

The Eight Elements for Identifying the Story of Snow White: From Grimms' to DEFA to Disney

by
Chloé Johnston

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The Grimms' Brothers left their mark on history when they published their first edition of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen gesammelt durch die Brüder Grimm* (Nursery and Household tales Collected by the Brothers Grimm) in 1812. Among these newly published tales was that of *Snow White*. Within the paradigm of the United States, the most salient example of Grimms' fairy tales are the better-known Disney films that have shaped the childhoods of many generations; starting in 1937, when Disney released its first feature-length animated film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. In 1962, an East German Production Company by the name of *Deutsche Filmaktiengesellschaft* (DEFA), produced their own adaptation of Snow White, *Schneewittchen*. The purpose of this thesis is to highlight that despite differences in time, culture, and medium the story of Snow White is still recognizable with the inclusion of eight core elements. These eight being: Snow White the character, the Evil Queen, the Mirror, the Huntsman, the Seven Dwarfs, the Apple, Snow White's Revival, and her Happily Ever After. The absence of any of the eight elements would not be Snow White but an entirely different story.

Key Words: Snow White, Fairy Tales, Folklore, Disney, DEFA, Grimms

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I understand that my project will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University, Honors College. My signature below authorizes release of my project to any reader upon request.

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Introduction

Though the Brothers Grimm may not be a familiar name to you, the stories they published may be—in one form or another. Snow White, which became a global sensation through Walt Disney's animated film (1937), is just one of the tales transcribed and published by the Brothers Grimm. The story is still recognizable, despite the various changes in culture, time, and medium. Several core components that define the original story remain, including: Snow White, the Evil Queen, the Mirror, the Huntsman, the Seven Dwarfs, the Apple, revival of Snow White (death or self-discovery), and Snow White's happily ever after. With this in mind, a comparison will be drawn between the Grimms' fairy tale Snow White (7th edition), Walt Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, and Gottfried Kolditz's *Schneewittchen*. The intent being to illustrate that these core components are what allow us to recognize a story as Snow White. The absence of the identified elements would depict a different tale altogether.

The Grimm brothers, Jakob (1785-1863) and Wilhelm (1786-1859), grew up in the village of Hanau, Germany where they were known to be inseparable and ever curious (San Souci, 1). Their father was a well-to-do lawyer who died suddenly in 1796, leaving the family in a near destitute state. The brothers struggled to enter high school but managed to succeed despite their financial situation and continued to do so until they became students at the University of Marburg (San Souci, 1). Under the guidance of Karl von Savigny, a young faculty member, the brothers discovered their passion for the German culture and language (Burke, 1).

In approximately 1807, the brothers began collecting the stories that would make the name Grimm world renowned (Bottigheimer, 4). Though both brothers are credited in the introduction of their first edition, the role in which they each played in the gathering, collating,

and editing of these stories is highly debated. Some sources cite Jakob as the collector and Wilhelm the collator (Bottigheimer, xi), and others vice versa.

Wilhelm was the more fervent collector, according to Kathleen Burke (1), enlisting friends, neighbors, old-school friends—anyone who would give him the time and tell a story—whereas, Jakob remained in his study collating the stories as they came. Though unfruitful at times, this hunt for authentic stories continued and by 1812 their collection had grown into “unwieldy stacks” (Burke, 1). At the suggestion of university friend Achim von Arnim, the brothers chose to put their hunt for scholarly perfection to rest and publish the first edition of volume 1 of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen gesammelt durch die Brüder Grimm* (Nursery and Household tales Collected by the Brothers Grimm; Bottigheimer, ix), which would become Germany’s most widely read book—second only to the Bible (Burke, 1).

A few decades prior to the release of the KHM, Germany was in what John Ellis refers to as “cultural poverty.” The sudden transformation of German culture came swiftly in the form of German classicism and, before its light had faded, the age of German romanticism was already there to take its place. The arrival of the Brothers Grimm coincided with the height of German philosophy, music, and literature, and their contribution to German culture came as a means to foster German nationalism (Ellis, 1-2).

