fathers' wishes is the route to their happiness.

The Disney adaptation of "Der Froschkönig" begins when Tiana, the protagonist, is a child. After she and her mother return home, Tiana and her father cook gumbo together. They share the gumbo with the community, and later, when her parents are putting Tiana to bed for the night, her father talks about his dream to own his own restaurant. For him, food is something that brings people together, a lesson represented by the community meal they had just shared. Tiana corrects her father when he says that people will come for 'his' food, looking at him and saying, "*our* food." This moment between them illustrates that Tiana connected her dreams to her father's dreams early on in life. Immediately after her father writes the name "Tiana's Place" on the picture he has as inspiration for his future restaurant, she notices the evening star outside her window and tells him that her friend Charlotte's fairy-tale book said, "if you make a wish on the Evening Star, it's sure to come true." (5:13–5:20) Her mother tells her to make her wish, but her father cautions her, saying "that old star can only take you part of the way. You got to help it along with some hard work of your own." (5:27–5:35) He asks her to promise him that she will "never, ever, lose sight of what's really important." (5:45–5:48) In this shot, the viewer gets a close-up of Tiana's father, with his wife standing behind him. She has her hand on his shoulder and, as he says, "what's really important," his hand appears in the frame to cover hers. (5:48) Visually, this framing indicates that her father believes that family and community—the reason that he wants to open the restaurant—are most important in life. Tiana makes the promise, but gets up after her parents leave the room, grabbing the inspiration picture of her father's restaurant and whispering "please, please, please" (6:12–6:14) to wish on

the star. A frog appears next to her and croaks, prompting her to scream and run out of the room.

Once Tiana leaves the room, the light in the scene shifts to morning, and “Walt Disney Productions” flashes on the screen before Tiana walks back into the room—this time as an adult. She is deep into keeping the promise made to her father, but, through the visuals and accompanying song in the scene it quickly becomes clear that she has misunderstood what her father meant by “really important.” After kicking off her shoes, she deposits a small amount of change into one of many coffee tins filled with cash and then says to the photo of her father, “don’t you worry, Daddy. We’ll be there soon.” (7:01–7:04) In her dresser with the tins of cash, there is an advertisement for a building for sale, and Tiana places the page that her father had labeled “Tiana’s Place” on top of the dresser next to her father’s picture. Her goal centers on making her father’s dream of owning a restaurant come true.

The wish on the evening star marks the end of the introduction to the film. The opening song that follows illustrates that she has coopted only part of her father’s dream as her own and missed his message about the importance of community and family. Moments after she lies down to sleep, her alarm rings and she runs off to a daytime job waiting tables. During this scene, we see Tiana constantly working, positioned in contrast to both the other figures in the film and the song “Down in New Orleans” (Randy Newman) playing as the scene unfolds. Newman’s song thematizes “painting the town” and music playing all day long. Visually, the characters surrounding Tiana are shown at leisure, including the male protagonist of the film, Prince Naveen, as he gets off his boat and begins to explore. In contrast, Tiana is constantly working, reading a book about cooking as she commutes on the trolley, taking care of

customers in the diner, and making beignets. Meanwhile, Naveen is shown flirting, dancing, and making music as he makes his way through the city, even tipping his hat at Tiana when he passes the cafe where she is working.

After the opening song there is a scene of Tiana at work. Her friends come in and invite her to go dancing, which she refuses. They tell her all she ever does is work and, like many of the other characters, are not supportive of her dream. Even her boss tells her that she will never make enough money to save up for a down payment on the restaurant she wants to open. In an unexpected windfall, Tiana's best friend Lottie asks her to make some of her "man-catchin'" beignets for the masquerade ball in honor of Prince Naveen. In her lack of understanding of how money works, Lottie ends up paying Tiana enough money to fund much of her restaurant space. Tiana immediately goes to make the down payment on her building. She and her mother have an emotional moment over her father's gumbo pot—the same one from the opening sequence—as they reveal that the sugar mill Tiana has just purchased was her father's favorite building. Her mother expresses that she is concerned about Tiana's happiness in the future. She would like her daughter to meet her "Prince Charming." This inspires the next song in the film, "Almost There," (13:36–15:57) in which Tiana envisions herself in her future restaurant, with all her dreams come true. Her costume in the song sequence changes from her usual green to a bridal white. This white dress, her mother's reference to Prince Charming, as well as shots during the song in which Tiana is carried, finishes cakes, and serves food to a small child, support a reading that Tiana's dream of owning a restaurant replace the previous Disney princesses' dreams of marriage. Tiana sees herself as "almost there" to fulfilling her father's

dream, but this sequence at her future restaurant further shows how she has lost sight of the sense of family and community in pursuing this goal.

The fulfillment of her promise to her father becomes the “final step” to adulthood for Tiana’s tale. In the Grimm’s tale, this “final step” is signified by the princess’s marriage to the prince after his transformation. For Disney’s Tiana, her promise looks a little different. Instead of promising to be the prince’s loyal companion, she promises her father to remain loyal to his values. It is actually the prince who makes the promise for the primary plot of the story—he tells her he will fund her restaurant if she kisses him in order to break the curse of his froggy form. This promise backfires, though, as the requirement for the kiss is that it comes from a princess, and Tiana is entirely working class and only dressed as a princess.

Though this is not an outright lie, her deceit comes in pretending to be something she is not, and she is punished in similar ways to the Grimm and DEFA heroines in extending her period of suffering and atoning by spending more time than she would care for with the prince. Until they fulfill the promises they make—to their fathers or to the frog kings or princes in their stories—the ‘princesses’ of the *Frog King* story are not able to reach their dreams or achieve their own happy endings.

Conclusion

For both Tiana and Henriette, fulfilling their promises in the context of their fathers’ wishes is the routes to their happiness. For the two heroines in *Tangled* and *Rapunzel oder der Zauber der Tränen*, it is the choice to withhold information from Mother Gothel that sparks the sorceress’s anger, but it is also the only route out of the tower and into the real world and the

realm of adults. Each of these heroines is an independent, self-sufficient woman who has the skills to enter adulthood and employs deceit to do so. Like many of the elements borrowed and shared between the narrative and cinematic adaptations of the tale, the transgression of the female protagonist is not the entrance into sexuality, but the symbolic loss of her youth through the ability and will to lie.

In both the United States and East Germany, lying is a behavior that is not acceptable. So, too, is the deception involved in not following through on promises. For these characters across the Grimm, Disney, and DEFA adaptations of the tales, the will to lie results in the loss of their bodily autonomy. This punishment occurs along the lines of the gendered power hierarchy—female protagonists are punished for their lies, yet male protagonists can be deceptive and still maintain their freedom. In *The Princess and the Frog* (Disney, 2009) and *Der Froschkönig* (DEFA 1988), the end to the princesses' suffering and loss of autonomy is marked by a transformation. Henriette in DEFA's adaptation transforms back from her disguise as a boy to a princess who is able to be with the prince after learning the value of keeping her promises. Tiana, when she finally marries her prince and becomes a princess by virtue of marriage, sheds her froggy form when their kiss is truly between two members of royalty. This also breaks the curse on Naveen, and they enjoy life together as humans running Tiana's restaurant. In Chapter 2, I expand the power hierarchy to explore how transformation in the adaptations of "Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich" is used to reinforce the expectations of class behavior. This discussion continues to encompass a further intersectional lens, exploring how race complicates the hierarchy further.

Chapter 2: Verwünscht und verwandelt—Transformation and Race

“As black Americans living in a small Kentucky town, the railroad tracks were a daily reminder of our marginality. Across those tracks were paved streets, stores we could not enter, restaurants we could not eat in, and people we could not look directly in the face. Across those tracks was a world we could work in as maids, as janitors, as prostitutes, as long as it was in a service capacity. We could enter that world but we could not live there. We had always to return to the margin, to cross the tracks, to shacks and abandoned houses on the edge of town.”

-bell hooks, Feminist Theory from margin to center

In June 2020, the Disney Parks Blog website posted the announcement that the theme parks intend to use the 2009 film *The Princess and the Frog* (John Musker and Ron Clements 2009) to retheme the “Splash Mountain” ride in the California and Florida theme parks. The ride will feature Princess Tiana—the first Black princess in Disney’s canon—and the alligator Louis as they prepare for their first Mardi Gras appearance “after *the final kiss*” (Ramirez 2020, emphasis Ramirez). This decision to replace *Song of the South* (Wilfred Jackson and Harvey Foster 1949) came after multiple Change.org petitions as well as a long history of criticism on *Song of the South* as misleading about race relations after the American Civil War. As I lay out in this chapter, Walt Disney Studios once again straddles the line in portraying the reality of their Black characters’ poverty and status in comparison to the white characters in the film. I argue that the film reifies a pattern by the Walt Disney Company in which they use adaptations of transformation tales to further disempower lower-class characters and characters of color in contrast to the rich, white royalty and the members of the upper class in their 21st-century films. Although *The Princess and the Frog* does make strides in representation of people of color in the Disney canon of fairy-tale characters, the further adaptation of Jacob and Wilhelm

Grimm's "Frog King" from film to theme-park attraction reproduces the same power structures and stereotyped representations surrounding race, the rights of Black people, and race relations from the current ride.

In this chapter, I move from analyzing how gendered performance within the power hierarchy laid out in the Introduction of this study applies to individual behaviors by the princesses in the adaptations of "Der Froschkönig" and "Rapunzel" to an intersectional analysis of how this hierarchy works within a larger, societal context. I first broadly analyze the use of transformation—particularly animal transformation—in the Grimm, DEFA, and Disney canons of fairy tales. I then present how the element of transformation from the Grimm tale depicts the widening or narrowing of class differences in the Disney and DEFA adaptations of the tale, respectively. In the DEFA films, adapted transformation tales primarily used the magic of transformation to teach royals lessons and educate them about the importance of hard work—aligning with the assumed equality and right to work for all in the GDR. On the other hand, the adaptations from Walt Disney in the 21st century depict the transformations and disembodiments of the poor and, quite often, of characters of color. I outline how the DEFA production *Der Froschkönig* (Walter Beck 1988) and the Disney version *The Princess and the Frog* lengthen the fourth sequence of Burkert's "Maiden's Tragedy" in comparison to the traditional Grimm tale. Finally, I connect the use of these transformations and the manipulation of the marginalized body in Disney's remediation to the depictions of the film's non-white characters in contrast to the social and financial status of the white characters. Although on the surface this adaptation of the Grimms' froggy fairytale appears to be a step in the direction of representation of people of color following a tradition of white or very light-skinned princesses

in Disney's animated feature-length films, *The Princess and the Frog* falls short on its promises of representation, further disempowering the female protagonist. Each of these films uses transformation as a means of reinforcing an existing power structure for class, but *The Princess and the Frog* expands that structure to include race.

Transformation and Status

Transformation in the Grimm canon is used for a multitude of purposes, including disguise, escape, the revelation of truth, and wish fulfillment. For example, in "Schneewittchen" (Snow White, 1812) the evil queen disguises²³ herself as a crone to gain the trust of the young maiden. In the tale "Fundevogel" (Foundling Bird, 1812), the protagonists transform into a pond and a duck in order to escape pursuit. The eponymous object in "Der singende Knochen" (The Singing Bone, 1812) reveals the truth of the character's death. And in "Hans Dumm" (Hans Dumb, 1812) the ugly, dumb male wishes himself transformed into royalty and beauty. Other tales, such as "Rapunzel," use non-magical transformations that indicate the passage of time, such as the young child growing into a mature young woman.

Animal transformation—in which a human changes into an animal or vice versa—often occurs to (dis)empower the protagonists. This disempowerment usually applies to both those transformed and those that break that transformation. Searching the ATU-AT Motif Library Guide from the University of Missouri for the keyword "transform" brings up 48 results—

²³ Disguise, although not actual transformation, is perceived as a transformation by those encountering the character.

primarily in the Thompson motifs²⁴, for the keyword “transform.” From the Grimm canon, ATU type 451 *The Maiden Who Seeks Her Brothers* or AT 451 *The Brothers Who Were Turned Into Swans* has the highest representation of examples from one type. In each of these tales—“Die zwölf Brüder” (The Twelve Brothers, 1812), “Die sieben Raben” (The Seven Ravens, 1819), and “Die sechs Schwäne” (The Six Swans, 1812)—the elder brothers of the youngest daughter are transformed into birds. In “The Twelve Brothers” and “The Seven Ravens” the birth of the youngest child, a daughter, forces the sons out of the house before their transformation. In “The Six Swans,” however, the brothers transform when their stepmother throws charmed shirts over them in order to get rid of them. She does not realize the youngest sister is there, and the young girl remains a human. In each of the tales, the brothers lose their human form, removing them from power and the possibility of taking over their father’s throne. Their redemption and transformation come only due to the sacrifice of their younger sister. Only in one of the versions does the young princess keep her voice throughout her journey to save her brothers. In the two tales where she loses it, the loss of her voice threatens both her status and her life. In “The Twelve Brothers,” after the youngest sister marries the king—who came across her in the woods and decided to marry the silent maiden—the king’s mother questions both the girl’s upbringing and her status. “[E]s ist ein gemeines Bettelmädchen, das du aus der Fremde mitgebracht hast, die hinter deinem Rücken die schändlichsten Dinge treibt.” (Grimm, 29 [1812]) (She’s a common beggar that you’ve dug up from nowhere, and she’s doing the most disgraceful things behind

²⁴ Aarne-Thompson-Uther (ATU) Index is a method of categorization of fairy and folktales which groups the tales based on repeated themes and motifs. These motifs stem from Stith Thompson’s *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (1932) which is often used to cross-reference the ATU categories. It is commonly used to refer to groups of tales for analysis of trends and commonalities. First composed by Antti Aarne and expanded upon by Stith Thompson, Hans-Jörg Uther further revised the classification in 2004. The University of Missouri’s library guide provides comparative access to both the ATU and AT (Aarne-Thompson) types, as well as the Thompson motifs.

your back!” (trans. Zipes, *Original* 31). Both through the brothers’ changes and their sister’s sacrifices, the protagonists in this tale type lose their power because of the animal transformation.

This loss of power is particularly relevant for “The Frog King, or Iron Henry.” Although the reader is only made aware that the frog is actually human and has been transformed, the other context of the tale illustrates that he is a relatively powerful man. Not only is he a prince, but he has command of a loyal servant who had iron bands wrapped around his heart out of grief. Only in later editions do the Grimms include that the prince had been cursed by an evil witch. “Da erzählte er ihr, er wäre von einer bösen Hexe verwünscht worden” (Grimm 4 [1857]) (He told her now how he had been enchanted by a wicked witch) (trans. Ashliman 2005). This curse removed the prince from his power, leaving him at the mercy of a young princess to return him to his proper state. To even be able to take power back, his transformation back into a human was required. “The frog had to transform himself to conform in status and appearance in order to gain royal approval for a wedding.” (Zipes, *Repulsive* 115) The transformation of the prince into the frog and the frog into the prince is entwined with the removal and reclaiming of power for the frog prince.

It is not, however, only the frog prince whose power is taken in the course of the transformation. Like the youngest sister in *The Brothers Who Were Turned into Swans* tales, the young princess who saves him must give up her own power and autonomy in doing so. Indeed, the 1857 text claims that it was only the young girl who could remove the curse. “Niemand hätte ihn aus dem Brunnen erlösen können als sie allein” (4) (she alone could have rescued him from the well) (trans. Ashliman 2005). And yet, the solution to the curse required the disgust,

anger, and disenfranchisement of the young princess in order to come to pass. She was the one who sacrificed her peace and spent time with a creature who is the object of her disgust before reaching her limit and throwing him against the wall.

