Ball-Gowned Bookworms, 'Bad' Fairies and Bold Adventurers: Fairy-Tale Films and Feminism

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The release of the live-action *Beauty and the Beast* (Bill Condon, 2017) marks a good point to question exactly what constitutes a 'feminist' fairy-tale film. The original version is often regarded as an innovative landmark (largely due to its heroine's love of books), yet we might ask how such recent releases compare – and whether protagonists now have more in mind than romance. The best-known fairy tales are frequently criticised as anti-feminist (Marcia Lieberman described the likes of 'Cinderella' as 'training manuals for girls')[1] and Disney variants are similarly said to reiterate a patriarchal agenda, equating marriage with female fulfilment.[2] However, certain rewrites aim to provide more progressive messages. Screenwriter Linda Woolverton has made her name through titles such as *Beauty and the Beast* (Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise, 1991), *Alice in Wonderland* (Tim Burton, 2010) and its sequel *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (James Bobin, 2016), as well as her most boldly revisionist work, *Maleficent* (Robert Stromberg, 2014), all of which are infused with a certain 'feminist' sensibility. As Woolverton has stated, 'I have absolutely set out over my career to move the female protagonist forward through time',[3] contending that, from her take on Belle, 'I knew that you couldn't do a throwback Disney victim/heroine. We weren't going to buy it as women after a whole awakening in the 70s. No one is going to accept that … If you don't stay relevant to how people are and how women are approaching life now, it's not going to feel true.'[4] Inspiring as such rhetoric is, we might consider the female roles presented in fairy-tale films today, questioning if we have genuinely moved 'forward' and what truly counts as empowering.

To begin, let us tackle that perennially thorny question: just how do we define a feminist fairy-tale film? An unconventional heroine is a seemingly crucial feature. Belle (Emma Watson) is certainly presented as such. As the lyrics to one song inform us, she's 'a most peculiar mademoiselle … the only bookworm in town' (the live-action version even has her castigated by a headmaster for teaching another girl how to read) yet this is no Malala Yousafzai. Her favoured reading material is *Romeo and Juliet* and

she otherwise conforms to narrative expectation, forfeiting her frail father for the brutish stranger who imprisoned him, her kind heart effacing any more intellectual concerns. The Beast's library may have greater appeal than fancy dresses (a nice moment in the new version has her escape a huge carapace of costume) yet this is about as progressive as it gets and while Belle leaves the restrictions of her small town Villeneuve (named after the *conteuse* who originally devised the tale), her horizons remain limited.

Other texts achieve more by resituating familiar fairy-tale elements in the modern world. The bare bones of the 'Cinderella' tale type, one of the oldest fairy tales in existence, remain recognisable in comedies ranging from teen vehicles such as *A Cinderella Story* (Mark Rosman, 2004), *The Princess Diaries* (Garry Marshall, 2001) and *Ella Enchanted* (Tommy O'Haver, 2004) to more adult versions such as *Miss Congeniality* (Donald Petrie, 2000), *Never Been Kissed* (Raja Gosnell, 1999) and *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* (Joel Zwick, 2002). In each case, although some have derided such films as paying '"lip-service" to feminism',[5] audiences are given heroines with distinctly progressive features – young women who prioritise education and social justice over romance in adolescent form, while more mature examples of the 'downtrodden heroine' triumph over adversity through their abilities rather than by simply attracting a man, proving themselves in the work they do, the talents they discover within themselves, and the confidence this gives them.