Between 1812 and 1858, seven editions of the *Kinder- and Hausmärchen* (KHM), both large and small, were published with a number of alterations and additions (Bottigheimer, 6-7). Though the brothers prided themselves on their “simple and faithfully collected story[ies],” the notion that these tales remained unaltered could not be further from the truth (Bottigheimer, 5). According to John Ellis (viii), “Grimms deliberately, persistently, and completely misrepresented the status of their tales: they made claims for them which they knew to be quite false.” These

alterations or “stylistic changes are consequently brought into question. Even the origins of the stories themselves are debated. All that remains is the intention of the brothers Grimm to present the public with a monument of national folklore (Ellis, 6).

Over time, the tales collected by the brothers have seen many versions, the most memorable are those that were transformed into animated films produced by Walt Disney. Beginning with his first feature-length animated film debuting in 1937, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, Disney set the stage for animation and revolutionized the film industry with a fairy tale that was a far cry from the published story it was based on. In 1941, four years after the release of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, Disney wrote, “We needed this new adventure, this ‘kick in the pants,’ to jar loose some new enthusiasm an inspiration” (Gabler, 215). Though many suggestions were made, it was in May of 1933 that Disney landed on *Snow White*, citing the aesthetic potential with its “seven ‘screwy dwarfs” (Gabler, 216).

According to some historians, the cartoon became a parable of Disney’s own young life with the tyrannical parent, the sentence of drudgery, the promise of a childhood utopia, and the need to conquer the previous generation (Gabler, 216). Aside from Disney’s speculated relationship with the story, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* hit the theaters during a brief window of relative stability in the United States. The film created a sort of distraction for the American people as the Great Depression had recently ended in 1933 and war was steadily brewing in Europe but would not officially break out until September of 1939. Though the United States would remain neutral in the war until the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941.

Two decades after the release of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, the East German film production company Deutsche Filmaktiengesellschaft (DEFA), began producing their own adaptations of their nation's fairy tales. From the company's inception in 1946 to their end in 1992, DEFA made producing children's films, including, fairy tale films, a priority. They had long since discovered the power of teaching through film (Allan & Sanford, 2).

In 1962, DEFA produced their own live-action version of Snow White (*Schneewittchen*) which more closely aligned with the Grimms' version. This lack of deviation from the original tale may be in part due to the political turmoil caused by the Cold War (1947-1991), the recent erection of the Berlin Wall (1961), and the more severe artistic guidelines set by the Socialist Unity Party (SED). Often times, opposition to these guidelines was career ending; being blacklisted meant unemployment with DEFA's monopoly or equaled a one-way ticket to West Germany (Heidushke, 11).

The significance of Snow White, compared to other published Grimms' fairy tales such as *Snow White and Rose Red*, *Rumpelstiltskin*, etc., is due to the number of times it has been replicated and its continued transformation through the years. With the aid of Disney's animated film increasing *Snow Whites* popularity exponentially, the story became easily recognizable as something fit for the screen which prompted replication. Snow White continues to influence and impact the generations that follow.

Starting with the Grimms' version, the changes made to each iteration of Snow White were intentional alterations made to suit the audience it was being released to ("Reception Theory"). The Brothers' Grimm wished to render the tale less offensive to sensibilities and make it, above all else, charming. However, their efforts in censorship practically destroyed the whole point of the story (Ellis, 74). For Disney, these changes were insignificant because the inspiration

for his film was not drawn from the published tale but a play, or film, version that he had watched in his youth (Gabler, 216). The story that Disney presented to anxious audiences in 1937, was a parable of Walt Disney's own young life which simultaneously promoted Great Depression values of hard work and community (Gabler, 217).

Aside from the Disney version, which had thrust the tale of Snow White into the spotlight and was largely based on Disney's childhood experiences, two other films based on the tale present themselves as vastly different from Disney and the Grimms' edition. DEFA used their film as an opportunity to subtly introduce socialist ideals while trying to remain true to the Brothers Grimm (Allan & Sanford, 2). Whether the changes were large or seemingly insignificant, the alterations made in each iteration completely transformed the story of *Snow White*.