This act of violence by the princess—taken out of anger, further discussed in Chapter 3—allows her to reclaim her power and unintentionally turn her mate into one that is acceptable for her. Unlike the crystalized version of the princess kissing the frog and catalyzing his return to human form, the kiss is actually quite rare in tales before the twentieth century. Far more often does the male frog require his prospective mate to commit an act of violence to transform back into a human, including throwing him against the wall as well as chopping off his head.²⁵

In the East German production of *Der Froschkönig* the transformation of the frog still occurs through a violent throw against a wall, but the after-effects of the change are different. The frog still transforms back into a human, but because Henriette, the princess, didn't fulfill her promise,²⁶ the curse is incomplete and the two cannot be together.²⁷ Through this transformation, the East-German production reiterates the need for keeping promises while also promoting humility. The king's transformation is incomplete because the young princess had felt herself too good to share her cup, plate, and bed with him willingly. Instead of being rewarded with an immediate marriage as in the Grimm tales, Henriette must follow the prince to the end of the earth and act as a loyal servant.

Rather than falling down as a human and immediately either marrying or sleeping with

²⁵ See Jack Zipes "What Makes a Repulsive Frog So Appealing" for a more in-depth discussion of the tales that include this violence.

²⁶ See Chapter 1

²⁷ The nature of how this is incomplete is unclear—the prince returns to his castle and Henriette follows him to finish fulfilling the requirements. There the prince's servants cower from him and act fearful—whether this is part of the curse is unclear.

the princess, the king falls onto the bed and remains silent. Walter Beck's princess takes charge and takes credit for the transformation. In a series of close-ups on Henriette's face and medium close-ups on the prone royal, she begins by asking him why he isn't saying anything. He confirms that he was, indeed, the frog, and Henriette's face changes from mild amusement to an ever larger smile. She says "Du warst verwünscht. Ich habe dich erlöst [...] und das konnte nur ich tun." (You were cursed. I freed you [...] and only I could do that.) (15:09–15:13, 15:24–15:26) (*Der Froschkönig* 1987) Here Beck flips the statement of the princess's unique ability to break the curse from the frog king telling her to the princess herself taking credit for it. She is proud of having thrown the frog against the wall and forcing his transition. This change in the narrative reinforces Henriette's haughtiness and self-importance, the reasons that the prince cites for the curse not being fully broken and thus their inability to be together.

Henriette sees this as a punishment and denies that it could be true. "Das ist nicht wahr. Das sagst du [...] um mich zu erschrecken, um mich zu bestrafen." (That is not true. You say that to scare me, to punish me.) (16:52–16:59) (*Der Froschkönig* 1988) The prince leaves, and Henriette makes the choice to journey through a multitude of tests in order to willingly fulfill the terms of her promise to the frog. The prince needs Henriette's help, but he acts in a way that manipulates her into offering it. Within the power hierarchy in which a male protagonist can enact their power on a villain who can enact it upon a female protagonist (who can then enact this upon an animal), it follows that Henriette would be the one needing to be taught a lesson. She does, indeed, learn to work hard and becomes the king's companion. However, as discussed in Chapter 1 with *Rapunzel oder der Zauber der Tränen* where the king needed to learn a lesson, the prince's manipulation and the fear his servants have for him open a potential

reading of the frog king also needing to learn a lesson. Although fairy tales gained some legitimacy in the GDR despite the depiction of monarchs due to the narrative opportunity to put them through lessons that reinforced the equality across classes, the servant's fear of the frog king calls for a political reading of a growing sentiment of distrust between the workers within the GDR and those making decisions within their lives.

Like the prince in the traditional Grimm tale, the human to animal to human transformation serves to disempower—and then subsequently reempower—the king by removing him from his kingdom and from his body. The film also shows that, like Henriette, the king needed to learn humility and care for his subjects and servants. When Henriette later makes her way to the king's citadel and bribes his *Kellermeister* to allow her to serve the wine, the servant warns her against making the king unhappy in his “heartless citadel” (*Zitadelle der Herzlosigkeit*). When she, disguised as Heinrich, drinks from the same goblet as him, his anger rises, and she flees from the room. She receives similar warnings from the cook and the chamberlain, indicating the king's treatment of each of his subjects. Just as she reacted with disdain to his eating from her plate and drinking from her cup as a frog, so too does he reject a servant doing the same. Just as Henriette suffers for her lack of humility, so too must the young king learn the same humility the king's daughter had lacked for her happily ever after.

Throughout Walter Beck's *Der Froschkönig* (1988), both the king and the young princess engage in transformations—self-inflicted or not—that disempower them through the removal of their identity. The king, transformed into a frog and then back into a human, must continue to transform to accept Henriette-disguised-as-Heinrich as his bride. Henriette, growing up from young princess playing with a golden ball to a young woman who trades away that same toy in

order to sleep with the prince, also transforms while she temporarily gives up her royal identity to serve her future husband in his citadel. “Henriette has to abandon her royal attitude to win the prince’s heart” (Kümmerling-Meierbauer 242), and in doing so, she also guides the prince through the rest of his transformation. As Jack Zipes intimates in *The Enchanted Screen*, “the entire film can be viewed as a series of ironic transformations that enable a young girl to come into her own.” (Zipes, *Choosing* 248) Beyond the traditional transformation depicted in the Grimm editions of the tale, DEFA’s *Froschkönig* expands the trope of transformation to teach the rulers humility and loyalty before they can fully come into their power and reward. For the frog king, the solution to the curse requires him to treat his servants as equals. Henriette, on the other hand, must live as a servant to achieve her goals and receive her reward. As Melissa Sheedy and I have argued elsewhere, the portrayal of the working (or in this case, servant) class as necessary to solve the problems of royals “reinforces the socialist practice of working together toward a common goal, with the emphasis on the prevailing role of the people as a whole.” (Sheedy and Wilcox 91) This transformation tale serves to showcase equality amongst people, using the transformation of the king and princess to model equality and the futility of pride simply for the sake of royal birth.

In contrast to DEFA’s use of the transformation tale²⁸ to showcase the need for humility from royals and those in the upper classes, the Walt Disney Company uses transformations in their adaptation of “Der Froschkönig” to further the vulnerabilities already present in the

²⁸See also Siegfried Hartmann’s *Schneeweißchen und Rosenrot* (1979) and Walter Beck’s *Der Prinz hinter den sieben Meeren* (1982) for further examples of animal-transformation tales in the DEFA canon. In both of these, like in *Der Froschkönig*, only a woman’s love—and that of a common woman—can break the spell for the transformed royals. It is the working class that frees royals.

characters' social statuses. *The Princess and the Frog* also conserves the transformation of the prince into a frog, but the film complicates the story by transforming the female protagonist into a frog when she kisses him. While the prince is still royal, the woman who is meant to break the spell is not. Indeed, she is a poor woman of color living in 1920s New Orleans, and as detailed below, is blocked at every point from achieving her goal of entering into the capitalist dream of business ownership. She is only dressed up as a princess and cannot access the power and privileges afforded that class. Even the prince of the tale is at the bottom of his own status level—he is penniless and in danger of getting cut off from his family wealth. Rather than being privileged, each of these characters is already vulnerable within their respective societies and the transformation of their bodies into animals heightens that vulnerability. This transformation serves to promote the difference between the white, rich characters of the film and the poor characters of color. In this film, too, the power hierarchy expands when analyzed intersectionally not only for class, but also for race.

This use of transformation is not uncommon in Walt Disney's 21st-century films. In the renaissance of Disney during the late 1980s and early 1990s, transformation operates similarly to that of the DEFA films—the transformations happen to royalty and serve to either unite two worlds, such as in *The Little Mermaid* (John Musker and Ron Clements 1989), or to provide lessons of humility to royalty. The prince in *Beauty and the Beast* (Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise 1991) is transformed into a hideous beast when he refuses to provide harbor to a beggar woman. In the case of the Disney version of "The Little Mermaid," the transformation also happens to a member of the royal family, but it is her own choice to do so—at least in the beginning. The titled heroine, Ariel, dreams of joining the human world and being able to be

with the human prince. “Though there are certainly elements of hierarchy in the way the human and ocean realms are configured, a part of the film’s rhetoric works towards persuading us that these parallel worlds are comparable and equivalent.” (Whitley 42). A princess in her own right as the daughter of King Triton, Ariel sees a multitude of the injustices rendered against her kind and the other species who live in the sea with her, yet her transformation allows her to rise up—she literally gets “out of the sea” (“Part of Your World” 15:23–18:20)—and join the human world as an equal.

These two transformation tales function similarly in regards to class as *Der Froschkönig* in the DEFA canon in that transformation is used to disempower those who are not using their power to promote equality, however the fairy-tale films of Walt Disney in the 21st century use transformation to disempower characters who already lack power within their society. Although the previous examples in this study fell within the gendered hierarchy of power—transformations from male at the top of the hierarchy to animal at the bottom, which then afforded the female protagonist power over the transformed male—the disembodied characters of color, including the male characters, in the 21st century Disney films do not begin at the top of the hierarchy. In the context of the United States where the history of enslavement and racism means that people of color are not afforded the same privileges as white people, the three transformed marginalized men in these films do not begin with the same power as they would if they were white. There are five animal transformations in four of the feature-length films Disney has produced since the year 2000—*The Emperor’s New Groove* (Mark Dindal 2000), *The Princess and the Frog*, *Brave* (Brenda Chapman and Mark Andrews 2012), and *Soul* (Pete Docter 2020). *The Emperor’s New Groove* is a loose rendition of Hans Christian Andersen’s “The

Emperor's New Clothes." As in Andersen's tale, the emperor (Kuzco) in *The Emperor's New Groove* has his faults shown to him through his relationship with the peasant, Paco, who calls him out on his pride and haughtiness while learning to care about the emperor despite his being transformed into a llama for the majority of the film. Although this holds similarities to the use of transformation in the Grimm tales and in DEFA, the difference for this film comes through the setting. Set in Incan times, the emperor is very clearly depicted as a person of color, and his transformation into a llama comes at the hands of a very pale, racially ambiguous female antagonist (Yzma)²⁹. The film denying Kuzco his own body is the first example of this shift in the treatment of transformation in Disney's films. In *The Princess and the Frog*, the two main characters are either Black (Tiana, the princess) or of an ambiguous, non-white background (Naveen, the prince) who are cursed by a money-hungry magic man (Dr. Facilier) employed by the prince's jealous servant (Lawrence). The only white character in this group, the queen in *Brave*, is transformed into a bear. Finally, in *Soul*, the film portrays the death of a Black jazz teacher in New York City who spends the majority of the film as an amorphous soul trying to get back to his own body.

In these four films, four of the five transformed characters are characters of color³⁰ and three of those four are men. The prevalence of men of color transformed outside of their own bodies in the Disney canon indicates not only a disregard for the Black and minority body, but also the existing disempowerment of people of color in the United States as opposed to white

²⁹ At the end of the movie, Yzma is transformed into a cat and is unable to return to human form. In many ways, her transformation serves a similar purpose as that in the earlier Disney and DEFA examples—she even joins the scout troupe in the film.

³⁰ *Brave* features the white queen transformed into a bear, yet this transformation aligns with another pattern from Disney in which the studio explores and emphasizes relationships and loyalty among family members. See the Introduction for a discussion of the shift toward familial loyalty in the Disney canon.

people. These characters of color—Kuzco in *The Emperor's New Groove*, Tiana and Naveen in *The Princess and the Frog*, and Joe in *Soul*—are denied the use of their own bodies throughout the plots of their films. Their disembodiment disempowers them in a similar way to the transformations of the Grimms and DEFA, but these disembodiments happen to characters who already exist in bodies that lack privilege and power.

From Frog King to Frog Princess

Released in December 2009, *The Princess and the Frog* appeared on screens in a United States that had only recently seen its first Black president and first lady inaugurated in January of that year. The highly anticipated film featured Disney's first Black princess, and previews for the film focused on rediscovering the magic and how audiences never knew the real story of what happened "after the kiss." Loosely based on the Brothers Grimm's "Der Froschkönig, oder, der eiserne Heinrich", Tiana is convinced by the transformed Prince Naveen—a visiting royal who was transformed into a frog by the voodoo practitioner, Dr. Facilier—to kiss him and break the spell in return for the money to support her restaurant. Dr. Facilier, in conjunction with the prince's valet, transfigures the prince as part of a plot to gain control of the family fortune of the LaBouff family by positioning the valet to marry the daughter, Charlotte, Tiana's best friend since childhood. The transformed Naveen mistakes Tiana for a princess and realizes the connection of his own froggy transformation to that of the "Frog Prince" storybook he sees in the room. Naveen asks Tiana to kiss him and, in a twist contrary to both the Brothers Grimm version and the storybook within the film, the kiss results in her own transformation into a frog. Their escape from the party leads them into the Louisiana bayou where they must learn to

embrace their froggy nature in the pursuit of returning to their human forms. Along the way they meet Louis, the trumpet-playing alligator, the lightning bug Ray, and Mama Odie, the “voodoo queen of the bayou” (Musker and Clements 2009). At Mama Odie’s they determine that Charlotte—as the daughter of the King of Mardi Gras—would count as a princess to break the spell. They race toward the city to find Charlotte, who happily kisses Naveen, but they miss the midnight cutoff for the spell and the two characters resign themselves to remain frogs, each giving up their individual dreams in preference to the happiness they have found together. Ultimately, they do receive their happy ending at their wedding; after their marriage vows, the two kiss, breaking the spell because their marriage made Tiana into a true princess.

The Princess and the Frog opens on an image of a star, panning down to a large house before zooming in to a window reminiscent of *Rapunzel’s* tower. A female voice is heard telling the story of “The Frog Prince”—or rather a version of it. The first character to come on screen is a young white girl with blond hair in a pink princess dress and a lady-in-waiting hat. Next to her sits a young Black girl, dressed in a far less fancy green dress and wearing a yellow crown. The camera then shows the narrator of the story, a middle-aged Black woman. This is a dual callback within the Disney canon—it mirrors Disney’s previous practice of starting their fairy-tale films with a bodiless narrator telling a story from an illustrated storybook³¹ while also referencing the only other Disney feature-length film featuring a Black character, *Song of the South* (Wilfred Jackson and Harvey Foster 1949). In this film, the character of Uncle Remus—portrayed as still

³¹ *Sleeping Beauty* (Wolfgang Reitherman, Eric Larson, Clyde Geronimi, Les Clark 1959) is one example of this, as well as *The Sword in The Stone* (Wolfgang Reitherman 1963). Both begin their opening sequence with a stylized page out of a fairy-tale book as the first visual. This practice was also parodied by DreamWorks Pictures’ *Shrek* (Vicky Jenson and Andrew Adamson 2001), which began with the storybook and a tale of a princess locked in a castle with a dragon. At the end of the story, Shrek’s green hand rips the page out of the book and the film cuts to the outside of an outhouse, implying that the book’s page was used in place of toilet paper.

living and working on a plantation after emancipation from enslavement—acts as the storyteller. In *The Princess and the Frog*, Tiana’s mother’s story concludes with the frog declaring his magic enchantment and the princess choosing to kiss him. This elicits very different responses from the two little girls: the blond, white child swoons and smiles while the Black girl looks disgusted. Already in this opening scene it is possible to see the power differentials between the characters. The young white girl, Charlotte, is the first shown on screen. She is wearing an extravagant costume while her Black playmate, Tiana, sits beside her. Tiana’s mother multitasks making (what is later revealed to be) yet another pink princess dress for Charlotte. This firmly embeds Charlotte, and not Tiana, as the princess in the tale.