That is not to say, however, that feminist influences are evident in all modern fairy-tale films, with a contrary cautionary impulse apparent in narratives that warn against unbridled female ambition, even suggesting that romantic devotion (and a degree of deference when it comes to careers) is the sole legitimate aim for women. The implicit message of *My Best Friend's Wedding* (P.J. Hogan, 1997), *The Devil Wears Prada* (David Frankel, 2006) and *Monster-in-Law* (Robert Luketic, 2005) reiterates the 'humbled heroine' motif of hoary old tales such as 'King Thrushbeard', with haughty females brought down a few pegs in what appears to be a direct rebuff of emancipated ideals.[6] Linda Woolverton may have had a feminist-inspired audience in mind when she gave Belle a love of books and a library in the Beast's castle to keep her a happy captive, yet other films have suggested that too much learning, and a career of one's own, is anathema to true happiness. Should we condemn such fare as justifying claims about fairy tales being a 'training manuals for girls', reiterating an outmoded message about acceptable femininity constituted by humility and an adherence to romantic ideals? A more measured response is to acknowledge that fairy tales have always contained contrasting ideas, to remember that the range of heroines and their allotted roles surpass the best-known trio ('Cinderella', 'Snow White' and 'Sleeping Beauty') and to take note when interesting variations appear. It is perhaps easy to be dismissive, especially as some recent versions offer insipid and

uninspiring protagonists, yet welcome surprises can be found in the most unlikely places. Kenneth Branagh appears to have helmed the live-action *Cinderella* (2016) simply to promote the same 'stars' in his subsequent production of *Romeo and Juliet*, while the two variants of 'Snow White' released in the same year – *Mirror Mirror* (Tarsem Singh, 2012) and *Snow White and the Huntsman* (Rupert Sanders, 2012) – affirm that, even as Snow White has matured, acquiring fighting skills and a social conscience designed to suggest that she is far from a passive princess, she is still hopelessly devoted to a questionable man. Epitomising a third-wave or even post-feminist sensibility, such 'updates' signal an attempt to have it both ways – a heroine that plays a more active role in securing her right to the throne yet who is principally characterised by murderous enmity toward an older female and a dubious alliance with a roguish male.

Lest we become overly discouraged by such fare we should note how *Maleficent*, the prequel tale to 'Sleeping Beauty' (perhaps the least inspiring source in terms of its comatose heroine), radically upends our understanding of the tale. Far from condemning its lead character, the film invites sympathy for Disney's 'mistress of all evil' (as characterised in the original *Sleeping Beauty* (Clyde Geronimi, 1959)) by revealing the reason behind her curse of an innocent child to be far more personal than a missed party invite. Formidable fairy Maleficent (Angelina Jolie) is shown to have been betrayed by her first love, Stefan (Sharlto Copley), in a ruthless bid for power. The violence he subjects her to, whilst asleep, returns us to the original tale by Basile, 'Sun, Moon and Talia', yet far from contriving a dubious family romance from what is, at basis, a sexual assault, Woolverton's script condemns the act. Maleficent trusts her childhood sweetheart, unwittingly drinks the sleeping potion he gives her, and wakes in crippling pain without her wings. Jolie collaborated with Woolverton to think of a reason why a female character would become so embittered, acknowledging sexual violence to be the subtext of the scene and its narrative consequence.[7] If Talia forgives her assault whilst in an enchanted sleep, regarding the children she conceives as ample compensation in restoring her life, Maleficent is enraged by her abuse yet also assuaged by the contrasting emotions her assailant's daughter awakes in her. Stefan's child, Aurora (Elle Fanning), becomes both the misbegotten focus of her rage and the source of her eventual restoration. Radically reworking Disney's hackneyed notion of 'true love's kiss', Maleficent revives the young woman she initially sought to curse, admitting both her wrongdoing and her love. While Prince Philip's kiss proves ineffectual, 'maternal' love is upheld, affirming the bond between the women. An 'evil' fairy is thus presented as mistreated rather than malevolent and still capable of the finer feelings we have come to attribute to approved femininity. Contrite, she undoes her bad magic and forfeits her rule of the Moors (the enchanted forest kingdom) to her foster daughter.