Storytelling has a long and impactful history with the human race. From oral tradition passed through generations to written accounts, storytelling gives us a sense of culture, history, and personal identity. For example, the story of Snow White is a very Eurocentric piece of literature and the message it conveys very much reflects the culture of Germany during the early 1800s. Beyond a simple reflection, stories prove a powerful method for promoting social cooperation and the teaching of social norms (Kluger, 1). One of the main contributors to even the alteration of stories in the Grimms' collection was adjusting themes to match social norms for more impressionable audiences. The act of storytelling is a shared experience for all of those that partake, providing a snippet or sample of a time before now. It is through this shared experience that we are able to experience story's like *Snow White*.

Discussion

Emotions are subjective, no two people feel the same, but *Snow White* is more than just a story, it's an experience. Though some elements are stronger than others, from start to finish, it's with the inclusion of the following eight elements that create the experience of *Snow White*, and their absence that transform it into something different.

The following discussion of the eight core elements are applicable to all versions being discussed (Grimms, Disney, and DEFA). Table 1, references the physical manifestation of each element in every iteration of the fairy tale discussed.

Snow White

It seems obvious to point out, that if Snow White did not have “Skin white as snow, lips red as blood, and hair black as ebony,” there would be no story to begin with (Dalton, 178). Having all of those characteristics not only gives her her name but also an unquestionable beauty, beauty that serves as the focal point for this tale.

The character of Snow White is consistently represented as an insecure and naïve princess, who is defined by her beauty. A common story arc exhibits princesses as spoiled and haughty creatures with both beauty and grace, but Snow White seems insecure to lay claim to her position as princess due to maltreatment. Her actions, like running off into the forest or entering the Dwarf's cottage, often present as those of an extremely naïve child. Except for her dealings with the Evil Queen, Snow White manages to survive time and again, seemingly through the blessing of her beauty.

Snow White's personality is wholly defined by her beauty. Her beauty is cause for jealousy from the queen, mercy from the huntsman, kindness from the Dwarfs, and love from the prince. Even though she was found as an intruder in the home of the Dwarf's, they dared to not

wake her as she slept: “Oh heavens! Oh heavens!’ said they, ‘what a beauty she is!’ and they were so much delighted that they would not awaken her” (Dalton, 181). Her beauty is both her greatest strength in terms of survival and her greatest weakness, being viewed as nothing more than “the poor little Snow White was left motherless and alone” (Dalton, 180). As evidenced in Benita Blessings analysis, “Snow White’s true gift and the most important trait in securing a happy future, as echoed in her stepmother’s magic mirror, was her looks” (Blessing, 241).

Snow White’s beauty also manages to highlight one of the largest deficits of her character, her personality or lack thereof. The “superficiality of Snow White’s character,” which is detracted from with her naïve and childlike behavior, is a minor issue when it comes to Snow White (Blessing, 241). We don’t recognize Snow White by her one-dimensional personality but her looks which, again, is what the story centers on.

Further evidencing Snow White’s naïve personality, in both Grimms and DEFA, Snow White is visited by the Evil Queen in disguise on several occasions using various methods to solidify her demise before finally using the iconic red apple. Snow White is warned multiple times in all versions of the story by the Dwarfs, to “beware of strangers” and each time “she allowed herself to be persuaded and opened the door” because she is pleased by the sight of an item (either a comb or corset) the Queen is offering (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*; Dalton, 183). Even in matters of the heart, the princess can think of nothing aside from the Prince who will one day whisk her away and the “nice things he’ll say” (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*).

In the DEFA film *Schneewittchen*, Snow White is also defined by a characteristic of industriousness—a virtue that held significant economic and political value during the postwar reconstruction of the socialist state of the German Democratic Republic (GDR; Shen, 78). Snow White's industriousness is exhibited in the form of going “into the kitchen and works with the kitchen staff to prepare another extravagant dinner ordered by the narcissistic and self-aggrandizing queen” (Shen, 78). These actions serve to endear the dwarfs and the audience, as it is intended to be seen as a contrast between socialism and capitalism (Shen, 78).