The version of “The Frog Prince/King” told in this introduction of the film is quite different from that which appeared in the *KHM*, in 1812. In the Grimm’s version the youngest daughter of a king loses her golden ball in the well near where she had been playing with it. A frog offers to retrieve it for her in exchange for her companionship. Believing that the frog would not be able to leave the water, the princess agrees but runs away to the castle once she has her ball in hand. When the frog appears at the castle the next day, the princess’s father tells her she must keep her promise, “was du versprochen hast, mußt du halten, geh und mach dem Frosch die Tür auf” (Grimm 3 [1812]) (You must keep your promise no matter what you said. Go and open the door for the frog.) (trans. Zipes 14) Once inside, the frog asks the princess to be lifted to the chair next to her, to eat from her plate, and then to sleep in her bed. At each request, the king orders the young girl to keep her promise. When she brings the frog upstairs to her room and lies down in her bed, rather than setting him down on the pillow next to her head, the princess acts out of anger and disgust, throwing the frog against the wall and

triggering his transformation into a handsome prince. This violent transformation becomes, in the context of the Disney film, a point of narrative and thematic departure in which the filmmakers adapt the quick physical violence of being thrown against a wall into a violent journey of transformation for both the prince and the princess as they attempt to survive hunters and wild animals during their trek through the Louisiana bayou.

In terms of narrative structure, the Disney adaptation of the Grimms' "Der Froschkönig" significantly departs from that of the traditional tale. Throughout this dissertation, I use Burkert's "Maiden's Tragedy" instead of Propp's sequences. Jack Zipes, too, centers the princess as the main character over the frog, stating "Indeed, if I were able to rewrite the title, I would place the emphasis on the princess as protagonist and call the tale, 'How and Why a Princess Selected Her Mate'" (Zipes, *Repulsive* 111). As I laid out in detail in the Introduction, Burkert's "Maiden's Tragedy" includes five stages: a break or separation from the heroine's home, a period of (often idyllic) seclusion, a catastrophe which brings about the end of the maiden's seclusion—this often is due to the appearance of a male character—a period of intense suffering or wandering, and a rescue with a happy ending (Burkert 71). In the Grimms' tale, the break or separation from the heroine's home is represented in her choice to play by the well, separated from her family. For Tiana in the Disney version, this break or separation is symbolic, represented by the death of her father. This moves her into the period of isolation—waiting tables and working to fulfill her father's dream—whereas the traditional princess enters the second stage while happily tossing her golden ball in the air. For both princesses, the catastrophe comes in meeting the frog: the Grimm princess loses her ball and makes a promise she does not want to keep while Tiana has a culinary disaster which necessitates a change of

clothes, leading her to meet Naveen-turned-frog and giving him the kiss that transforms her. Both of these princesses begin the fourth stage, or the period of suffering, dealing with their respective time with the frog.

Here, the structure differs, as the traditional tale enters the rescue phase with the princess throwing the frog against the wall in anger, triggering his transformation into a handsome prince. Disney's adaptation, however, relies not on a single act of violence to trigger the rescue phase and happy ending, but instead relies on a half-resolution of the period of suffering. After their violent and emotional journey through the bayou and back to New Orleans, Tiana and Naveen discover that Charlotte's kiss will not break their curse. This partially resolves the narrative into a happily ever after, as Tiana and Naveen resign themselves to enjoying their lives as much as they can as frogs. However, there is a second resolution and final "rescue," as Tiana becomes a princess when marrying Naveen and therefore her kiss breaks the curse and returns them to their human forms.

Kissing a Frog Does Not Make One a Princess

The presence of the kiss for the story within the film introduces the dichotomy of the characters of Tiana and Charlotte in terms of their class and wealth as well as their general characterization as princesses throughout the film. Tiana reacts to the idea of kissing a frog in much the same way as the young princess in the Grimm tale while Charlotte embodies the belief in "true love's first kiss" set up by the Disney princesses who came before her. The filmmakers imbue Charlotte's character with the traits that viewers have come to expect from the stereotypical image of the traditional Disney princess: she dreams of marrying a prince, has blond hair, lacks a

mother figure, and embodies the capitalist dreams of wealth common in Disney's fairy-tale adaptations.³² Her appearance also references the previous Disney princesses: her blond hair and pink princess dress are reminiscent of Disney's Aurora from the 1959 adaptation of "Sleeping Beauty" and her dance with the prince later in the film uses animation similar to the "Tale as Old as Time" dance from *Beauty and the Beast* (Disney 1991). She is also very much a passive princess, waiting for her prince to appear *deus ex machina* to rescue her (Rowe 217).

Tiana, on the other hand, embodies many of the more realistic and traditional fairy-tale heroine characteristics, both from Disney and the traditional written tales. She is hard-working, loyal to her values, and obedient to her father even after his death. Though these stereotyped depictions should place Tiana as the hard-working "Cinderella" of the tale and as protagonist in contrast to Charlotte's frivolity, the characterization of these two "princesses" further others Tiana's character and draws out the contrast between her status of "princess" and those that came before her. Charlotte, when the plot continues after a time jump to the women as young adults, serves as a foil to Tiana with her extravagance and greed:

the film gives value to its first Black princess by positioning her against a flawed [w]hite³³ character, Charlotte. This reduces Tiana's blackness. Her race and its nomenclature are secondary in the film, serving to further denigrate Black female bodies. This action implies that Black women's bodies exist only when placed in contrast to whiteness, or specifically [w]hite female bodies. (Moffitt 473)

Indeed, almost all the non-white characters are positioned against a white character; Tiana is

³². See Zipes, "Breaking the Magic Spell" for his analysis of success seeking and capitalist values present in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (David Hand, William Cottrell, Wilfred Jackson, Larry Morey, Perce Pearce, and Ben Sharpsteen 1937).

³³ Moffit capitalizes both Black and white when using them as attributive adjectives. Because white is not an ethnicity but instead refers to the appearance that describes attributes that can indicate a multitude of ethnicities, I have edited the quote to reflect this.

positioned against Charlotte, James (Tiana's father) against Big Daddy (Charlotte's father), and—later in the film—Prince Naveen against his servant as well as Louis the trumpet-playing alligator against Ray the Cajun lightning bug. These pairings illustrate an ever-present power dynamic between the white and non-white characters in the film. The white characters receive their goals and wishes, although sometimes at a price, whereas the non-white characters face a series of trials and tribulations to reach their goals.

The contrast of position between Tiana and Charlotte set up in the opening scene becomes starker as Tiana and her mother make their way home. Leaving Charlotte's turreted house behind, they take the trolley, the houses in the frame growing smaller and smaller as they get further away. The scene cuts to the family's kitchen, where Tiana and her father are standing over a pot. He asks for her opinion and prompts her to add to the dish, then validating her choice and declaring it to be the "best combo [he] has ever tasted" [4:24–4:25] and a dish they needed to share with everybody. They invite the neighbors to eat, showing how they, even in their small space, have plenty to share. The introduction then ends in Tiana's room as she and her father discuss opening a restaurant and sharing their gift with the world, "Thing about good food, it brings folks together from all walks of life." [4:42–4:47] **TKTiana's wish on the evening star immediately after this conversation, however, foreshadows her misunderstanding of her father's lesson later in the film. Although she publicly claims to believe that hard work is the only way to get what she wants, she still privately accepts help from Charlotte as well as kissing the frog when he promises her a shortcut, recognizing the constraints set upon her by her status as a poor Black woman.**

Just as the introduction to Charlotte and Tiana sets the two women up as opposing

characters, this introduction to the film is structured in a way that sets up the gap between the statuses of Black people and white people. Tiana and her mother travel to and from the rich household of Charlotte and her father, occupying the space in a way which makes it clear they are only guests there for the benefit of the rich, white occupants. Charlotte and her father never enter Tiana's family's space, though the neighbors are invited to enjoy and share the food Tiana and her father made. This differentiation illustrates the power differential between the two families—Tiana's family may visit the space occupied by Charlotte and her father, but only when they are providing a service. Charlotte's father gives in to his daughter's every wish while Tiana's father encourages her to think for herself, grow, and be generous with her talent. Bookending this part of the film are scenes in the two girls' rooms; Charlotte's showcasing extravagance and a belief in fairy tales and wishes while Tiana focuses on family and simplicity. The girls' belief in wishes and dreams are explicit in these scenes, though Charlotte's are portrayed as a greed for material extravagance and Tiana's center around fulfilling her father's wishes. Beyond the referential frog king story, Disney builds a fairy tale about how people of color in early 20th-century New Orleans worked hard because they wanted to build their dreams. This narrative ignores much of the reality of the lives of people of color living in the Jim Crow era, and like *Song of the South* before it, makes the claim that people of color were happy to work as hard as they did, rather than it being a necessity for their survival.

Hard Work and (Un)Reachable Dreams

Employing a time jump from Tiana's wish on the evening star, the second part of the film shifts from establishing the relationship between Tiana and Charlotte—while also illustrating

the economic disparity between the rich, white part of town and the community in which Tiana and her family live—to establishing how hard Tiana must work in pursuit of making her father’s dreams come true. The viewer watches Tiana go to bed as a little girl wearing a crown and then, with no cut between scenes, the light in the room brightens and an adult Tiana enters through the door wearing a waitress cap, kicks off her shoes, and puts away her tips from a “rough night.” A picture of her father in a military uniform is on her dresser, a Distinguished Service Cross hung on the frame. She addresses it, saying “Don’t you worry, Daddy. We’ll be there soon” [7:01–7:04] before falling into bed. “There” for Tiana is the restaurant she and her father had dreamed of opening when she was a little girl. Throughout the film, Tiana rarely loses sight of this goal. Though her work-life balance is hardly idyllic—Tiana works non-stop without time for her friends, suffering through small emergencies setting her back in her goals, and forgoing sleep—as she works to keep her promise to her father, this lifestyle becomes idyllic for her. In this way, the Disney adaptation of “The Frog King” conserves the lesson, as discussed in Chapter 1, that promises must be kept. However, these promises can only be kept through your own hard work and wishing upon a star—or taking a short cut to your goal—is not acceptable.

Concomitantly, this part of the film reinforces the roles that power and money play within the film—both for the have nots and the haves. While Tiana has to work hard for every cent she earns, her friend Charlotte has inherited her money and is able to live a luxurious life without understanding Tiana’s focus on her goals. Tiana has barely lain down to sleep when her alarm rings and she gets up to go to her next job. At this point, the title pane appears, marking the transition between prologue and plot, and the song “Down in New Orleans” begins. During this song, Tiana is shown saving her pennies, studying cooking on the trolley to her morning job,

and charming the patrons of the diner with her smile, work ethic, and beignets. The song also introduces the jealousy of Dr. Facilier over the LaBouff fortune; as he cheats and scams a man out of a nickel, Big Daddy throws a wad of cash at a paper boy. The lyrics, “rich people, poor people, all got dreams” [9:12] are synchronized first against Big Daddy and Charlotte LaBouff in their car (rich people), and then against a group of Second Line players with Tiana working diligently in the background (poor people). Prince Naveen is at the end of the Second Line procession, and Tiana, busy in her work, rolls her eyes when he tips his hat at her.

While the hardworking, female protagonist is a stock character in fairy tales—especially in East German fairy tales, which embraced “the fairy tale’s inherent folksiness” (Sheedy and Wilcox 80) as a means of legitimization for socialist values—the right to work and the wish to work among them—Disney’s use of the stock character has shifted from hard work as an inherently ‘good’ trait of young women to a necessary part of their survival. Many of the Disney princesses worked hard, not because of their own motivations, but because their situations required it. Cinderella worked because her stepfamily required it and Rapunzel worked because it was all there was to do. Even princesses like Sleeping Beauty or Snow White were forced to act as peasants and work because of the villains in their tales. In each of these princess’s stories, though, their motivation to work comes from threats which, once defeated through marriage or magic, no longer exist. Their work will eventually come to an end. Tiana’s working song, “Almost There,” highlights how her work is instead motivated by her interpretation and pursuit of her deceased father’s dreams, and those dreams don’t go beyond the realm of business ownership and more work. Tiana is denied the possibility afforded other princesses of ending her time of hard work. She instead works to fulfill the dreams of others, implying that working herself to the

bone for her white bosses coincides with her own dreams. Within the capitalist system, especially one where women, poor people, and people of color sit at the bottom of the power hierarchy, Tiana's intersectional identity with all three of those categories renders hard work fruitless. Her lack of power, especially when contrasted with Charlotte's princess treatment, destabilizes Tiana's role as the protagonist in the film:

Disney's efforts to breathe life into a Disney princess who is 'keeping it real' by keeping her feet planted firmly on the ground potentially diminishes Tiana's royal aura for those rightfully expecting the first black princess to live in the same world of fantasy and (im)possibility as do her other sister princesses. (Lester 297)

Tiana's work, contrary to that of characters like Cinderella (*Cinderella*, Geronimi, Jackson, and Luske 1950) or Rapunzel (*Tangled* 2010) keeps her from moving forward in her life. "For Mulan and Tiana, limitless dreams appear off limits, seemingly the domain of white princesses who harness magical power to live beyond the bounds of even the top of the social hierarchy." (Dundes and Streiff 1–2) Unlike her fellow female protagonists, she does not dream of a happy ending but instead reaches for a goal that would be easily achievable for a white, rich character such as Charlotte.

1920s New Orleans

It is not only Tiana's royal aura and dreams which are diminished in her contrast to the previous Disney princess protagonists—*The Princess and the Frog* is the only feature-length animated Disney film sourced from the European fairy-tale tradition to be remediated using a specific time and place. The other feature-length fairy-tale films conserve the "once upon a time" fantasy of their source materials. All the other fairy-tale princesses from Snow White to Elsa

exist in a time and space only loosely defined by the setting. The films depicting specific times and places recognizable in history—for example, *Pocahontas* (Eric Goldberg and Mike Gabriel 1995) or *Mulan* (Tony Bancroft and Barry Cook 1998)—are the films featuring women of color as their protagonists and not adapted from European fairy tales. The only other Disney fairy-tale film to take place in a very specific locale was *The Emperor's New Groove*, which originally began as a loose adaptation of a 19th-century adventure novel. This project was redirected and redone in the theme of Hans Christian Andersen's "The Emperor's New Clothes." Although adaptations and retellings of tales often use specific settings, the choice to portray Disney's first Black princess in a specific political and geographical context—especially one which places so many restrictions on her as a Black woman—undermines the façade of representation. Instead, it allows viewers of the film to create distance between the realities of race in the film and their own context. "Indeed, the historical setting is an important means of distancing difference, allowing audiences to recognize and even name racism as a problem without having to think ill of the present." (King 160) Despite the factors that disadvantage Tiana as a Black, poor woman living in New Orleans, the film ignores her lack of power. The Walt Disney Company attempts to place a Black princess within the existing narrative formula that they use for white princesses, but they disregard the reality that her life would not afford her the same opportunities as the princesses in previous films. **Tiana discovers both that she is unable to achieve her dreams through hard work and that magic shortcuts afforded to princesses such as Cinderella (*Cinderella*) and Aurora (*Sleeping Beauty*) also go awry.** Just as Tiana is denied the possibility of ending her period of isolation, she is also denied the "once upon a time" of her white sister princesses.