As with *Frozen* (Jennifer Lee and Chris Buck, 2013), another de-Disneyfied hit, a male love interest proves to be unabashedly malign, intent on usurping female power (and decisively punished). Such narratives affirm that feminist fairy-tale criticism has had a discernible influence on popular cultural renditions, repudiating heterosexual romance as a dubious ideal (at best) and upholding female camaraderie as a powerful alliance. That is not to say, however, that romantic concerns are necessarily the main impetus of fairy tales (or the films they have inspired). Indeed, in some cases this ideal has been notably questioned and the uncertain terrain of male/female relations foregrounded instead. Hans Christian Andersen's 'The Little Mermaid' can be understood as warning about the consequence of unrequited love and selfless devotion, its heroine forfeiting not only her voice but her family for an opaque figure who fails to return her affection (a tale that has inspired myriad versions, including Lars von Triers' disturbing *Breaking the Waves* (1996), which seems to champion Andersen's piety, demanding the ultimate sacrifice from its heroine to enter the kingdom of heaven). Perrault's 'Bluebeard' offers an interesting counterpart, with prayer used to stall a murderous spouse after his wife is caught entering the bloody chamber (and witnesses her slain predecessors). Thanks to sibling intervention (a devoted sister raises the alarm) she survives her perilous brush with 'love' and her reward is manifestly material rather than spiritual (unlike the deluded heroine of 'The Little Mermaid' she secures vast riches rather than a soul!). The story's repudiation of romance forms a notable contrast to the likes of 'Beauty and the Beast', warning girls to be wary of duplicitous men. As Maria Tatar has noted, there is a common misperception of 'Bluebeard' as a punishment of female 'curiosity'/infidelity, rather than of male violence,[8] yet Bluebeard's wife is an aspirational female figure, a forerunner of the slasher's Final Girl, as well as the various imperilled wives of thrillers such as *What Lies Beneath* (Robert Zemeckis, 2000) who learn dark secrets about their husbands and put an end to their murderous ways, proving naïveté is not the sole preserve of virginal brides, and far from a desirable quality, with lost innocence a necessary rite of passage.

Female sexuality has always been a potent draw for those interpreting fairy tales (and caring to rewrite them) and another of Perrault's tales, 'Little Red Riding Hood', is especially revealing. Often theorised as warning young women to avoid losing their 'reputation' to predatory men,[9] the narrative is powerfully reclaimed by Angela Carter's story 'The Company of Wolves' (1979), returning us to its oral origins, where its heroine freely explores her sexuality – and survives unscathed. Her retort at the threat of being 'eaten' is to laugh openly at the wolf ('she was nobody's meat') and eagerly join him in bed, an exhilarating revision that has found little equal on screen, including Neil Jordan's version, *The Company of Wolves* (1984), which, despite some collaboration with Carter, falls short of allowing us a bedroom scene (its heroine

transforming into a wolf without any carnal precursor). The more recent *Red Riding Hood* (2011) by *Twilight* director Catherine Hardwicke is even more reticent and was mocked by critics for venturing into Carter territory with a heroine that lacks either sensuality or spirit. What does this suggest about narratives that appear to take inspiration from feminist retellings, and even have a woman calling the shots, yet can offer only fey heroines who have been conspicuously defanged?[10]