The Evil Queen

While Snow White is defined by her beauty, the Evil Queen is defined for her vanity and jealousy that often make it “so that she had no rest day or night.” Her role as the antagonist is a plight to both Snow White and herself (Dalton, 180). An event consistent in each version occurs after the death of the Queen (Snow White's mother), wherein the King remarries a bride “who was very beautiful, but so proud and haughty that she could not bear any one to be better-looking than herself” (Dalton, 178). It is her pathological need to be the most beautiful without competition that forces her constant pursuit of Snow White, even after the princess had been banished to the seven hills with the seven Dwarfs.

The Evil Queen embodies the emotions of envy, vanity, and jealousy with a darkness that Snow White does not possess, compelling her to destroy anything that could challenge her elevated stature. Even after ordering Snow White's death, the Evil Queen goes further to ask for her heart as a trophy of her victory over one who would usurp her. Though only explicitly

present in the Grimms tale, her actions are further illustrated after the Huntsman delivers the organs pilfered from Snow White, “supposing she had eaten the heart and tongue of her daughter-in-law, did not think but that she was above all comparison the most beautiful of every one around” (Dalton, 182). The implication behind the asking for and consuming of her heart seems to express her wish to defile Snow White’s beauty. Opening her chest cavity to transform her into something unseemly or ugly in death while simultaneously extracting her beauty in some twisted fashion.

Though the Evil Queen ultimately fails, she is cited on several occasions as being “frightened” or “terrified” after hearing of Snow White’s survival, despite the numerous attempts which hints at the Evil Queen feeling more than just threatened by her beauty (Dalton, 178-186). The Evil Queen’s desperation to rid the world of Snow White overcomes her, eventually leading her to “tremble and foam with rage...she swore Snow-White should die if it cost her her own life” (Dalton, 184). Being so utterly consumed by these dark emotions, may in part come as a byproduct of a society that values feminine beauty with individual worth. Snow White’s beauty is not just an insult to her vanity but an insult to her very person or existence and being the Queen, this insult can’t go unpunished.

Within the manuscript and first edition, the source of jealousy and competition is the vying for the affection of the King, who is both father and husband. Prior to her birth, Snow White’s mother makes a narcissistic wish to have a beautiful child as an extension of her own

beauty but realizes too late that Snow White is not an extension but an individual person. In later film adaptations, the inclusion of this competition between the Evil Queen and Snow White over the Prince resurfaces this retired idea without the inclusion of intrafamilial violence.

An assertion made only in *Schneewittchen* (DEFA), is a subplot wherein the Evil Queen is also after the affection of the Prince for monetary gain, not love. The Evil Queen, with her boundless greed, has depleted the kingdom's coffers and the arrival of a young, beautiful, and rich Prince leads her to formulate a plan around the marrying of their two kingdoms. This conflict seemingly reignites the competition once held between the Queen (Snow White's mother) and Snow White that was present in the original manuscript (1810) and the first edition (1812) and was eventually removed for its unsavory depiction of intrafamilial violence (Ellis, 74).

The Mirror

If not for the Mirror that consistently keeps the Evil Queen company, the story of Snow White would not be “the heroine's explosion from home, the various threats on her life culminating with apparent death, and her rescue and reawakening,” but rather the tale of a self-important Queen who isolates and neglects her step-daughter (McGlatherly, 56). The phrase “mirror, mirror on the wall, Who is the fairest of us all?” evokes memories of mirrors and magic and tantalizing red apples; just as the Evil Queen is a recognizable villain of vanity, she is nothing without the accompaniment of her magic Mirror. It is the Mirror's response to the Evil Queen's question—“Thou wert the fairest, lady Queen; Snow-White is fairest now, I ween”—

that makes the Evil Queen “mad with jealousy” to the point of killing Snow White (Dalton, 180; *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*).

The Mirror, aside from being her source of vanity, also stands a symbol of power, both magical and otherwise. It’s the magic of the Mirror that makes it distinct. If the Queen didn’t receive responses from the Mirror, it wouldn’t be as enticing as it is. The Mirror would lose its allure as a provider of validation for her narcissistic tendencies.