Setting Tiana's fairytale firmly in 1920s New Orleans introduces the political implications of why Tiana, her family, and her community must work so hard. In the course of the film, the white characters are featured with wealth, power, and capital such as businesses while Tiana and her family consistently work despite setback after setback in pursuing their dreams. At each step, Tiana's struggle to purchase her restaurant and to take charge of her own life is determined by the systemic racism of the white people surrounding her; her manager at her morning job criticizes her and doesn't believe she will ever succeed, and the white real estate agents raise the price once she has the funds for a down payment. Even gaining the down payment is the result of Charlotte's lack of worry in regard to money—when she discovers that her dreams of marrying a prince could come true, she hires Tiana to make her “man-catchin’” beignets and shoves more money at Tiana than her friend could have ever saved through her day and night jobs. “The rhythm of the film revolves around the benevolence of Charlotte's character: Charlotte hires Tiana to cater the ball, allowing Tiana to earn enough to place a down payment on her restaurant.” (McCoy Gregory 438) After receiving the money from Charlotte, Tiana continues to center her dreams on hard work, singing about how her father told her that fairy tales only come true by making them happen in the first “I Want” song of the film, “Almost There.” This romanticization of the hard work required by achieving her dream harkens back to Uncle Remus in *Song of the South*, in which he was portrayed as jovial and happy to be working for the white family on the plantation. Tiana, too, is portrayed to be motivated by the ‘American dream’ of being able to pull oneself up by one's bootstraps to success. However this narrative ignores the reality, for both her and Uncle Remus that “slavery had established a hierarchy of race and class, with peculiar attitudes and subtle rationalization even by the most ignorant and

degraded poor whites.” (Brewer 30) These two characters may both work, but they are stuck in the hierarchical power system with little chance to rise above. For Tiana, her attempt to do so—especially in taking a short cut—results in disaster and her own transformation into an animal.

Another factor glossed over by the Walt Disney Company in this remediation of “Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich” is that Tiana’s relationship with Naveen would have come under suspicion in 1920’s New Orleans. Tiana as a Black woman and Naveen as a racially ambiguous—if clearly non-white—man would have violated the antimiscegenation laws that were not struck down by the Supreme Court until 1967. “Aimed at preserving the racial purity of the white race, they [antimiscegenation laws] prevented interracial couples from marrying and producing legitimate, racially mixed children. Racially mixed children threatened white supremacy.” (Oh 1330) Although Naveen is racially ambiguous, these laws would still have affected the two characters. “Jim Crow realities would have certainly interrupted on some level the seemingly smooth flow of this very public interracial pairing.” (Lester 300) Lester goes as far as to posit the question as to whether that could be one of the reasons Disney removed Tiana and Naveen from their non-white bodies until their marriage ceremony. As explained above, this is a pattern with the non-white protagonists in Disney’s feature-length films. Disney’s 2020 release of *Soul*—the story of a jazz teacher who dies and must find his purpose to return to Earth and fulfill his dream—is, at the time of writing this chapter, the most recent example of this pattern, following Tiana, Naveen, and Kuzco (*The Emperor’s New Groove*) in the violent separation of non-white characters from their bodies. By not portraying the characters in the context of their Black and non-white bodies, the filmmakers are able to avoid and decentralize the realities of racial relations in their films. A technique which is strikingly familiar to the

criticism of *Song of the South* for romanticizing the relationships of former enslaved Black people with their enslavers after emancipation.

“When I’m Human” – Money, Power, and the Body

Although the film avoids the complication of portraying a relationship and marriage between Tiana and Naveen in their human forms, the power of the body remains an indicator as to who has power and wealth throughout the film. Those with money and power—Big Daddy, the diner owner, Tiana’s realtors—are all white. Although each of the white characters come with flaws which could lend themselves to a reading of equalization between the white and non-white characters—Charlotte is obsessed with finding a husband, Big Daddy spoils his daughter, the realtors are money hungry—the white characters continue to be the ones in power. The characters portrayed as working or without money—Tiana, her family, Naveen, and the working characters throughout the film—are all non-white. As set up in the introduction of the film, the hierarchy of rich characters over poor characters in the film is undeniable, and these dynamics open the power hierarchy, too, to be observed through an intersectional lens.

This hierarchy, however, is not restricted to wealth, but also operates along the lines of race, which would support the inclusion of another intersectional lens to this reading.

Lawrence, the prince’s valet who is one of two poor white characters in the film, maintains power over his employer, the racially ambiguous Naveen. In a revenge scheme against his employer, Lawrence makes a deal with Dr. Facilier to gain wealth and status by taking over Naveen’s body and marrying the rich Charlotte. This body switch positions the white man in a brown body as ridiculous, going as far as to distort Naveen’s body as the magic wears off and

Lawrence returns to his—undesirable, according to Charlotte’s reaction and his attempts to hide it—short, white, overweight body. This violent transformation into the original body is comparable to the violence of the Grimm’s tale, but the distortion of the marginalized body as it is occupied by a white man demonstrates that, when viewed through the lenses of race and class, Disney places the white, powerless, poor man above the royal minority man. In the larger hierarchy, white and rich is privileged above white and poor, which is then privileged above any of the marginalized identities regarding race.

The literal warping of the non-white body as it is taken over by a white man is a poignant illustration of the treatment of characters of color within the film. Not only do the two main characters spend most of their diegetic time outside of their own bodies, the film’s treatment of non-human characters, such as Louis and Ray, also relies on warped representations and stereotyped imagery of non-human characters that pushes them to the bottom of the power hierarchy. Louis, a trumpet-playing alligator, is ostracized and run out of jazz clubs for the way he looks, mirroring the real-life experience of Black people in the Jim Crow era and throughout segregation. He only achieves his dreams by pretending to be wearing a costume to fit in with other musicians during Mardi Gras. Ray—a lightning bug enamored of the evening star whom he calls Evangeline—is characterized as Cajun. Maria Hebert-Leiter reads Ray’s character as an attempt to remove Tiana’s Blackness from the social periphery in which the film “emphasizes the Cajun as Other to erase racial difference and claim a place for Tiana in the mainstream national imagination.” (968) Hebert-Leiter examines the implications of including a Cajun character, pointing out the connection of Ray’s love of the evening star, named Evangeline, to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s poem *Evangeline*. “Longfellow’s poem relates the Acadian

tragedy through the story of two lovers divided during the 1755 dispersal of the Acadians from Acadia.” (970) Relating how in the 1870s, Cajun—a corruption of ‘Cadian from Acadian—had come to mean “white trash” (970), Hebert-Leiter positions Ray’s white identity above Louis’ Black identity, providing another example in which any character of color is portrayed as having less power than even the lowest white character.

Conclusion

Transformation as remediated from the Grimms’ “Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich” into the East German and US-American fairy-tale film canon is a tool to reinforce class and class relations for both film traditions. In DEFA’s *Der Froschkönig*, the king’s transformation from frog to handsome human provides a lesson to the haughty Henriette about both keeping her promises and laying aside her sense of superiority. This aligns with the accepted characterization of royalty as foolish in their snobbery for DEFA fairy-tale films. In a society where class differences should not mean differences in treatment or resources, Henriette’s learning to share her plate, cup, and bed with someone ‘lower’ in society than her is a lesson toward collective care and consciousness which aligns with socialist values.

Although the fairy-tale films of the German Democratic Republic and the Walt Disney Company employed transformation similarly in the twentieth century—transforming royals who facilitate collaboration and understanding across societal barriers—, Disney’s use of transformation in the twenty-first century has developed into a tool to disempower figures that already exist at a disadvantage in society. Although *The Princess and the Frog* seems perfectly poised to replace the *Song of the South* with the tale of a hardworking, self-starter princess of

color, she is human for less than one third of the film and instead spends most of her time on screen as an animal. This adaptation of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's "Der Froschkönig" ("The Frog King") conserves the lessons taught in the tale of fulfilling promises and obeying your father's wishes, but it does so in ways which also reinforces 21st-century prejudices of race and class.

The transformation of the marginalized body into animals and non-humans in the Disney film canon indicates the normalization of the subjugation of those with minority identities within the United States. Enslavement disadvantaged Black people economically and, even after emancipation, laws and societal perspective relegated them to second-class citizenship that was not addressed until long after the civil rights movement. It would be remiss of me, in my final edits of this dissertation, not to return in the conclusion of this chapter to the June 29th, 2023 Supreme Court ruling on cases 20-1199 and 21-707, which rendered college admission decisions based on affirmative action illegal in the United States. Adding to Justice Sotomayor's dissent, Justice Jackson's dissent begins, "Gulf-sized race-based gaps exist with respect to the health, wealth, and well-being of American citizens. They were created in the distant past, but have indisputably been passed down to the present day through the generations." (1) She notes "This contention [that it is *unfair* for a college's admissions process to consider race] blinks both history and reality in ways too numerous to count. But the response is simple: Our country has never been colorblind." (Jackson 2) Justice Jackson's dissent recognizes the history of disempowerment for Black people and minorities in the United States due to enslavement. This decision is yet another example of how people of color are disadvantaged and disempowered in the United States.

Chapter 3: *In ihrem Zorne: Anger and Power*

“honestly the best marketing scheme in history is men successfully getting away with calling women the “more emotional” gender for like, EONS, because they’ve successfully rebranded anger as Not An Emotion”

—Claire Willett (@clairewillett)

Women responding to racism means women responding to anger; the anger of exclusion, of unquestioned privilege, of racial distortions, of silence, ill-use, stereotyping, defensiveness, misnaming, betrayal, and co-optation [...] Every woman has a well-stocked arsenal of anger potentially useful against those oppressions, personal and institutional, which brought that anger into being. Focused with precision it can become a powerful source of energy serving progress and change.

—Audre Lorde, *“The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism”*

The 13th Fairy. Mother Gothel. The Evil Queen, witches, and stepmothers. Without the anger of women, many fairytale plots lose momentum. The anger of witches and wives is sprinkled throughout fairytales like Hansel’s breadcrumbs. Of course, the crones are not alone in their rage. The prince, when he rescues his “damsel in distress,” often draws upon his anger to fuel his heroics. And, even though much of our society has a slimy smooch in mind when they consider the prince of “Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich”’s transformation, in the traditional tale from the Brothers Grimm the princess actually throws him against a wall. When these tales are remediated in the cinema of the German Democratic Republic and the United States, this anger remains, adapted in ways that reify women’s lack of power to become angry without punishment.

This chapter applies the power structures analyzed in Chapters 1 and 2 to theories of anger, asking the question of who is allowed to be angry in fairytales and what the consequences for expressing that anger are. The answer to this question seems clear cut—the

villain is angry, and the protagonist receives that rage. The villain is then punished for their anger, often violently. When it comes to female villains and antagonists, this often upholds the dichotomy of the maiden and the crone. However, this is rarely so simple. Snow White's stepmother is violently punished for her anger, yet a young princess who angrily throws her frog companion against a wall sees him transformed into a handsome prince and is rewarded with marriage. And this complication does not account for the anger of the male protagonist against the villain. In this chapter I examine the structures of anger, and thus power, in three well-known fairy tales—"Rumpelstiltskin", "Rapunzel", and "Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich." To first define and describe anger, I employ Plutchik's "Wheel of Emotions" and the behavioral study of Disney princess movies by Descartes et. al. to examine gendered behavior of the princess character. I then explore the definition of Aristotelian anger—or *orgē*—as analyzed by Nussbaum, who focuses on the injury, status, and payback elements of anger. Applying analyses of *orgē* to how anger presents in the "Rumpelstiltskin" tale, I identify the parameters necessary for anger and present a hierarchy of power and anger across male protagonists, villains and non-binary characters, and female protagonists in these fairy tales. Using this hierarchy of anger, I analyze the adaptations of anger in "Rapunzel", "Der Froschkönig", and "Dornröschen" in the Grimm, DEFA, and Disney canons to illustrate how whether or not one is punished for expressing anger reinforces acceptable emotional portrayal across genders.

As we have seen throughout this dissertation, it is the period of isolation that is most often expanded in the cinematic adaptations of "Rapunzel" and "Der Froschkönig" to punish the female characters for behavior contrary to their expected gender roles. When searching for angry women across literature, examples from mythology and the antiquities have received

more attention than those of fairy tales. Mary Valentine and Anne Devane's *Female Rage—Unlocking Its Secrets, Claiming Its Power* uses the Medusa myth as a foundation for outlining the causes for angry rage. Athena's former servant turned Gorgon, Medusa is seduced (or raped, depending on the variation) by the god Poseidon in disguise. In response, Athena transforms Medusa from the beautiful woman who tempted Poseidon into a monstrous Gorgon with snakes in place of her hair. After this transformation, Medusa's angry gaze is able to turn men to stone with simply a look. Valentine and Devane read Poseidon's disguise as deception, and both Athena's and Medusa's response to this disguise is an example of "the rage of innocence when a traumatic event undermines the viability of her perceptions" (14). Should the deception not incite rage, "Anguish turned to shame" is cited as another cause (17). As in Walter Burkert's "Maiden's Tragedy", Medusa's catastrophe is caused by the appearance of a man, yet it is Athena's rage in response that moves Medusa into isolation and suffering. In this way, Athena, and not Medusa, metes out the punishment in response to Poseidon's deception. This is also the structural point where female rage occurs in the fairy tale—the young princess throws the frog against the wall when he invades her bed and Gothel's anger appears when she learns that her young charge has spent time with a prince in her bed. In Disney's *The Princess and the Frog* (Ron Musker and John Clements 2010), the princess's anger at the frog results in her own froggy transformation but in the DEFA remediation the princess's anger renders the physical transformation of the frog insufficient to break the curse. As analyzed in Chapter 1 in conjunction with sex and lying, Rapunzel in Disney's *Tangled* faces the potential of unending imprisonment with Gothel, while her East German counterpart is locked into the tower as punishment. In these adaptations the heroines suffer more for the rage of the women than in

their traditional tales.

The complexity of anger and rage as portrayed in fairy tales can be read in conversation with Aristotle's discussion of *orgē*, where anger is the desire for revenge in response to a perceived undeserved slight, to better understand who is allowed to both experience and act upon their anger in the context of fairy tales. The power dynamics of anger—one can only enact angry action on someone less powerful than oneself (Harris 123)—help to illustrate the dynamics of power in fairy tales and their adaptations. As with many genres, power in fairy tales is gendered—powerful men are often kings and royals, whereas powerful women are witches or those able to control the forces of nature. Analyzing who is allowed to be angry—and whether they see consequences for acting on that anger—across adaptations allows for insight into the hierarchy of power in these tales and in the societies in which they appear. As these tales are adapted into new contexts, these power and anger dynamics illustrate the continued hierarchy and the expected gendered behavior in the GDR and the United States.

Aristotelian Anger

Aristotle defines anger, or *orgē*, as “a desire accompanied by pain for an imagined retribution on account of an imagined slighting inflicted by people who have no legitimate reason to slight oneself or one's own” (Rhetoric . 1378a31–33, cited in Nussbaum). Anger in response to this provocation is meant to reinforce the lower status of the target, and when anger is addressed upward in the anger hierarchy—i.e., from female protagonist to the villain—the action of their rage results in the reinforcement of the required behavior and emotions through punishment. As I will illustrate through analyzing “Rumpelstiltskin” in the Grimm canon

and the cinematic adaptations of “Rapunzel” and “Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich”, the hierarchy of anger mirrors the hierarchy of power discussed throughout this dissertation. Male protagonists may enact anger upon villains of any gender. Non-binary characters—i.e., Rumpelstiltskin, who embraces behaviors and motivations from both male and female characters—rank the same as villains.³⁴ Finally, both male protagonists and villains are allowed to enact their anger on female protagonists without punishment. Villains and female protagonists who attempt to enact their anger upon those higher in the hierarchy, however, are punished.