If female sexuality remains a troublesome matter in many fairy-tale films, female power is another evident concern, with the main legacy of 'Snow White' – the insecure aging female – casting a long shadow. While Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar cogently identified the voice of the magic mirror as that of the king, imposing patriarchal ideals upon women,[11] vanity is often assumed in film to be an intrinsic female flaw. Even a ridiculously irreverent affair such as *The Brothers Grimm* (Terry Gilliam, 2005) – which rewrites the German scholars as travelling charlatans who fabricate enchantments to make a fast buck – cannot exercise equivalent imagination in depicting its villain: a wicked queen (Monica Bellucci) who has survived centuries by entrancing local men to bring her young girls to restore her beauty (in much the same way as Ravenna (Charlize Theron) sucks the life-blood from females in *Snow White and the Huntsman*). While Bellucci's queen has an apparently progressive counterpart in terms of capable female trapper Angelika (Lena Headey), she is regressively treated: tied up and threatened with sexual assault by an Italian buffoon to allow the male leads a chance to prove themselves as the film's saviours. They rid the village of their evil witch-queen, smashing the mirrors of her enchanted boudoir to reveal the hag beneath the alluring façade, and our postmodern pantomime concludes with any nod to 'feminism' revealed as a joke. Such ventures may take a cue from the 'de-Grimmed' fairy tales explored in print yet prove that, while revisions can sometimes confront expectation, questionable ideas can equally be entrenched. *The Brothers Grimm* may use the same pretence as *The Princess Bride* (Rob Reiner, 1987) – seeming too silly to be taken seriously – yet even if revamped fairy-tale films have their tongue firmly in their cheek we might still question the female roles endorsed. Risible female protagonists such as Princess Buttercup (Robin Wright) may parody the passive trophy figure, waiting to be saved by her 'true love', yet fail to offer any alternative. Still more perniciously, when an apparently assertive female appears this often proves superficial. *Hansel and Gretel: Witch Hunters* (Tommy Wirkola, 2013) may present a tooled-up heroine yet Gemma Arterton's Gretel, much like Headey's trapper, soon dwindles from tough huntress to damsel in distress. Traditional tales thus get a modern makeover, designed to inspire laughs, yet genuinely strong females remain vilified. In this last example bad witches are easily distinguished from good ones through their hideous appearance (and greater power) and spectacularly killed accordingly. Arthouse horror *The Witch* (Robert Eggers, 2015) may aim to be taken

more seriously (providing a degree of verisimilitude with its carefully crafted New England speech and costume) yet remains a curiously backward affirmation of an ignorant belief system: with baby-snatching hags, a naked bacchanal, and a pubescent female recruited by the devil into slaying her own family. Eggers' subtitle 'A New England Folktale' invites us to read the story as fable rather than fact, yet the result is no less disturbing than Wirkola's over-the-top and deliberately disjunctive film, which has characters spout profanities in Tarantino-esque style. In both cases women are either appropriately demure (weak) or demonic.

The witch does get an interesting take in some novel revisions however, including Sondheim's deconstructive fairy-tale musical *Into the Woods*, transferred to screen in another Disney product that doesn't mind venturing into some dark places. The film version (directed by Rob Marshall, 2014) takes familiar fairy-tale motifs and radically upends them. Its credo – 'careful what you wish for' – is sombrely realised as marriages fail, spouses are unfaithful, and loss proves rife, yet its most notable feature is the extent to which Meryl Streep's witch is unfairly blamed when things go wrong for everyone, largely due to their own flaws. In an interesting moment of fairy-tale revisionism she turns on the assembled characters and refutes the villain's role assigned to her, although she doesn't evade the usual female frailties (her own wish is to regain her youth and beauty in the hope this will inspire greater admiration from her daughter). As with the other cases, the coveted dream soon curdles: she loses her power with the acquisition of restored looks, and loses her daughter also.

The mother-daughter relationship is typically fraught in the fairy tale. In many of the best-known tales heroines lose their biological mothers in early infancy and are typically persecuted by resentful replacements.[12] There is some factual evidence for the ubiquity of maternal deaths in the fairy tale, as Marina Warner has argued,[13] especially in an age when childbirth was a potentially fatal endeavour and multiple marriages the norm, but whatever psychological or historical grounds are given to explain the inter-generational rivalry between females, this has also been a crucial point in fairy-tale criticism for feminists, with older females rarely presented as positive figures. The effect of removing mothers from the picture, and depicting female relationships as conflict-ridden and threatening, is that heroines become male-identified, especially as paternal villainy diminished in print and maternal malice was unfairly emphasised in its place. How are young women to find positive female role models among such scenarios? The power of rewritten fairy tales is that new possibilities are offered instead.