The importance of the Mirror lies less in its magic but more in its purpose. Because how does the Queen even know that she’s beautiful? How can she be so utterly consumed by her vanity? The object can’t be anything but a Mirror, for how would she even know what she looks like if not for the Mirror displaying her reflection. To further elaborate, Snow White, who is considered the fairest in the land is no more consumed with vanity than she is with caring for seven small men. Though Snow White is constantly labeled a beauty by others, she does not have her own understanding of her looks, not as the Queen does.

The Huntsman

At first look, the Huntsman appears to be the merciful savior of poor Snow White, but it’s not an act of mercy that the Huntsman commits. Rather, he does not have the heart to crush the flower—that is Snow White—himself. Like all others, her beauty played a vital role in her survival by staying his hand. Compared to the sheltered and naïve princess, the Huntsman grew strong and survived using his wits and experiences in the real world. Knowing who the princess is, there’s no doubt that he did not believe in her ability to survive on her own in the wilderness. In both old and new versions, the Huntsman offers words of pity as Snow White disappears into the forest, as illustrated by Dalton (180):

When he drew out his knife to kill her, she began to cry, saying, 'Ah, dear Huntsman, give me my life! I will run into the wild forest, and never come home again.' This speech softened the Hunter's heart, and her beauty so touched him that he had pity on her and said, 'Well, run away then, poor child;' but he thought to himself, 'The wild beasts will soon devour you.' Still he felt as if a stone had been taken from his heart, because her death was not by his hand.

As the Huntsman urges Snow White to run into the woods, knowing full well that she did not have the ability to maintain her own survival, he solidifies that Snow White is truly alone and without an ally. Ultimately, the importance of the Huntsman lies in his ability to choose whether Snow White lives or dies.

Not all versions feature the Huntsman, but the idea remains the same: Snow White's presence is so much a threat to the Queen that she is forced to find ways to have some agent kill her, be it human or nature. This is illustrated in the 1810 manuscript, wherein the Queen chooses to dispose of her troublesome daughter in a very different manner (Ellis, 49):

When the King had gone off to the war, she had her carriage made ready and commanded to be taken with Snow-white to a large, dark forest. But in this same wood there were many very pretty red roses. When she arrived there with her little daughter, she said to her: oh, Snow-white, get out and pick some of the pretty roses for me! And as soon as Snow-white had got out of the carriage to do

as she said, the wheels went off at great speed, but the Queen had commanded it all to happen, because she hoped that the wild animals soon would eat the child.

Snow White is again left to her own devices, expected to be swiftly taken care of by nature because yet another does not wish to dirty their own hands.

The Seven Dwarfs

Further along in the story, after Snow White's unannounced arrival at their cottage and a bit of convincing, the Dwarfs begin to take on the role of a surrogate family. They offer Snow White refuge from the Evil Queen and a sense of belonging that she had yet to feel anywhere before. In Grimms, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, and *Schneewittchen*, Snow White spends her days cooking, cleaning, and waiting for the return of the Dwarfs from the mines. Through her diligent housework and nurturing affect, Snow White endears herself to the dwarfs (Shen, 78; Blessing, 240). Each day before they leave, the Dwarfs issue a warning, "beware of strangers... don't let nothing or no one in the house" (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*).

Though the Dwarfs all come to adore Snow White, her stay with them is always conditional to her upkeep of household duties, reinforcing gender roles. While the state of the house differs from version to version. In Grimms and *Schneewittchen*, everything is neat and well taken care of prior to her arrival, but the state of the house is abysmal in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, which compels Snow White to clean. In *Schneewittchen*, the cleanliness in the house can be attributed to the diligent work of the dwarfs who individually take responsibility for keeping their house clean and organized. This behavior is not a means to masculinize the domestic sphere, rather a clear reference to the Socialist Unity Party's (Sozialistische

Einheitspartei, SED) efforts to teach citizens that “good socialists must be ‘clean and tidy, polite, kind and generally well-behaved’” (Blessing, 240). Regardless of intention, Snow White always agrees, “with all my [her] heart and will” (Dalton, 181).