Martha Nussbaum extrapolates on the “perceived slight to oneself or one’s own” in Aristotle’s definition of *orgē*, noting that “either anger focuses on some significant injury, such as a murder or a rape, or it focuses only on the significance of the wrongful act for the victim’s relative status—as what Aristotle calls a ‘down-ranking.’” (15). In her book *Anger and Forgiveness: Resentment, Generosity, Justice*, Nussbaum outlines the history of the study of anger, arguing “that the idea of payback or retribution—in some form, however subtle—is a conceptual part of anger.” (Nussbaum 15) **TKAnger appears on two levels—as an emotion or a feeling and as an action.** She, however, also argues that the idea of payback is a problem, and anger, too (15). She notes that recent philosophers have generally not passed much time analyzing anger as an emotion. Her critique centers on the question of whether anger revolves around the injury or action that provokes the anger or if anger is in response to the perceived wrongdoing—or Aristotle’s “down-ranking’.

³⁴ By grouping non-binary characters with villains, I am not implying that they inherently share any other characteristics.

Whether it centers on the provocation or the response to that provocation, anger serves to reinforce the lower status of the person having committed the injury. In other words, when a villain is punished in a way that shows the rage of the hero or heroine, it reinforces that the villain is 'lesser' in status than the hero. Nussbaum homes in on the repetition of the word *phainomenēs* (imagined) in Aristotle's definition: "By twice repeating 'imagined' (*phainomenēs*), Aristotle emphasizes that what is relevant to the emotion is the way the situation is seen from the angry person's viewpoint, not the way it really is, which might, of course, be different." (17) Even if an injury might be objectively justified, such as when the 13th fairy in "Dornröschen" (Sleeping Beauty) acts against the king (also in anger, which will be discussed later) and makes him angry, it is the king's perspective and viewpoint that makes the anger valid.

The focus on perspective does not fully account for what causes the anger of those higher in the hierarchy, such as the king in DEFA's "Rapunzel" adaptation and his anger at Rapunzel after his son lies to him.³⁵ Nussbaum describes a difference between the *target* and the *focus*—a person is typically the former and the act the latter (17)—of anger. Although the *focus* of the anger is the act that causes perceived damage, the damage isn't necessarily done to the person who becomes angry. The damage, Nussbaum argues "may be inflicted on the person who, as a result, feels anger, or it may be inflicted on some other person or thing within that person's circle of concern." (18) The "circle of concern" cited by Nussbaum means that anger extends beyond just injustices to oneself to the wrongdoings that "touch on core values of the self." (18) When we ascribe personal importance or personal connection to a wrongdoing on behalf of another, this moves them into our circle of concern.

³⁵ See Chapter 1

The anger of fairy-tale princes and male protagonists is often enacted on behalf of his “circle of concern”: at the top of the power hierarchy which reinforces gender roles, a misbehaving villain or female protagonist who is acting in anger goes against the core values and societal norms that keep the male in power. The prince who gets angry on behalf of a princess—for example, when Matthias angrily confronts DEFA’s Mother Gothel when she imprisons Rapunzel in front of him—expresses his anger in an effort to protect his circle of concern—in this case, Rapunzel. Expanding further into the Grimm canon, when the evil stepmother in “Schneewittchen” (1812) attempts to kill her, there is no attack on the prince himself—and yet the prince tacitly takes part in her punishment in the Grimm tales. When the queen attends the royal wedding at the end of the 1812 version of the tale, “da waren eiserne Pantoffeln im Feuer glühend gemacht, die musste sie anziehen und darin tanzen.” (249) (Iron slippers were then heated over a fire. The queen had to put them on and dance in them.) (trans. Zipes *Original* 178) The missing agent in the description of this punishment leaves the reader drawing assumptions as to who ordered the punishment and who carried it out—assumptions that in the movie adaptations are unnecessary as the agent of punishment is made clear. In Disney, the queen dies a violent death after the angry dwarves chase her up a cliff—lightning strikes the cliff, and she falls to her death. The dwarves, who are “associated with earth” (Tatar, “Snow White” 252), work in conjunction with nature to defeat and punish the evil stepmother with death. In Gottfried Kolditz’s DEFA adaptation, the prince leads the charge in punishing the queen when she is invited to the wedding. Mirroring the queen’s poisoned apple—to convince Schneewittchen to trust her and eat the apple, the queen had split one, eating the safe, green half and giving the poisoned, red portion to the girl—the prince offers the queen a red apple.

Believing it to be poisoned, she flees, chased by the prince out of the country. In the Grimm and DEFA “Schneewittchen” tales, the prince enacts his anger against the evil stepmother not because he was the one to receive harm, but because he views the princess within his ‘circle of trust.’

A further aspect of the prince or male protagonist’s anger has to do with restoring control. W.V. Harris in “The Rage of Women” goes deeper into an analysis of “what seems to be the attempt of a male-dominated culture to delegitimize the expression of certain emotions” (121). She notes the connection between the Greek *erōs*, or passionate love, and *orgē* as “conditions of the inner person [...] which needed to be resisted by women.” (122) She cites an earlier passage of the *Rhetoric* where Aristotle explains that nobody can be angry with “those whom vengeance clearly cannot overtake, or those who are far more powerful than he is; against such people they are not angry, or at any rate less so.” (Harris 123). Her analysis indicates that *orgē* must be followed by action or come close to action. In other words, if someone does not have power over another, they cannot enact anger upon them.

In the short form of the traditional fairy tale, the audience is often privy to only the action side of rage and the slights behind them are simplified. Since the action anger can only be directed at those who are less powerful, who is allowed to be angry provides insight into the power structures presented in a text. In reading fairy tales, we can see that anger in action, especially revenge, are often reserved for the male characters and the female villains in the tales we know best. Male protagonists tend to enact their anger most often—attacking, manipulating, and fighting the antagonist, male or female. The antagonist in fairy tales often acts out their slight against the protagonist. Female protagonists in these fairy-tale films often

must first prove themselves worthy before being able to respond to their antagonists, though more often they are either rescued by a prince-figure or solve their conflict through non-violent means. Otherwise, as I will explain in the following section, their anger is played out against non-human or inanimate objects, after which they must go through a period of atonement before receiving their “happily ever after.” If we consider the characters in the Grimms’ “Rumpelstiltskin,” there is only one who experiences Aristotelian *orgē*—Rumpelstiltskin, when he is denied the queen’s child, rips himself apart in rage—but two characters receive a “slight” in the tale. In addition to Rumpelstiltskin’s loss of the child, the queen faces a number of mistreatments throughout the Grimms’ version of the tale but never commits an act of anger.

To provide a quick summary of “Rumpelstiltskin”: a miller makes the claim that his daughter can spin straw into gold. This catches the attention of the king, who demands the woman accomplish the task upon pain of death. The woman, who does not actually possess this ability, is aided by Rumpelstiltskin for three nights, and on the last night promises her first-born child to him. The miller’s daughter marries the king, and when her first child is born, Rumpelstiltskin comes to collect his payment. He provides the young queen a way out of the deal, finding his name. A soldier overhears the “little man” – *Männlein*, in German – say his name is Rumpelstiltskin, and when the queen speaks it to him, he tears himself in half in his rage. In some variants, Rumpelstiltskin removes himself from the situation on a flying spoon but, as Maria Tatar details in her research, “the Grimms seem to have favored violence over whimsy.” (Tatar, *Sex* 366). For the Grimms’ edits, however, Rumpelstiltskin violently rips himself in two instead of flying away:

"Das hat dir der Teufel gesagt! Das hat dir der Teufel gesagt!" schrie das Männlein und stieß mit dem rechten Fuß vor Zorn so tief in die Erde, daß es bis an den Leib hineinfuhr, dann packte es in einer Wuth den linken Fuß mit beiden Händen und riß sich mitten entzwei." (Grimms, 283 [1819])

"The devil told you that! The devil told you that!" shouted the little man, and stomped his right foot so hard into the ground with rage that it drove in up to his waist. Then he took hold of his left foot with both hands and ripped himself in anger up the middle in two." (my translation)

Here, the power structure—as viewed through the lens of who can enact their anger—is easy to follow. Rumpelstiltskin becomes angry at the slight of being denied the child. The young queen, though she has been put through a multitude of slights including the threat of death and the loss of her child, does not become angry. There is not a character in the tale over whom she has power. That Rumpelstiltskin enacts his rage against himself, tearing himself in two after the queen speaks his name, invites the interpretation that the slight leading to this anger has been self-inflicted.

This self-infliction of *orgē* indicates another potential complication of the power hierarchy, similar to what we saw in Chapter 2. As when analyzing power through an intersectional lens for race and class, when dealing with characters that exist outside of gender and beauty norms, the anger hierarchy requires additional considerations beyond male, villain, and female. Continuing with Rumpelstiltskin and his self-inflicted rage, there are signals in the tale that the character lies outside of the gender binary. Because of his small nature, Rumpelstiltskin is referred to as "ein kleines Männchen", (Grimm 280 [1819]) with the diminutive "-lein" requiring a grammatically neutral pronoun. As discussed in Chapter 1, the Grimms tended to indicate the advent into sexual maturity for characters whose grammatical genus required neutral pronouns by shifting to the use of biologically based pronouns. Read for

the aspect of lying from Chapter 1, Rumpelstiltskin also engages in deceit through the omission and hiding of his name in an attempt to trick the young girl-turned-queen. That Rumpelstiltskin continues to be referred to as “es” throughout the tale also implies a lack of sexual maturity. The little man’s name also supports a reading of the character as lacking sexual maturity or unable to achieve it. In his 2020 book, *Rumpelstiltskin’s Secret: What Women Didn’t Tell the Grimms*, Harry Rand discusses how the name itself, *Rumpelstiltskin*, has ambiguous meaning, and he breaks down how it could mean “crumpled stalk” (40), referring to the character’s impotence. Additionally, despite the diminutive *Männlein* building from the grammatically and biologically masculine *Mann*, the trades that Rumpelstiltskin makes in exchange for spinning gold into straw—a traditionally feminine specialization—include the maiden’s necklace, her ring, and finally her child. Rumpelstiltskin’s longing for the queen’s child—without the expectation that it was for nefarious purposes, such as eating or sacrificing it—supports a reading that perhaps he could not produce his own. Andrea Meyertholen agrees, making an argument that the character of Rumpelstiltskin is an example of a non-binary character who “confronts the fairy-tale realm with a not-yet-defined or not-yet-acknowledged type of being that falls beyond and in between existing realms.” (47) Her character analysis chart (48) reveals a similar hierarchy when examined solely for power relations as my own for anger. For me, Rumpelstiltskin’s character embodies both the helper and villain role in that he contributes to the oppression of the miller’s daughter. His “in-between” status in the tale, combined with the potential to read him as a non-binary character, accounts for the infliction of his rage upon himself within the hierarchy. Unlike the female protagonists who attempt to break the hierarchy or do enact their rage ‘upward’, Rumpelstiltskin enacts his anger upon himself—as neither man

nor woman and also neither pure villain or protagonist, he stands outside of the existing hierarchy. He has no real power over the queen—especially after she gains power by virtue of her marriage to the king—but she also holds no power to inflict anger onto him.

It is not a coincidence that this hierarchy reflects that which we have seen throughout this dissertation to be the hierarchy of power within fairy tales. Powerful male figures in our tales are often those who have or desire official, civic power. They are kings or princes, and should they not be, they desire to either become royalty or have enough money to be like royalty. Within the Grimm fairy-tale canon, these are figures that include Gambling Hans, the Master Thief, etc. However, the tales of poor male figures are not the tales that have worldwide recognition as canonical Grimm tales—in both the Disney and DEFA film traditions, the tales chosen for adaptation include “Schneewittchen”, “Rapunzel”, “Aschenputtel”, and other tales that feature princes or kings as the male protagonists. The tales of poor, non-powerful men, however, also reinforce the male figure’s position at the top of the anger hierarchy. Ruth Bottigheimer, in her analysis of the AT 675 “Lazy Boy” tales, also explores the directionality of the anger within the tales under this category:

In most tellings it is the boy who becomes angry, and he directs his anger solely toward the princess. In Straparola’s tale the boy becomes ‘almost mad with rage’ when the princess laughs [...] The boy’s parental figures may also demonstrate anger [...] In an Egyptian version of the tale the protagonist’s *father* becomes angry with his youngest son [...] The princess’s father also expresses anger. When his daughter is defiled, the king becomes angry with her, with her child(ren), and with the boy... (266).

Bottigheimer’s analysis continues to explain that “the princess herself *never* expresses anger, even though she suffers the injustice of an unwished-for pregnancy” (266). Once again, the princess of this tale is at the bottom of the hierarchy, unable to express her anger, even with

due cause.

When women and female figures do have power, moreover, they often only have power over other humans due to one of two factors: either they have proximity to a powerful man through marriage or familial ties, or they have access to magic. For the miller's daughter, it is her marriage to the king—enabled by Rumpelstiltskin's spinning—that provides her with the power and status to send men out searching for his name. Rumpelstiltskin, in aiding the miller's daughter, gave her the key to defeating him. "Status and fortune never result from the female's self-exertion but from passive assimilation into her husband's sphere." (Rowe 246) The miller's daughter did not have to work for her power but entered into it through marriage. The women with magic—such as the Snow White's stepmother, the 13th fairy of "Dornröschen", and Mother Gothel—are the villains and witches of their tales. These 'witches' are those that are able to embody the in-between of the powerful and the powerless and control natural forces. Their own power—not attained by marriage—moves them up the hierarchy of anger, allowing them to enact anger upon the female protagonists of the tale.

However, one does not have to be a witch to access natural power. As Carolyn Merchant states in her book *The Death of Nature*, it is both the nurturing, docile woman and the witch who can claim natural power. "The virgin nymph offered peace and serenity, the earth mother nurture and fertility, but nature also brought plagues, famines, and tempests. Similarly, woman was both virgin and witch" (Merchant 127). In the tale of "Rapunzel" from the Grimms, Disney, and DEFA, both the nurturing virgin nymph and the witch are present. Rapunzel, the young girl, is the result of her birth mother's ingestion of the garden herb and stands as the virginal nymph—as well as the earth mother in her latter pregnancy. Gothel, imbued with magic or not

depending on the variant of the tale, remains the controller of nature. She grows the rampion and takes control of the female protagonist before locking her in the tower. Indeed, as we saw in Chapter 1, the “Rapunzel” tale illustrates how “[d]isorderly women, like chaotic nature, needed to be controlled” (Merchant 127). Under the care of Gothel, Rapunzel’s entrance into adulthood is controlled. The ‘witches’ of these tales are often not only subjected to the power of the male protagonist when he rides in to save the princess from them, they are also subjected to his anger.

In the following sections, this analysis shifts from defining and developing the anger hierarchy to analyzing instances of anger in the two tales upon which I focus throughout this dissertation—“Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich” and “Rapunzel.” Within these tales as codified and remediated by the Grimms, the Walt Disney Company, and DEFA, the male protagonist can enact anger on a male or female antagonist who can then enact their anger on the female protagonist. (266) Indeed, the women, girls, and witches who angrily assert themselves in a direction that counteracts this hierarchy—and thus counteracts their expected gender roles—are punished through the delay of their reward until they repent and learn their lesson or, in the case of the villains, through banishment or bodily harm. Anger in the upper classes is still not acceptable, but when this anger is played out upon someone lower than them, they, especially male royalty, are given the chance to reform without going through the punishment stage. As Bottigheimer states, “[w]e may safely conclude that the general populace, and women in particular, are not allowed to express anger in these tales.” (266) In these remediations, we see that anger continues to be an undesirable emotion in both the Disney and DEFA adaptations of “Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich” and “Rapunzel”.