The powerful or unorthodox female is a key motif in Woolverton's screenplays, as is their ability to overcome a threatening male adversary. Belle successfully evades the villainous Gaston in *Beauty and the Beast* (and the henchmen that endorse his power) and while *Maleficent*'s fairy leader so threatens the king (in defending her

people's land) that he demands her death, she retains her power, even denuded of wings, and survives both him and his successor. Woolverton's two *Alice* adaptations offer a more laughable villain in terms of foppish fool, Hamish Ascot (Leo Bill), yet he also threatens the heroine in various ways, taking over her father's company when she spurns his engagement proposal and seeking possession of the family's other assets. Some socio-political comment is made about the limited options for a young woman in the Victorian era. Almost forced into marriage by her mother in the first film, Alice (Mia Wasikowska) follows in her father's footsteps instead, becoming an international trader (with her journey to Wonderland presented as an imaginative retreat from a repressive reality). The sequel marks a notable shift in mother-daughter relations. A rip-roaring opening scene shows Alice on the high seas, a daring captain of her father's boat, followed by a dismal return to England where Hamish retains a key stake in her father's business and threatens to seize her mother's home in lieu of her ship. With her freedom curtailed, Alice's imagination offers her only escape, yet the inventiveness of Carroll's books are replaced by a scant tale with a questionable conclusion. Back in Wonderland, Alice is tasked with reuniting the Mad Hatter (Johnny Depp) and his estranged family, and she demonstrates equivalent selflessness on her return to reality, electing to give up her life abroad to help her mother. Mercifully, her mother declines the gesture and both set sail together, forming a rival trade company, an inspiring image of unity that offers one of the film's few highlights.

Despite Woolverton's commendable attempt to provide heroines who flout the conventions of their time, notable restrictions remain. A heroine's love of books may be a new twist to 'Beauty and the Beast' yet is not as radical as it seems if all she yearns for is romance. Equally, while female rage against male violence is powerfully legitimated in her revision of 'Sleeping Beauty', we shouldn't forget that it is also narratively regretted (causing its perpetrator to ultimately cede her power). By the same token, turning Carroll's Alice into a female adventurer fails to inspire as it should when she is a fugitive on home soil. Presenting selflessness as a supreme virtue is also a curiously retrograde message for a film that otherwise intones feminist impulses, particularly in the sequel's critique of misused male power (including Hamish's petulant demands on Alice, the male board's refusal to listen to her ideas, and a sinister attempt to have her committed to an asylum). Disney entered similar territory in *Return to Oz* (Walter Murch, 1985), with Dorothy (Fairuza Balk) threatened with shock treatment when her dreams are regarded as a malady – a dark comment on the patriarchal attempt to curtail the female imagination. Alice escapes the asylum and is ultimately freed from any ties to 'home' yet her liberation is owed in many respects to a mother who finally accepts her differing destiny, and is even inspired to emulate it. Indeed, the most notable aspect of Woolverton's second *Alice* film is its revision of the usual intergenerational conflict

between females. *Brave* (Mark Andrews, Beverley Chapman and Steve Purcell, 2012) set an important precedent in this respect, with a plot (written by Beverley Chapman for her daughter) that stands firmly behind unconventional heroine Merida, challenging the notion of an arranged marriage and championing female sovereignty. It even channels something of Angela Carter – and what Catherine Orenstein refers to as 'beast feminism'[14] – by accidentally transforming her mother into a bear, enabling the formerly frosty Eleanor to finally understand her wild-child daughter, just as taking care of her mother grants Merida a new perspective. Chapman's pioneering achievement with this film reminds us of the benchmark a Disney-owned production can set – and we might justly celebrate the more recent *Moana* (Ron Clements and John Musker, 2016) for providing an equally spirited female who proves her heroic worth to look after her people, led by a remarkable grandmother. Indeed, while some critics paint fairy-tale films with very broad brushstrokes, tending to commend anything 'indie' while lambasting Disney wholesale, we should bear in mind the numerous examples that respond to familiar feminist objections such as the ubiquity of female rivalry, the absence of positive female relations, an unwillingness to present powerful females positively, and a reliance placed on male figures for deliverance.