It is only within the American film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, that outright hostility is offered to Snow White and Disney’s film makes itself abundantly clear on how it feels about gender roles. Upon her arrival, Grumpy, offers phrases such as, “shut up! and tell her to get out” (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*). Even more disturbing are Grumpy’s consistent attacks on Snow White’s femininity, with phrases such as “all females are full of wicked wiles” and “her wiles are beginning to work give em an inch and they’ll walk all over ya” (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*). Following these statements, Snow White makes a wish for Grumpy to like her, pushing her into a position of submission to the outright hostile (borderline verbally abusive) man. This follows the pattern of abuse Snow White saw with her own stepmother, the Evil Queen.

Prior to the release of Disney’s *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, the seven little men that the world became so fond of were nameless. It was Disney who recognized their potential as more unique and engaging elements to telling the story. The voice of both “Sleepy” and “Grumpy,” Pinto Colvig, made the suggestion of giving the Dwarfs names that reflected strong characteristics (*Walt Disney’s Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*). It is further speculated that the names given represent different aspects of the self. For example, “Happy” embraces the world

with joy while “Grumpy” is the part of us that strays towards the negative, and so on and so forth (“Hidden meanings of ‘Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs’”).

The Seven Dwarfs are so unique in and of themselves that their role in the story is quite irreplaceable. It wouldn't feel the same if it was the house of seven large men rather than dwarfs, if anything that would be an entirely different genre of film.

The Apple

The inclusion of obvious gender roles is portrayed in tandem with overtly Christian themes, one of which is the red apple. The Apple that so famously fells Snow White, holds a similar significance as a representation of sin and temptation.

As the story goes, Adam and Eve, the first humans, spend their days living peacefully in the garden of Eden. In this garden they are allowed to eat the fruit off of every tree with the exception of one. Adam and Eve are warned by God that consuming the fruit of this tree will cause them to die. It is after this that Eve is tempted by a snake to eat the apple for “Ye shall not surely die” (Genesis 3:3). Eve is tempted for she “saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes,” and after both Adam and Eve consume the fruit they gain knowledge and are promptly banished from the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:6-7).

The story of Snow White presents the apple in a similar fashion of temptation:

There made an apple of the most deep and subtle poison. Outwardly it looked nice enough, and had rosy cheeks which would make the mouth of every one who looked at it water; but whoever ate the smallest piece of it would surely die (Dalton, 184).

Prior to the appearance of the apple, Snow White is told on several occasions to beware of strangers and to not let anyone in the house, the only rule that applied to her aside from keeping house. It is through the temptation of the Apple's beauty and her own ignorance that, like Eve, Snow White takes a bite of the forbidden fruit. The result of both their actions, are dire in consequence and result in death. Being that the Grimms' brothers followed the Christian tradition very closely in all of their tales, this reference of sin and temptation make sense.

Funnily enough, the story Adam and Eve does not explicitly state that they ate an apple. In the Bible, it simply states that both Adam and Eve ate a "fruit." It's just in the Christian tradition that an apple is assumed to be in the place of this nondescript fruit. Say then, using the lens of Christianity, if it weren't an apple, would the story still feel the same? For both Snow White and Adam and Eve. For example, replace the apple with a banana. Sure, bananas are great, but a banana is not an apple. The same cultural significance cannot be applied to a banana.

The Revival

Presentations of Snow White's miraculous revival from the sleep caused after consuming the deadly apple, vary quite often. The idea of revival—either physical or metaphorical—is always present. Both Grimms and *Schneewittchen* follow the same plot line, a prince travelling through the forest happens upon Snow White in her glass coffin. After reading the golden inscription, the prince requests, "Let me have this case...for I cannot live without Snow-White. I will honour and protect her as long as I live." It is at this point that the Dwarfs take pity on the poor Prince. While they begin to carry Snow White off, someone trips and the shock from the fall removes "the piece of poisoned apple which lay in Snow-White's mouth" (Dalton, 185-6). It

is after the piece of apple is removed from her mouth that Snow White reawakens to meet her Prince.