Der Froschkönig

Anger in the tale of “Der Froschkönig” is enacted by two characters—the young princess who becomes angry at her froggy friend’s impertinence and the king, her father, who reacts with anger when his daughter refuses to keep her promises. First identifying the examples of anger in the Grimm tale, I then examine how the anger is adapted into Disney’s *The Princess and the Frog* and DEFA’s *Der Froschkönig*. Both movies expand the princess’s anger and her subsequent punishment while removing that of the king’s.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the princess never intends to keep her promise in the first place, but the inner monologue included in the Grimms reveals her perceived status in contrast to the frog: “Sie dachte aber ‘was der einfältige Frosch schwätzt, der sitzt im Wasser bei seines Gleichen und quackt, und kann keines Menschen Geselle sein.’” (Grimm, 2 [1857]) (But she thought, “What is this stupid frog trying to say? He just sits here in the water with his own kind and croaks. He cannot be a companion to a human.” trans. Ashliman) The description of the frog as *einfältig*—translatable to oafish, witless, or simple (*einfältig*, dict.cc)—and the verb *schwätzen*—to twaddle, schmooze, or babble (*schwätzen*, dict.cc) indicate that she did not believe the frog to be smart enough to make the deal. Her positioning of him “im Wasser bei seines Gleichen” separates him from her—he is unable to be companion to a human because he is not the same as her. This positioning establishes the perceived power hierarchy (from the princess’s perspective) early in the tale—the frog is beneath her.

To her surprise, the frog follows her to the castle where her father holds her to her promise. As discussed earlier, she must let him sit next to her, eat from her plate, and sleep in

her bed. At each request from the frog, the princess hesitates and must be reminded of her duty by her father. At the frog's request to sleep in her bed, however the king becomes angry. The Grimms conserved a direct description of anger—the first edition states “Da ward der König zornig” (Grimm 4 [1812]) (But the king became angry, trans. Zipes, *Original* 15) and the seventh reads “Der König aber ward zornig” (Grimm 4 [1857]) (The king became angry, trans. Ashliman)—across the seven editions of “Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich.” Unlike the hierarchy established between the princess and the frog at the start of the tale, the Grimms do not include in-text positioning to illustrate the power structure—as a child and a young girl, the princess is under her father's power.

The princess's anger in the Grimms' “Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich” is depicted when the young princess throws her amphibian friend against the wall in a combination of rage and disgust as he requests to sleep in her bed with her:

Als sie aber im Bett lag, kam er gekrochen und sprach “ich bin müde, ich will schlafen so gut wie du; heb mich herauf oder ich sag's deinem Vater.” Da ward sie erst bitterböse, holte ihn herauf und warf ihn aus allen Kräften wider die Wand: “nun wirst du Ruhe haben, du garstiger Frosch.” (Grimm 4 [1857])

As she was lying in bed, he came creeping up to her and said, "I am tired, and I want to sleep as well as you do. Pick me up or I'll tell your father." With that she became bitterly angry and threw him against the wall with all her might. "Now you will have your peace, you disgusting frog!" (Trans. Ashliman)

As set up at the start of the tale, the princess believes the frog to be beneath her and not worthy for human companionship. Using Aristotle's requirement of a perceived slight for *orgē*, the frog's requests to eat off the same plate and drink from the same glass place the two of them on the same level—and the princess perceives this as a downranking. Allowing him to sleep in her bed is the last straw for the young girl, and she responds to this downranking by

picking the frog up and throwing him against the wall.

The princess's throw does not have the initial immediate result she intended however, for rather than being quiet and ending up hurt, the smash against the wall catalyzes the frog's transformation back into his true form: a handsome prince. A closer look at the Grimms' texts from 1812 and 1857, however, reveals that the princess's intent went much further than simply injuring her would-be-bedmate, and that her anger had elevated to the point of murderous rage. The first edition of the *KHM* indicates that the princess intended for the frog to die when she threw him against the wall. The edits to the 1857 edition of the *KHM* eliminate the maiden's murderous motivation, "Als er aber herab fiel, war er kein Frosch, sondern ein Königssohn mit schönen und freundlichen Augen." (Grimms, 4 [1857]) (When he fell down, though, he was no frog, but a king's son with beautiful, friendly eyes. Trans. Zipes, *Original* 15) According to Maria Tatar, this is contrary to expectations in the Grimms' edits of their tales: "[T]he Grimms made a point of adding or intensifying violent episodes." (Tatar, *Hard Facts* 5) This pattern of intensifying violence is evident in the Grimms' editing of "Rumpelstiltskin". He rips himself in two in the latter editions, but the 1812 edition of the *KHM* features a Rumpelstiltskin who angrily runs away (Grimm 255 [1812]). In editing the murderous intent out of their traditional tale, the brothers contradict their own patterns regarding violence. It could be possible to read this particular tale as an anomaly to their patterns, but Tatar also explains how the Grimms edited references to premarital sex, citing how the copy of "Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich" sent to Clemens Brentano depicts the princess lying down next to the prone prince after his transformation (Tatar, *Hard Facts* 8). In later editions, the two do not sleep together but instead go to the king to be married. In reducing the references to sexuality and lessening the intensity

of the princess's violent episode—both contrary to the editing they practiced in the other tales—the brothers made a conscious choice to diminish the princess's angry response in latter editions of the *KHM*. This choice allows the princess character to behave closer to gender expectations without drastically editing the tale.

Despite her angry actions against the frog, the princess in this Grimm tale avoids punishment for her actions. In my reading, this is because the tale establishes early that the frog has a lower status than the princess and she is therefore, according to the anger hierarchy built above, 'allowed' to be assertive and angry at him. In his 2008 article, "What Makes a Repulsive Frog So Appealing: Memetics and Fairy Tales," Zipes disagrees with Bruno Bettelheim's reading of the princess flinging the frog against the wall, which relies primarily on the anxiety of the princess and the need for any feeling—even negative—in order to be able to love. "Anxiety turns into anger and hatred as the princess hurls the frog against the wall. But thus asserting herself [...] the princess transcends her anxiety, and hatred changes into love." (Bettelheim 288) Zipes argues that "Bettelheim's interpretation is overly simplistic and implies that the princess is anxious when she is actually cunning and furious. The princess wants to destroy the frog because he is inadequate and repulsive as a mate." (Zipes, "Repulsive" 116) Zipes' indication that the princess becomes angry and destructive because the frog is not worthy as a mate supports my interpretation that the princess is allowed to enact her anger because the target is of a lower status. In the adaptation of this tale by the Walt Disney Company—but not in the DEFA version—however the princess is aware that the frog is human. Her violence against the frog in this case results in an extended period of suffering in the company of her repulsive would-be husband.

Power dynamics within the Grimms' "Der Froschkönig" are distributed along the same lines as the power structures analyzed throughout this dissertation. The king holds power over his daughter who holds power over the frog. In the same way that the king is able to police what his daughter is and is not allowed to do, so too does the young princess have to *allow* the frog to eat at her plate and sleep in her bed with her. Even though she is disgusted by the frog and angry that he is asking to invade her space, she still has the choice until her father intervenes. Her father is ultimately the one who perpetuates the Aristotelian downgrade—he denies her choice and autonomy in her personal spaces, pushing his authority—yet she is unable to enact her anger and rage against him. Instead, she expresses her anger through violence against the frog—avoiding the punishment dealt to her cinematic sisters.

The DEFA and Disney adaptations of this tale both explore the after-effects of the princess's anger against the frog. Where the plot of the traditional German tale ends with the transformation of the frog and the return of his faithful servant, these two cinematic examples portray how the princess must atone for her anger when she and the prince are both of the same species. Although the action plays in two different species—DEFA's as humans and Disney's as frogs—in each of them, the princess must deal with the effects of losing her power over the prince in his froggy form. No longer a human-over-animal power differential, the princess's anger results in her punishment and return to the power hierarchy in which male characters have power over female characters.

DEFA's 1987 filming of *Der Froschkönig* conserves the princess's violent act of rage—she flings the frog against the wall, and he is transformed into a handsome young man. As seen in Chapter 1, the curse is not completely broken when the princess does not complete the

requirements. She must journey after the frog king in order to eat from his same plate, drink from his same cup, and sleep in the same bed as she had promised. Although this princess also is unaware that the talking frog is actually human, unlike her Grimm counterpart she is punished for her violence through an extended period of isolation. Her punishment serves a dual purpose when she dresses up as a servant to achieve the three requirements to break the curse—the king also learns that those he believes to be lower than him are actually equals.

In this version of “Der Froschkönig”, the princess expresses anger and frustration with the frog multiple times before throwing him against the wall of her bedroom. Similar to the Grimm tale, when the frog makes it into the castle, the princess must be reminded by her father to fulfill the terms of her promises. In terms of plot and dialogue, the narrative of this part of the film is exactly the same, down to the king reminding his daughter to keep the promises she made to someone who helped her in need. It is in the mannerisms of the princess and the king that this adaptation edits the anger and frustration in the tale: when the king tells her to share her cup with the frog, she huffs and overturns the glass. In response to the request to share her plate, she grumpily shoves it toward the frog. Finally, she gets up to angrily leave the room when the frog asks to sleep in her bed. Missing from this adaptation is the early establishment of the frog’s inferiority to the princess as in the Grimm versions. Instead, the princess’s disdain for the frog appears to have no cause other than her ungratefulness. For the GDR, which in the mid 1970s “proclaimed that East Germans had by now developed socialist attitudes such as collectivity, congruity of interests between society and the individual as well as the change [...] to the new principle ‘I am responsible for everything’” (Brock 224), this disdain for another creature is counter to the proper behavior for any young person in the GDR, let alone a young

woman. In addition to not fulfilling her promises as discussed in Chapter 1, the princess acts out as she is asked to follow through.

Henriette's bad attitude toward the frog continues as she leaves the dining room—arms out in front of her, touching the frog as little as possible—and goes up to her room. Along the way, she stops at the balcony, momentarily holding the frog over it in the open air. This threat of death by falling adapts the deadly force intended by the princess in the Grimms' editions of the tales but translates it to an action that is visible on the screen without changing the plot. Her threat also illustrates the power difference between her and the frog prior to the throw against the wall—she has the power to kill him and he, as an animal, is at her mercy.

DEFA's *Froschkönig* conserves the violent anger of the princess when she throws the frog against the wall, but the young girl in the movie does not avoid punishment. When the frog transforms into a human king and falls onto her bed—much to Henriette's delight as she realizes what happened and grins in joy—he makes it very clear that she had not fulfilled the requirements to fully break the curse: “du hast mich aus dem Brunnen befreit... nichts mehr, nichts weniger” (15:17) (you released me from the well—no more, no less). Her anger at being forced to keep a promise to a being she had believed to be beneath her results in her being unable to claim the reward of marriage and companionship found in the Grimm tale. She willingly sets out after the king when he leaves in order to fulfill the requirements of the curse. Posed under the disguise of “Heinrich,” she is able to control her anger and eventually drink from the same cup, eat from the same plate, and sleep in the same bed as the king. Here, instead of Henriette learning to accept the equality of those she considers beneath her, it is the frog-turned-king.

As in the adaptation of “Der Froschkönig” for the silver screen in East Germany, Disney’s 2009 *Princess and the Frog* also delays the reward for the female protagonist when she shows anger and the emotions that bookend anger on Plutchik’s emotion wheel toward the frog. Already portrayed as having general disdain for the idea of kissing a frog, the film’s lead female character, Tiana, becomes first disgusted and then angry when confronted with one that asks her to kiss him to break a curse. This anger, rooted in disgust, aligns better with Bruno Bettelheim’s reading of “Der Froschkönig” as a tale of anxiety turning to anger and then turning to love. In confronting Tiana with an object of her disgust as a potential shortcut to her problems with money, this version of anger in an adaptation of “Der Froschkönig” condemns lowering one’s values in pursuit of an easy win.

Early in *The Princess and the Frog*, when she is still a child, the portrayal of Tiana establishes her affect as somewhere between annoyance and disgust. In the opening scene detailed in Chapter 2, Tiana’s mother reads a storybook version of “The Frog King” for the two little girls—Tiana and Lottie. In this version of “Der Froschkönig,” the frog’s wall walkabout is replaced with the culturally crystallized variant of his transformation—the princess’s kiss. Although Lottie is very obviously willing to “kiss a lot of frogs” to fulfill her dream of becoming a princess, Tiana’s body language and face expresses pure disgust at the thought of smooching an amphibian. This, like the disdainful thoughts of the princess in the Grimms’ tale, foreshadows the reaction she has when she finally comes across a frog. Upon meeting Prince Naveen in his cursed, frog form at the masquerade, she reacts not only with disgust, but fear, and she takes Naveen’s froggy presence and request for a kiss to break the spell as a slight to her sensibilities. Though she doesn’t throw the frog himself, she does throw things at him in an attempt to keep

him away from her, ending by smashing him with a book.

Her violent actions toward him are an attempt to regain the power she loses when faced with the subject of her contempt, disgust, and fear. This fear, opposite to anger on Plutchik's 8-spoke color wheel, is what motivates her to harm the frog. Though it is motivated by fear, the action that she takes would be considered an action of anger when analyzed according to Aristotle's definition—she has responded to a perceived slight and has acted upon a creature with less power than her. For Tiana, this perceived slight is twofold: not only is she confronted by a creature which has long disgusted her, a frog appears each time she acts contrary to her father's lesson and wishes on the evening star. Her first wish was a child in her bedroom immediately after her conversation with her father about dreams and hard work. After her father leaves the room, she runs to her window and makes her wish. Immediately after, a frog appears (6:23). The second occurs right before Naveen appears. After a disastrous moment at Lottie's masquerade ball, Tiana walks onto the balcony and makes the same wish: "please, please, please" (25:46), asking for her dream to come true. The frog is linked to moments when Tiana loses faith in her own ability to achieve her dreams and, like the young princess in the Grimm tale whose anger peaks when the frog asks to sleep in her bed, Naveen asking for a kiss is the final straw for how far she feels she can lower herself. She responds to this down-ranking with both fear and anger to regain control.

In response to her fearful employment of anger, Tiana, like Henriette in *DEFA*, also is made to spend more time with the prince and learn to understand him. In Disney's remediation of the tale, however, Tiana is also transformed into a frog alongside her prince and must fall in love and marry him before she becomes a real princess and able to break the curse. This

extended time with the frog is the same period of atonement seen in response to Tiana's deceitfulness examined in Chapter 1 as well as the transformation connected with her attempt to rise above her class status in Chapter 2. With both of these factors playing a role in catalyzing her transformation into a frog, the connection between punishment and anger is less directly linked in this film than in the DEFA and Grimm versions. She does act in anger, but less overtly than the two other princesses discussed in this section. However, the punishment for her anger, as in the DEFA tale, promotes the lesson of not taking shortcuts to achieve her dreams. Unsurprisingly, this is not the case for Lottie who, as discussed in Chapter 2, is coded as the traditional, white, Disney princess for this film.

In visual representation, position in frames, and in their goals, Tiana and Lottie are positioned as opposites in *The Princess and The Frog*. Their emotions reflect it as well. Where Lottie is often joyous and bubbly, Tiana is stoic or annoyed. Where Tiana remains steady and focused throughout the film, Lottie's mood changes by the minute. Though she always returns to joy, anger is one of the many emotions that comes across her face in any given situation. Lottie believes that she can convince Prince Naveen to marry her (making her into a princess) and convinces her father to throw a masquerade ball. When the prince shows up late, she goes through an almost full range of emotions, from boredom, disgust, anger, and dismay, to hope and eventual joy—all in less than 30 seconds of the film. (22:48–23:16) Lottie's anger, though rare, comes in short waves and burns out quickly. Though Naveen has promised nothing, Lottie's anger in this scene comes at the perceived slight of his shunning. As a character who rarely sees consequences for her actions, she is not obviously punished for her rage. She is a side character, and therefore not destined by Disney to marry the male protagonist, but she does meet one of

his very young family members, and the film makes an implication that she would be willing to marry him—fulfilling her dream of becoming a princess—when he comes of age. A generous reading of this potential marriage for Lottie within the scope of lessons is that she must learn patience and how to wait, but this lesson does not come at anywhere near the cost of Tiana's.