These examples attest to the need to dispense with assumptions and look closely at the story. Contemporary 'Cinderella' narratives may be pithily derided as 'remakes with a faux feminist touch'[15] yet by insisting that an education and a fulfilling job are more desirable ambitions than getting a prince they offer progressive new inflections on well-worn motifs. Fairy-tale films can entrench some outmoded and objectionable ideas or they can confront them. Parody will only go so far in this respect, often claimed as a necessary ideological weapon yet which is equally liable to misfire. By the same token, assessing a film's worth based on its budget or brand is equally questionable. The current vogue for adapting fairy tales in spectacular fashion has not necessarily provided the most interesting films, admittedly, and while live-action versions of established Disney classics may provide the occasional *Maleficent*, we have also seen relatively uninspired renditions of *Cinderella* and *Beauty and the Beast* that fail to give us anything different. On a more positive note, however, beyond an evident commercial interest in adapting fairy-tales, we have seen some wayward and unusual renditions that aim for something more, with female characters shown to be both flawed and fearless, sometimes paying a tragic price for their mistakes, and sometimes surviving deadly encounters.

Tale of Tales (Matteo Garrore, 2015) takes three tales from the 17th-century collection by Giambattista Basile, mining familiar themes. 'The Queen' is an object lesson not to mess with magic and wish for more than you have, as a necromancer grants the queen's desire for a child at the cost of both her husband's and ultimately

her own life. In 'The Flea' it is a king's turn to prove how foolish he can be, becoming so obsessed with a repulsive insect (an allegory of his own detestable desires?) that he forces his daughter into marrying a brutish ogre, who rapes and imprisons her. The princess escapes and takes violent revenge against her monstrous husband, eventually replacing her father's rule. 'The Two Old Women' provides another indictment of violent abusive men yet also effaces female camaraderie and cunning. When one sister entices a king with her singing, yet keeps him in the dark about her looks, familiar motifs combine (from mythic sirens to a reversal of 'Cupid and Psyche'). He dares to see who he is having sex with and violently flings the old woman out of the window, where a witch happens to intervene. Rejuvenated, she returns to the king, unrecognised, and is wooed into becoming his wife. Her sister is keen to secure the same transformation but told a cruel lie – that she had her skin flayed to get these results – consequently meeting a nasty end. The deceitful bride is also punished, however: returning to her old self at the wedding ceremony she is forced to flee (an aged outcast again, but now alone). If the moral of these last and first tales is to warn against forbidden wishes, the middle story allows its suffering princess the means to triumph by taking charge of her life, refusing to comply with patriarchal demands. She may shed a tear when her father grovels for forgiveness but succeeds to the throne without a consort, having proven her ability to look after herself. Despite originating from a centuries-old collection (in which she is rescued by an old woman and her sons) this updated tale enhances a notable progressive impulse. Akin to the likes of 'Bluebeard' and its screen variants, feminist ideas of female self-preservation are commended – and self-rule (rather than marriage to a prince) becomes the heroine's reward.

As Woolverton has noted, 'many versions of the same story can exist. The purpose is not to wipe out the other one but to do it in a different way'.[16] Roald Dahl's *Revolting Rhymes* (1982) affirms the potential of rewrites to yield new delights, as well as reminding us feminist ideas are not necessarily female-authored. The BBC animation (made in 2016), with additional material from Jan Lachauer and Jakob Schuh, reworks Dahl with some satirical twists. Red Riding Hood (canny enough to keep a pistol in her knickers) is now both a businesswoman (floristry) and a vigilante who takes revenge against greedy pig bankers (adding a pigskin bag to her 'lovely wolf-skin coat'). A modern-day heroine, she appropriates the gun intended to kill Snow White and uses it both to defend herself and attain justice. Subsequently raising two children alone, she is female self-reliance personified, and although very different to Carter's lusty heroine her courage (and survival instincts) are intact.