Even within versions from the Grimm brothers, many variations of a physical revival are found/present. In the 1810 manuscript, there is significance to the scene in where Snow White's father rescues her from death in place of a prince (Ellis, 75-6). Instead of true love's kiss, the King ordered his royal physicians, to revive her by "tying her body to ropes connected to the four corners of a room" (McGlathery, 57). Following the manuscript, the first edition (1812) features another prince who manages to revive Snow White after "two of his disgruntled servants accidentally revive snow white when they strike her in anger, thus dislodging the apple" (McGlatherly, 58).

In Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, we find another representation of a physical revival. Wherein Snow White lay in her coffin surrounded by crying Dwarfs until her Prince charming rides along on a white horse, distraught to find Snow White dead. No words are exchanged as the Prince approaches her lifeless body, and without a second thought the Prince kisses Snow White and with true love's kiss she is miraculously awoken.

Though the element of Revival may not seem unique to Snow White's story, it is necessary for the happy ending to come about which adds to our overall experience of Snow White.

The Happily Ever After

Snow White's story concludes after her miraculous revival. In every iteration without exception she finds her happily ever after, which always means getting married to the Prince and the death or banishing of the Evil Queen. It should be said, that time and culture dictate what is considered a happy ending and in all of the versions presented it just happens to be marriage. Obviously, this is subjective but as time passes who's to say if this will change. Maybe the 2024 Snow White will have something different to offer.

To celebrate their victory over death and the Evil Queen, the wedding is filled "with all the splendor and magnificence proportionate to the happy event" (Dalton, 186). In *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, the two simply ride off into the sunset riding a white horse towards a castle illuminated in gold with the promise of matrimony implied by the gilded castle off in the distance.

Snow White's happy ending is also marked by the death or fall of the Evil Queen, either before or during the wedding's celebration. All Grimms versions (manuscript, first, and final edition) show the Queen forced to wear red-hot iron shoes and dance until she dies; the Queen falls to her death in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Schneewittchen* is the only telling to provide a less violent end to the Queen. Instead, children were taught that happy endings did not require corporal punishment, which "mirrored a postwar aversion to punish even fairy tale creatures by death" (Blessing, 240).

Though the Happily Ever After is very subtle element, if it were to be removed would you still feel the same after the fact? Would your *Snow White* experience mirror all of those

prior? Probably not, because a change in the experience influences the way the story is viewed, slightly obscuring our recognition of it.

Conclusion

“There is no single ‘original’ or ‘authentic’ oral text,” because each retelling would never be told with the exact same wording and the unique context for each retelling produces a variety of oral texts (McGlatherly, 53). When an oral text is then transformed into a more fixed medium, either print or film, the story transforms again taking influence from the text, texture, context, and the interplay of medium and message (McGlatherly, 62). The story of Snow White has taken on many forms, but “The common knowledge of the tales is so profound, so deeply ingrained, that, even without the story being told in full, a reference or a casual hint is enough to communicate the meaning of the essential message of the tale,” (McGlatherly, 62). No matter the version, Snow White would not be *Snow White* if she was without her beauty, untroubled by the Queen, or if the Huntsman had not stayed his hand.

Returning to the purpose of storytelling, the continual recommunication of fairy tales, told in whatever form they take, provide a voice to history. For children, fairy tales can communicate morals and social norms while also providing a place of projection for their own fears or triumphs (Kohler, 1). Snow White proves to be a unique existence in the realm of fairy tales as it continues to be replicated across time, culture, and medium. In this instance, Snow White is one of a kind unto itself and its evolution across time remains ever so important in our communication of this tale.

At its core, the story of *Snow White* is a recognizable tale because of the eight discussed elements that make Snow White what it is. For example, the visually stimulating and wild reimagining of the classic tale in the film *Mirror Mirror*, presents a more progressive spin wherein Snow White is her own rescuer. Released during the height of Katniss Everdeen's, the young female protagonist of "The Hunger Games," fame, Snow White too, is given the opportunity to have a hand in her own happily ever after but with a sword (Dargis, 1).