Both Disney and DEFA adapt the anger from the Grimms' "Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich" in similar ways—neither princess is able to break the curse on the first attempt because they have defied acceptable behavior for a woman or a princess through their angry, emotional outburst against the frog. In order to finally break the curse, they both must spend more time with the frog—either as animal or human—than the Grimm counterpart and learn lessons that help them acquire proper behavior for their time and social context. In East Germany, both the princess and the frog king must learn to accept those they treat as lesser as equals—both the princess and the king have to let the other eat, drink, and sleep with them while their potential partner is disguised as a lower class or power rank. This promotes a sense of equality in the GDR, in which the dichotomy between rich and poor or upper and lower class is shown to be irrelevant. The young princess barely blinks in giving up her jewelry and dressing herself as a servant after she is denied the prince because of her anger. In the United States, on the other hand, the film employs a sense of American individualism and puritan work ethic, rejecting shortcuts and pushing Tiana to just simply work harder despite all of the obstacles thrown her way. Both she and her prince learn the lesson that if one works hard enough under capitalism, they can succeed in their dreams.

Rapunzel

When reading the traditional Grimm variants of “Rapunzel,” the primary instance of anger and rage in the tale centers around Mother Gothel’s rage at Rapunzel’s indiscretions with the prince. As discussed in Chapter 1, Gothel’s anger is often interpreted as anger at her charge’s sexual indiscretions with the prince but can also be read as anger at Rapunzel’s lying. Within the discussion of what can cause anger, it follows that Gothel would be angry with Rapunzel for lying, rather than for sleeping with the prince, because the act of lying places the recipient of the lie in a vulnerable, lower position, where the liar has less respect for the recipient. In other words, Gothel’s anger in this scene stems more from her belief that Rapunzel no longer respects her enough to be truthful with her, but instead listens to the prince to make her decisions. Gothel has, indeed, been lowered in rank in Rapunzel’s viewpoint. In both the East German and US-American adaptations Gothel’s rage is conserved, but each film also provides space for Rapunzel and/or her prince to show her anger, illustrating the hierarchy of who is punished for their anger between prince, villain, and princess.

In the Grimm’s 1812 edition of the tale, Mother Gothel’s rage is expressed in two directions on the anger hierarchy—down toward Rapunzel when Gothel discovers the indiscretion with the prince and up toward the prince when he climbs Rapunzel’s shorn locks for the last time. These two instances have already been analyzed for the replacement of the interdiction of sexual activity with a taboo on lying and deception in Chapter 1. In the 1857 edition, however, her rage also includes Rapunzel’s father when he enters her garden for the third time to steal the greens:

Er machte sich also in der Abenddämmerung wieder hinab, als er aber die Mauer herabgeklettert war, erschreck er gewaltig, denn er sah die Zauberin vor sich stehen. “Wie kannst du es wagen,” sprach sie mit zornigem Blick, “in meinen Garten zu steigen und wie ein Dieb mir meine Rapunzeln zu stehlen? das soll dir schlecht bekommen.” (66)

Thus he set forth once again just as it was getting dark. But no sooner than he had climbed over the wall than, to his horror, he saw the sorceress standing there before him. "How can you dare," she asked with an angry look, "to climb into my garden and like a thief to steal my rapunzel? You will pay for this." (trans. Ashliman 2019)

As opposed to the 1812 version in which the anger, or *Zorn*, is not made explicit, the Grimms edits enhance Gothel's power both through the use of *zornig* (angry) and by elevating her magic ability. Shifting from being called a "Fee" (fairy) to a "Zauberin" (enchantress), the 1857 edition much more clearly marks Gothel as a woman with magic—and therefore power. As Dundes would remind us, women who are villains are threats to masculine power and a "threat to the gender hierarchy" which "demands remediation." (*Bad Witches* 12) In adding magic and power as part of her identity as a *Zauberin*, so too did the Grimms add in the ability for her to become angry early on in the tale. Although the anger hierarchy would place the *Zauberin* beneath Rapunzel's father, one reading of this potential break in the hierarchy considers how Gothel's naming him as a *Dieb* or a thief in the tale emphasizes her perceived status over him—his thieving has lowered his rank from her perspective, and she is empowered to enact her anger upon him. However, the payment she demands in her anger mirrors not only the father's theft of the rampion in her garden but also the mother's longing for it. It is only after the father explains that his wife is pregnant that Gothel provides a stipulation for allowing him to rip up her rampion—he must give her the child. She enacts her anger by depriving both him and his wife of the child for which they had longed. While the father receives Gothel's rage and is in immediate danger of bodily harm and fear of the sorceress, it is the mother whose child is promised away while still in her womb. When the child, whom Gothel took in punishment and named Rapunzel, finds herself also pregnant and at the risk of being stolen from the sorceress

by the prince, this anger and the Aristotelian action of anger repeats itself, punishing the young woman with a loss of bodily autonomy.

Walt Disney's *Tangled* expands Gothel's anger at Rapunzel's father from the 1857 Grimm edition to incorporate elements of individualism and greed in the context of hoarding wealth and natural resources. In the opening sequence (0:33–5:15), the voice of Flynn Rider narrates the adapted story of "Rapunzel" up until her encounter with the prince. In this story, having accidentally discovered a magical, youth-restoring flower grown from a drop of sunlight, Gothel hides the bloom from the rest of the world. In a judgement statement that seems to bely the individualism present in earlier fairy-tale adaptations from Disney,³⁶ Flynn explains, "you see, instead of sharing the sun's gift, this woman, Mother Gothel, hoarded its healing power and used it to keep herself young for hundreds of years." (2:02–2:10) When the queen of that land falls ill while pregnant, the king orders his men to search for the flower and, upon its discovery, the blossom is brewed into an infusion which restores the queen to health. As in the Grimms' "Rapunzel," the mother's ingestion of this plant leads to the loss of her child, as the flower's power passes to the baby and Gothel steals the child from her crib. Unlike when Gothel discovers the theft from her garden in the Grimms' version, there is no explicit anger in in this sequence. Instead, Disney's Gothel appears quietly sinister with furrowed brows and no smile, and even when the flower is plucked her eyes widen in fear rather than narrowing in anger. (2:53) Gothel's lack of anger is unsurprising—in Disney's version of the tale Rapunzel's parents are royalty, and, as we saw in Chapter 2, difference in class complicates the hierarchy of power,

³⁶ See Zipes, "Breaking the Disney Spell" for his discussion on the very "American" changes Walt Disney made to the "Schneewittchen" tale, which established a pattern for the following films.

and are here seen to complicate the hierarchy of anger. The Grimms' Gothel was angry with peasants and enacted her anger primarily on the mother. The queen in *Tangled*, on the other hand, is connected to the civil power of the king, which affords her protection from Gothel's potential anger.

Instead of enacting anger upon the king and queen, Gothel's directs it at Rapunzel. As in the Grimm versions when Rapunzel reveals that the outside world has come to her via spending time with the prince, Gothel expresses anger and attempts to downrank Rapunzel whenever the young girl communicates a wish to explore the outside world. This is part of a larger pattern of downranking in which Gothel teases and nitpicks at the girl, raising herself up and cutting Rapunzel's confidence. After establishing Rapunzel's wish to leave the tower to see the lights—the paper lanterns from the castle—that appear each year on her birthday with the song “When Will My Life Begin” (5:57–8:18), the film cuts to the introduction of the prince character and then returns to Rapunzel's tower where Mother Gothel has arrived. Her entrance to the tower plays out similarly to that in the Grimm tales: she calls out “Rapunzel, let down your hair” (9:33). Shortly after, she calls again, “Rapunzel! I'm not getting any younger down here!” (9:46). After Rapunzel pulls her up on her hair, Gothel continues to interrupt and talk over the girl, ignoring her until she catches sight of the two of them in the mirror:

Gothel: “Rapunzel, look in that mirror. You know what I see? I see a strong, confident, beautiful young lady. Oh, look, you're here, too. Hahahahahaha I'm just teasing stop taking everything so seriously.” (10:43–10:58)

This continuous downranking reinforces the power differences between Gothel and Rapunzel, illuminating the already-present naivety of the young girl who has only known the inside of the tower as compared to Gothel's centuries of life out in the world. It is very similar to how the

Grimms' "Der Froschkönig" established the perceived power difference between the princess and the frog by stating her inner thoughts about him. As in that tale, this establishment of power sets up Gothel's position in the anger hierarchy.

Because Gothel disparages her young charge's competence in the outside world, Rapunzel in this version does not reveal her involvement with the 'prince' figure (Flynn Rider—discussed in Chapter 1). Instead, Gothel discovers the intrusion after Rapunzel leaves with him and follows after them. When Mother Gothel discovers a tiara in Rapunzel's abandoned tower, the film frames her in a close-up shot as her eyes narrow and she lets out a huff of air before grabbing a sword as the scene fades to black. (36:25–36:50) This is the first time she becomes mad, but not the last. After tricking Rapunzel into returning with her to the tower, the girl realizes that she is actually the lost princess of the kingdom and angrily confronts Gothel. Here, the young princess—usually at the bottom of the hierarchy—enacts a rage absent from the Grimm tales, physically shouldering Gothel aside. Throughout this confrontation, Gothel attempts to deflect, asking "why would you ask such a ridiculous question?" (1:18:16) and trying to convince Rapunzel that all is well. When Rapunzel vows to never let Gothel use her hair again (1:19:04) and shoves the older woman, Gothel falls against a mirror, breaking it.

The breaking of the mirror, in combination with Rapunzel's vow to deny Gothel the youth-restoring magic of her hair, mirrors Gilbert and Gubar's reading of the queen in "Schneewittchen" and her obsession with the mirror. "To be caught and trapped in a mirror rather than a window, however, is to be driven inward, obsessively studying self-images as if seeking a viable self." (37) So too has Rapunzel—looking out of the window from her tower—mirrored their reading of Snow White's mother as "still to have had prospects; not yet fallen

into sexuality, she looked outward” (37). Rapunzel looks out of the tower into potential—she has her whole life ahead of her. Gothel, on the other hand, is trapped in the mirror, or, in “the patriarchal voice of judgement that rules the Queen’s—and every woman’s—self-evaluation.” (Gilbert and Gubar 38) As in their reading of “Schneewittchen”, in *Tangled*, the relationship between Rapunzel and Gothel is a conflict between a woman with every prospect before her and one whose prime has passed. She is attempting to hold on to her beauty—and thus her power—by any means possible.

Once the mirror breaks—or once Gothel faces the loss of this power and beauty—she shifts from innocent deflection of Rapunzel’s accusations of kidnapping to rage. When Flynn Rider arrives and climbs up Rapunzel’s hair, he discovers the young princess gagged and chained to a support post. Gothel appears behind him, stabbing him in the side. Rapunzel threatens Gothel that she will fight her and try to escape for the rest of her life but promises to comply if she is allowed to save Flynn. Gothel agrees and, as Rapunzel is invoking the restorative magic of her hair, Flynn uses a shard of the broken mirror to cut off her hair. As the magic disappears and the shorn locks turn brown, Gothel screams in rage, “What have you done?” (1:24:44) Her beauty fades, and her hair turns to silver as she runs over to the broken mirror to peer at her reflection in what is left of the mirror. Her rage, enacted upon the male protagonist, is the cause of her undoing and the loss of her access to youth and beauty. Her obsession with her own image—reflected in the mirror—and willingness to do anything to keep it opens the door to Flynn cutting off Rapunzel’s hair. Her rage—and greed and vanity, as narrated at the start of the film—is punished and she loses both her beauty and her life when she falls out of the tower and turns into dust before hitting the ground.

Like Rapunzel in *Tangled*, the Rapunzel in DEFA's 1988 *Rapunzel oder der Zauber der Tränen* expresses her wish to go outside early in the film, reminding Gothel that “du wolltest mir an diesem Geburtstag sagen, warum ich in diesem einsamen Turm leben muss” (you were going to tell me why I have to live in this lonely tower on this birthday) (3:11) Gothel disassembles in this film, too, asking if she is not enough for Rapunzel. Later, when speaking with her prince, Rapunzel explains to him that her mother is afraid to the point of death that Rapunzel might leave her. When Matthias asks if her mother would not be happy that she has met folks in society, Rapunzel answers him, “Es würde ihr Tod sein” (it would kill her) (19:59), clarifying, “die Mutter hat Angst ich könnte sie verlassen” (My mother is afraid that I could leave her) (20:09) In this film, the motivation for Gothel locking Rapunzel up in the tower is directly stated—she wants to keep the girl for herself. **TKGothel's stated motivation, not present in the Grimm or Disney versions of the tale, lends itself to a connection of the character Rapunzel with the people of the GDR who, like the maiden locked in the tower, were secluded from the rest of the world.**

It is not until the enchantress discovers Rapunzel's transgressions that anger comes forth as an action. When Gothel sees Matthias leaving the tower, she calls up. Rapunzel hides the flower given to her by Matthias, looking over her shoulder to reassure herself that there are no traces left of him. When Gothel enters the tower and Rapunzel notes that she's there at an unusual time (32:58), Gothel responds by telling her “Ich hatte Sehnsucht, mein Kind” (I had a longing, my child) (33:01). She then grabs Rapunzel's braid and throws it over the girl's shoulder. Her movements are brusque, and she maintains a stern, drawn expression on her face. She repeatedly appears immediately behind Rapunzel, uncomfortably close, asking her questions

about her day. Although her questions seem innocent—“mein Kind, ist irgendetwas geschehen?” (my child, has anything happened?) (33:33)—Gothel continues to invade Rapunzel’s personal sphere, even physically manipulating the girl’s body to face her as she asks her questions. Rapunzel responds in an increasingly higher voice, dissembling yet expressing a level of fear at Gothel’s questions and actions. Finally, when Rapunzel attempts to lean her head against her, Gothel carefully and controllingly pushes her head away, asking the question central to the analysis on lying and deceit from Chapter 1, “hast du schon lügen gelernt?” (Have you already learned to lie?) (34:15)

Gothel in East Germany does not portray a wild, desperate rage like her counterparts in the Grimm and Disney variants of the “Rapunzel” tale. Her rage is controlled, and she undertakes a calculated series of steps to enact her anger on Rapunzel and on Prince Matthias. With magic, she shears off Rapunzel’s braid. After Matthias climbs the disconnected braid, Gothel magically transports Rapunzel to a glass cage where she can hear nothing and cannot be heard. Seeing this, Matthias turns to Gothel, draws his knife, and threatens, “Ich töte dich, wenn du sie nicht sofort befreist.” (I will kill you if you don’t release her immediately.) (39:08) This princely anger is not represented in the traditional Grimm tale but aligns with the hierarchy identified earlier in this chapter of the male protagonist enacting rage on a female antagonist. He follows through and attempts to stab Gothel, but she magically disappears and he misses. The scene resolves with Gothel promising to free Rapunzel as long as the prince leaves the tower of his own volition. She vows “steig hinab und sie ist frei” (climb down and she is free) (40:56) but releases the braid from the tower as he is on his way down. He falls, like the prince in the Grimm versions, losing his sight from the thorns below. She then abandons Rapunzel in

her tower, intending to never return, but not realizing that the king planned to also brick the tower up.