Despite some novel rewrites fairy-tale films are still viewed with suspicion, provoking continued dissent about what counts as progressive. Some suggest the most innovative gesture is a finale that denies heroines any happy ending, claiming

this serves as the best antidote to the 'Disneyfication' of fairy tales.[17] I am not convinced by this idea, especially given the tragic fate of many modern-day heroines and the suggestion that a repudiation of enchantment (read as delusion) is at all powerful. We might note that Ofelia, the tragic young protagonist of *Pan's Labyrinth* (Guillermo del Toro, 2006), is reborn in another realm; a denouement that, like many a fairy-tale film, attempts to have it both ways – offsetting a hazardous reality with an imaginative alternative. The symbolic shot at the end of the film, of a flower blooming on a seemingly dead bough, serves as a vital sign of hope and renewal (both for fairy tales and the inspiration they offer). Like generations before us (and those who will come after) we need something to believe in: whether it be warning against dubious alliances or confirmation that there is a better future to be had. And we need tough little girls to grow up, to survive and thrive, discover abilities that will help them make it in a less than perfect world, and to keep their wits about them – the wolf-skin coat is optional.

Sue Short

Notes

1. Marcia Lieberman, 'Someday My Prince Will Come: Female Acculturation Through the Fairy Tale', *College English*, vol. 34, no. 3 (Dec., 1972), pp. 383-95; cited in Short, *Fairy Tale and Film: Old Tales with a New Spin* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 23.
2. Jack Zipes, *The Brothers Grimm: from Enchanted Forests to the Modern World* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 60-1.
3. 'First Belle, now Alice: How screenwriter and headbanger Linda Woolverton is remaking Disney heroines for a feminist age', interview with Rebecca Keegan available at http://time.com/4344654/beauty-and-the-beast-linda-woolverton/ (accessed March 2017).
4. 'The Impact of Legendary Linda Woolverton, Writer of *Maleficent', Wide Lantern,* http://widelantern.com/2014/06/the-impact-of-legendary-linda-woolverton-writer-of-maleficent/ (6 September 2014; accessed March 2017).
5. Jack Zipes, *Relentless Progress: The Reconfiguration of Children's Literature, Fairy Tales and Storytelling* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 129.
6. See Maria Tatar, *Off with their Heads!: Fairy Tales and the Culture of Childhood* (Princeton University Press, 1992), for more on this motif.
7. Jolie made the allusion to rape in a BBC Radio 4 Woman's Hour interview (10/6/14), while Woolverton acknowledges the allegory in an interview with Susan Wloszcyna http://www.indiewire.com/2014/05/maleficent-writer-Linda-Woolverton-on-adapting-fairy-tales-for-a-new-generation-206602/ (30 May 2014, accessed March 2017).
8. Tatar, *Secrets Beyond the Door: The Story of Bluebeard and his Wives* (Princeton, 2006), pp. 3-4.
9. Zipes regards Perrault's version of the tale as a 'rape' narrative in *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood: Versions of the Tale in Socio-Cultural Context* (2nd edition, London: Routledge, 1993), while Catherine Orenstein points out the term's meaning as lost virginity and thus a woman's reduced value on the marriage market in *Little Red Riding Hood Uncloaked: Sex, Morality and the Evolution of a Fairy Tale* (New York: Basic Books, 2003).

10. For further discussion of aberrant females in horror, and their kinship with fairy tales, see Short, *Misfit Sisters: Screen Horror as Female Rites of Passage* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).
11. Gilbert and Gubar make this important realisation in 'The Queen's Looking Glass', the opening chapter to *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Imagination* (2nd edition, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), noting the importance placed on female looks is constituted by male estimations of female worth.
12. See Tatar's *The Hard Facts of the Brothers Grimm* (Princeton, 2003) for an interesting account of the editorial (and psychological) reasons for making stepmothers blameworthy.
13. In *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and their Tellers* (London: Vintage, 1995), Marina Warner pays considerable attention to the socio-cultural power dynamics behind the tales.
14. See Orenstein's *Little Red Riding Hood Uncloaked* (2003), specifically its chapter of the same title.
15. Jack Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen: The Unknown History of Fairy-tale Films* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 174.
16. Woolverton in indiewire interview.
17. Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen*, p. 366; Cristina Bacchilega and John Reider, 'Mixing It Up: Generic Complexity and Gender Ideology in Early Twenty-First Century Fairy Tale Films' in *Fairy Tale Films: Visions of Ambiguity*, eds Pauline Greenhill and Sydney Eve Matrix (Utah State University Press, 2010), pp. 32-4.