Even with the "Robin Hood' style twist," involving the dwarfs and Snow White becoming a band of chivalrous thieves and the inclusion of "new visual definitions for 'ornate,' 'opulent' and 'gilded'" with just a little bit more magic, *Mirror Mirror* still manages to include the eight elements (Chang, 1). The film's identity as a more progressive version of the tale still introduces Snow White as a meek and insecure, though her character gains more confidence through the course of the film and concludes with her happily ever after coming in the form of marrying the prince.

As *Mirror Mirror* and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* deviate from the original script, we can still recognize these films as iterations of that same classic tale even with the overt "Disneyfication." The feelings behind Disney alterations to fairy tales, or the "Disneyfication," are mixed at best (Brode & Brode, 2). Some argue that Disney's films were "catastrophic revision[s]" of these tales while others justify the changes, as book-to-film adaptations are often tricky to complete with the original story completely intact—especially because the original Grimms tale

was too rudimentary to be adapted to the screen (Brode & Brode, xiii; Brode & Brode, xiv; Gabler, 217).

The basic plot structure (the eight core components), followed by the other variants of *Snow White*, are still present in Disney's film version making it a legitimate variant in the cycle of *Snow White* tales, even with its technical and dramatic additions (Brode & Brode, 2). Even as the story was altered by Walt Disney (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*) and Gottfried Kolditz (*Schneewittchen*) and Tarsem Singh (*Mirror Mirror*) for their respective films, our perception of these films still identified with our understanding of what we understand the tale of *Snow White* to be, making them all legitimate variants in the cycle.

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Tables and Figures

Table 1

Elements	“Snow White,” Grimms’	“Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs,” Walt Disney	“Schneewittchen,” Gottfried Kolditz
Snow White	The fairest in the land who is defined by beauty and a naïve personality.	The fairest in the land who is defined by beauty and a naïve personality.	The fairest in the land who is defined by beauty and a naïve personality.
Evil Queen	Snow White’s vain and jealous stepmother out for her life.	Snow White’s vain and jealous stepmother out for her life.	Snow White’s vain and jealous stepmother out for her life.
Mirror	A nondescript mirror that magically responds to the Evil Queen.	An ornate mirror depicting a talking mask, that magically responds to the Evil Queen.	An ornate mirror that reflects and magically responds to the Evil Queen.
Huntsman	A Huntsman ordered by the Evil Queen to kill Snow White but doesn’t.	A Huntsman ordered by the Evil Queen to kill Snow White but doesn’t.	A Huntsman ordered by the Evil Queen to kill Snow White but doesn’t.

Seven Dwarfs	A group of seven nameless Dwarfs who work as miners.	A group of seven nameless Dwarfs who work as miners.	A group of seven nameless Dwarfs who work as miners.
Apple	The Evil Queen in disguise offers Snow White a poisoned red apple.	The Evil Queen in disguise offers Snow White a poisoned red apple.	The Evil Queen in disguise offers Snow White a poisoned red apple.
Revival	After falling prey to the apple, Snow White is placed in a glass coffin. The Prince rides along and asks to take her to his castle. When his men go to pick up the coffin, one trips, and the apple stuck in the back of her mouth is dislodged. Waking her once more.	After falling prey to the apple, Snow White is placed in the glass coffin. She remains there until her Prince rides along to give her true love's kiss, that wakes her once more.	After falling prey to the apple, Snow White is placed in a glass coffin. The Prince rides along and asks to take her to his castle. When his the Dwarfs go to pick up the coffin, one trips, and the apple stuck in the back of her mouth is dislodged. Waking her once more.
Happily Ever After	The Prince and Snow White host a grand	Snow White is whisked away on the	The Prince and Snow White host a grand

	<p>wedding and, at the wedding, force the Evil Queen to dance in shoes made of hot iron till she dies.</p>	<p>Prince's white horse as they ride off into the sunset towards the castle. The Evil Queen falls to her death while being chased by the Dwarfs, prior to this.</p>	<p>wedding and, at the wedding, the Evil Queen is invited by the Prince to take a bite of a red apple. The Evil Queen flees from the wedding wherein the Prince orders her to be banished.</p>
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