As discussed previously, it is not Gothel alone who acts as an antagonist in *Rapunzel oder der Zauber der Tränen*. In Chapter 1 I outlined how the king's choice to barricade Rapunzel's tower with her in it places him in a position where he enacts his power by punishing Rapunzel for the deception of the prince. This decision, grounded in his greed and wish for his son to marry the rich-but-ugly princess the king has chosen for him, is accompanied by anger and frustration. Cutting from Gothel's shearing off Rapunzel's braid, the prince returns to the castle only to be stopped by his father who angrily banishes the prince to chambers enclosed with bars on the windows. Matthias escapes with the help of his companion and returns to Rapunzel, only to be blinded when he falls from the tower. In *The Enchanted Screen*, Jack Zipes reads an anticipation of the end of the GDR in the DEFA remediation of *Iron Hans* (Lotz 1988). The king in *Iron Hans* is ineffective due to his disregard of nature, which Zipes reads as commentary on the GDR's lack of ecological care. In *Rapunzel oder der Zauber der Tränen*, the king is ineffective due to his capitalistic greed. Each time his greed comes out, so too does his anger. While this codes his anger as a negative quality, unlike Gothel who removes herself from the narrative at the end of the film, the king is allowed to redeem himself in giving up his greed for riches by allowing Matthias and Rapunzel to marry. **TKThis ending aligns with state ideology on the surface: allowing the king who represents the official power or the state to find redemption while Gothel is expelled from society could indicate the legitimacy of the state's control over the citizens of the GDR. Yet the need for him to give up the motivation for his control over Rapunzel's and Matthias's autonomy indicates a discontent with the motivation and control of**

the regime over its citizens.

Because it is combined with the “Jungfrau Maleen” (Maid Maleen) story—a tale in which, after being locked in her tower for years, a princess journeys and joins her beloved’s kitchen staff and stands in for his self-conscious betrothed in the wedding ceremony—DEFA’s *Rapunzel oder der Zauber der Tränen* includes more instances of anger than the traditional Grimm tale. The ugly princess in the latter half of the film is quick to anger at many different causes. Her ugliness causes her to regularly be downranked by the other characters—especially when compared to the beautiful Rapunzel who takes her place in the wedding—or at the very least she perceives herself to be downranked by them. In reality, the only person who actually downranks her for her ugliness is the king who, when the princess refuses to appear before them until the morning of the wedding asks, “ist die Prinzessen so hässlich, dass man uns den Anblick so lange wie möglich ersparen will?” (is the princess so ugly that one wants to spare us the view as long as possible?) (57:52) The queen, in response, seems uncomfortable with the question, averting her eyes and not responding. This judgement of ugliness from the king is part of his broader characterization as a ruler who values the wrong things, and the ugly, rich princess embodies the same values.

Each time the princess blames her looks for the way she is treated, it is actually because of her bad attitude. Whenever someone mentions it, she pouts, shrieks, or even grunts. When her mother suggests they find a different, beautiful girl to act as the princess, she makes a noise somewhere between a groan and an angry grunt. (1:01:19) They find Rapunzel, who has made her way out of the tower and to the castle kitchen in search of Matthias—who she thinks is a hunter—with the help of the magic crank that used to magically lengthen her hair. When the

ugly princess is unable to repeat the words Rapunzel spoke at the church steps, at the door, and when Matthias gave her the necklace, the ugly princess angrily demands Rapunzel's death to hide her deception. Her anger is ineffective, and she runs away when her duplicity is revealed. With the ugly princess as opposition to Rapunzel's docility and beauty, the film sets up a very clear message on what type of behavior is accepted in society. It is not the angry, self-serving 'ugly' princess, but rather the agreeable, hardworking Rapunzel who is rewarded with love, marriage, and power at the end of her tale.

Conclusion

Both in the traditional tales and in their remediations on the silver screen, who is able to be angry at whom, and who suffers a punishment or a delay of reward because of it, male protagonists tend to enact their anger most often—attacking, manipulating, and fighting the antagonist, male or female. The antagonist in fairy tales often responds to a slight by acting in anger against the protagonist—such as in the tale of “Rapunzel”. Female protagonists in these fairy-tale films often must first prove themselves worthy before being able to respond to their antagonists, though more often they are either rescued by a prince-figure or solve their conflict through non-violent means. Although each category of character throughout the power hierarchy employs anger at some point, it is *who* they become angry at and whether or not they must disappear, die, be punished, or go through a period of repentance to achieve their goal that serves to maintain the hierarchy.

This chapter has identified the portrayal of women's anger in the Grimm canon and the expansion of the punishment phase in response to this misbehavior. Like Chapters 1 and 2, this

chapter examines the dynamic variation and conservation in the DEFA and Disney adaptations of feminine rage and anger. As in Chapter 2, which adds an intersectional lens to the power hierarchy through a discussion of the connections of transformation as punishment in conjunction with race and class status, this chapter moves toward an interdisciplinary application of the methodology, drawing on theories in psychology and philosophy to first identify anger and rage in the literary and cinematic tales. Across the tales analyzed, anger appears throughout the hierarchy—male protagonists, villains, and female protagonists employ anger, as well as characters coded outside of the binary such as Rumpelstiltskin who enacts his anger upon himself. It is only the male protagonists who avoid punishment for this anger. Both the East German and US-American remediations of “Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich” and “Rapunzel” indicate that female anger remains unacceptable and a punishable behavior. This speaks to a more general prohibition of feminine anger, one that reverberates throughout society today in the categorizations of the “Karen” figure and the “angry Black woman.” Women’s anger in these fairy tales—set up against Aristotle’s requirements of power to enact anger as well as the requirement of a perceived slight—becomes delegitimized, resulting in these female protagonists’ disempowerment.

Conclusion

“And they all lived happily ever after.”

“und wenn sie nicht gestorben sind...”

When the young princess throws the frog against the wall in an angry outburst, she pushes against the boundaries of acceptable behavior for a young woman. As her story is adapted to other contexts, this youthful push takes on new meaning which reflects new expectations for behavior in the tale’s target audience. These new meanings illustrate both the changing cultural ‘ingredients’ which render a tale and an adaptation familiar and relatable for the new audience. Analyzing these new elements in the cinematic adaptations of the Grimm tales “Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich” and “Rapunzel”, this dissertation has identified and analyzed the dynamic variation and conservation present across the Grimms’ seven editions of the *KHM* and into the fairy-tale films of the Walt Disney Company in the United States and DEFA in the GDR. Utilizing additional theories that focus on the gendered performance of identity, the model of the Maiden’s Tragedy, intersectionality, and anger theories, I analyze these variants for their power dynamics, illustrating how female protagonists in these tales are punished when they act contrary to the sanctioned behavior for their relative status in the power hierarchy.

To develop this hierarchy of power and gender that is reinforced throughout the tales and adaptations studied in this dissertation, I draw on Burkert’s “Maiden’s Tragedy” and the expansion of the fourth stage in the princess tales and films as it is used to implement punishments in the forms of lost bodily autonomy, transformation, and imprisonment or

banishment in the cinematic adaptations of the tales. From the referent tale of “Rapunzel,” both Disney and DEFA expand the severity of Rapunzel’s punishment when Mother Gothel discovers her liaison with the prince figures. DEFA’s Rapunzel is literally bricked into her tower while Disney’s Rapunzel sees her love interest murdered and her freedom threatened by Mother Gothel’s promise to keep her chained up and forever isolated from the world.

In East Germany, the DEFA fairy-tale film productions benefitted from the *Märchenwelle* in the 1970s, rejuvenating the popularity of the tale and providing the genre legitimacy within the socialist GDR. Drawing on the tales’ potential to illustrate collaboration between classes as well as the prevalence of hard work as a thematic thread through much of the Grimm canon, fairy-tale film in the GDR was able to appropriate the genre for didactic purposes. When the princesses in *Der Froschkönig* (Walter Beck 1988) and *Rapunzel oder der Zauber der Tränen* (Ursula Schmenger 1988) misbehave and are punished, the behaviors they are meant to learn align with socialist values. Henriette, in *Der Froschkönig*, is denied the immediate reward of marriage to the frog-turned-king because she acted out, throwing the creature against the wall rather than being willing to share her plate, cup, and bed with him. In Chapter 1, “Sex, Lies, and Growing Up: The Transition from Sexuality to Deceit as a Marker of Female Adulthood”, I analyze this in conjunction with the princess’s duplicity and unwillingness to keep her promise. In both the Grimms’ version and the East German film, the young princess’s father reminds her multiple times that she must keep her promises, illustrating both the behavior required of her and her father’s power. However, the East German remediation reiterates multiple times the importance of not making promises one cannot keep. When the king transforms out of his froggy skin, he tells her the curse is not fully broken and leaves. Henriette follows him,

encountering the elements of fire, water, and wind, stating each time “ich suche mein Versprechen einzulösen” [*Froschkönig* 28:16] when asked where she is going. Rather than prohibitions against youthful sexual activity, *Der Froschkönig* reflects the GDR’s broadened values regarding sexuality in monogamous, heterosexual relationships and instead imparts lessons centering on truthfulness. This is true, too, for the East German remediation of Rapunzel, in which Gothel banishes Rapunzel and blinds her prince only after the young girl dissembles when asked about the prince’s presence in her tower.

In the United States, Disney’s fairy-tale films turn the tale into something that Jack Zipes describes as “peculiarly American.” (*Breaking the Disney Spell*, 347) This American context is particularly relevant when considering Disney’s adaptation of “Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich.” Instead of a young princess, in this film it is a young, working-class Black woman who is approached by the frog. In Chapter 1, I discuss how the Disney adaptation both conserves and increases the command of the father from the Grimm tale to keep promises despite his absence in the Disney film. In this case, the female protagonist, Tiana, breaks her promise when she attempts to find a short cut for achieving her financial dreams. As a child she had promised her father that she would work hard and not lose sight of community and family in her goals, yet in a moment of desperation, she wishes on the wishing star, immediately after which the frog appears, asking her to kiss him and catalyzing her own transformation into a frog for the majority of the film. Her breaking of the promise is only one part of her misbehavior in this version, though. In Chapter 2, “*Verwünscht und verwandelt: Transformation and Race*”, I analyze how the history of enslavement and racism in the United States creates an almost impossible barrier for Tiana to achieve her goals solely through hard work. While she did reach for an easy

remedy through wishing to sidestep the hard work required of her to achieve her goal, this chapter analyzes her punishment against the backdrop of Disney's pattern of transforming characters of marginalized identities into non-humans. In this way, Tiana's transformation into a frog can be read as a punishment for attempting to move above her station. Expanding the power hierarchy to include both class and race, this chapter demonstrates how the characters of color—even male characters—are subject to the power of any white character.

Transformation in DEFA's *Der Froschkönig* is also applied to remind the characters of acceptable status interactions, but this time only in terms of class. Henriette, in refusing to comply with the frog's wishes to share in her meal and her sleep—both the DEFA and Grimm versions establish the princess's feelings of superiority over the frog—not only is refusing to keep her promise but is also acting in a way that engenders class conflict. The punishment for her anger at the frog's assumption of equality to the point of bodily harm reflects the assumed equality of the classes within the GDR. The anger of the princess is central to the argument of Chapter 3: "*In Ihrem Zorne: Anger and Power*", which explores the representations and motivations for anger in fairy tales through interpretations by Martha Nussbaum and W.V. Harris on Aristotle's definition of *orgē*. Aristotle's definition of anger, which centers around the desire for revenge as a result of a perceived slight, also requires the ability to act against the one with whom you are angry. Thus, the analysis of who is angry in fairy tales and their adaptations simultaneously illuminates the power hierarchy—a reading of who is able to be angry (and enact that anger) with or without punishment is also a reading of power structure. For the female antagonists of the remediations of "Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich" it is once again the angry throw at the wall which demonstrates their unacceptable gendered behavior.

Drawing on the deadly intent of the princess in the early editions of the *KHM*, I outline how the Grimms initially imbued their king's daughter with deadly intent in throwing him against the wall. In this tale of a princess and her froggy foe, it is the response and punishment for the anger rather than the anger which can be analyzed to reveal power structures. In the Grimm tales, the princess immediately either sleeps with the prince or marries him with the blessing of her father. The cinematic adaptations, however, require the princess to go through a period of atonement while spending time with the prince. DEFA portrays this as the princess's own wish—she has learned her lesson to keep her promises and not act in anger and Disney destines their female protagonist to join the frog prince as a fellow amphibian. Fairy-tale cinema in both traditions studied in this dissertation reinforces a hierarchy of power in which male characters are allowed to be angry with little to no consequence—especially when the anger is directed at villains of any gender—and female characters may only be angry and assert this anger downward in the hierarchy toward animals. This allowable anger for the female protagonist comes at a price should she know already that the animal is actually human, though. Villains are able to be angry in any direction of the anger hierarchy, but they are punished with death, disappearance, or self-banishment (in the DEFA tales) once they enact their anger on the male protagonist.

Outlook for Future Research

Within the analysis of power structures as evidenced by the adaptations of sexuality and lies, transformations, and anger there are limitations and potential gaps as well as opportunities for expanded future research. My own positionality as a US-American scholar whose formative

years happened during the renaissance of Disney affords me a much longer history and comfort with the Disney corpus of fairy-tale film than with the DEFA examples. As I have worked with these tales, the element of age as an axis of power and indication of villainhood has surfaced multiple times and, while I touch briefly on it in my analysis of the early translations of “Rapunzel,” this research would benefit from a deeper analysis regarding the changing standards for behavior in fairy-tale women from youth to old age. The analysis of age also opens up another limitation of this work in that it focuses only on two tale examples. This limitation was chosen on purpose, as “Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich” and “Rapunzel” are the only two tales which appear in both corpuses and were adapted at roughly the same time period in the GDR (1988) and the United States (2009 and 2010). While it was advantageous for my research in the course of this dissertation to focus on a relatively small portion of each film company’s history within their political and social contexts, I would like to expand this work to include tales that were adapted earlier in their respective corpuses.

In the same vein of text and film choice, it would be advantageous to investigate sexuality and lying, transformation, and rage across each of the film corpuses of DEFA and Disney individually, and each of these themes could fill its own book. This expanded scope would result in valuable additions to the existing analysis from scholars such as Shen, Zipes, and Davis on the individual film companies and their adaptation history. Focusing on Disney’s animated musicals also opens analysis rooted in music and lyric adaptation. Following the lead of existing scholarship within the field, this work also opens itself up to analysis of these themes beyond the films in the East German and American traditions.

Finally, moving beyond the medium of film provides a significant number of fairy-tale adaptations both in literary and theatrical texts. Specifically in the realm of musical theater, fairy tales have provided rich original recipes for adaptation to the stage. From Rodgers and Hammerstein's 1957 *Cinderella* to Andrew Lloyd Webber's 2021 *Bad Cinderella*, the American musical offers multiple opportunities to examine the remediation of traditional fairy tales to the stage.

This dissertation set out to analyze the depictions of power structures from the Grimms' literary fairy tales to the silver screen by investigating the dynamic variation across versions and variants. Scholarship on the Grimm fairy-tale collections, individual tales, and their cinematic adaptations has provided documentation and rich analysis of the history of adaptation, gender dynamics, feminism, and the impact of the fairy tale on society in both literature and film. My study connects these existing areas of scholarship, providing a comparative analysis of the adaptation practices for two of the largest existing corpuses for fairy-tale film. In my analysis of representations of gendered behavior and enforcement as an indicator of the directionality of power within these tales, I have uncovered patterns of punishable behavior in the realm of lies, social status, and anger absent in the films' literary referents. The dynamic variation in what is portrayed as acceptable behavior from the Grimms to DEFA and Disney speaks to the continued disempowerment of women, people of color, and the working class across the two film traditions, trumping the divide between their respective socialist and capitalist ideologies.

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