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University of Tlemcen



Faculty of Letters and languages  
Department of English

**The Woman and the Metaphysical Conceit in the  
Romanticised Postmodern Fairytales *Frozen*, *Frozen 2* and  
*Moana***

*Thesis Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfilment for the Requirements  
of Doctorate Degree in Literature*

**Presented by:**

Mrs. Rania HAMSİ

**Supervised by:**

Prof. Wassila HAMZA REGUIG MOURO

**Board of Examiners:**

Prof. Ilhem SERIR	President	University of Tlemcen
Prof. Wassila HAMZA REGUIG MOURO	Supervisor	University of Tlemcen
Dr. Omar RAHMOUN	Internal Examiner	University of Tlemcen
Prof. Yasmina DJAFRI	External Examiner	University of Mostaganem
Dr. Malika HAMMOUCHE	External Examiner	Graduate School of Economics- Oran

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## *Statement of Originality*

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the degree of Doctorate, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: Rania HAMSI.

Date:

## *Dedication*

*To my late father, may he rest in peace.*

*To my precious son Fazil.*

*To all the persons I love and cherish: My beloved mother,  
husband, sisters and brother, family members, friends and  
colleagues.*

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Solemn gratitude is addressed to all the teachers and mentors belonging to the department of English, University of Tlemcen whom I have had the immense opportunity to encounter and profit ceaselessly from their valuable knowledge and unique comments. You have been reliable counsellors who insightfully provided unwavering support throughout my years of learning.

A special thank goes to my friends and colleagues for their valuable comments and precious suggestions; you have made the writing of this thesis quite enjoyable and worth remembering.

Find here all find here the expression of my earnest gratitude.

## Abstract

Born out of a challenging attempt to unravel the nature of the relationship and connectedness between the woman and nature, hatched from years of research regarding the exploitation of the woman and the degradation of the natural world, the present research work addresses the interrelation between the woman and nature in the selected Walt Disney Princess movies of *Frozen* (2013), *Frozen 2* (2019) and *Moana* (2016). Pertaining a peculiar focus to the functioning of the woman/nature dichotomy, this study aims at revealing the way the woman and the environment are perceived and treated in a completely patriarchal-dominated society. Analyzing female characters endowed with an ecofeminist spirit and attitude, this study uses the feminist ecological philosophy as the theoretical framework upon which women and nature relations are examined, the environmental issues are divulged and the destroying patriarchal beliefs and patterns are exposed. As an entity examined within the gender and ecological contexts, the work claims that there are environmental issues as a result of the dominating patriarchal system. Indeed, the *Frozen* franchise and *Moana* highlight an occurring natural destruction due to male domination; a one which confines and subverts both of the woman and nature. Accordingly, the study demonstrates that the female characters of the selected movies sustain a fundamental role in repairing the existing natural devastation. Throughout feminine values of care and nurturing, the environmental universe is restored. Admittedly, the study reveals the female characters as powerful and determined women fuelled by an oppressive system to bring about change to a long muffled and oppressed world. In a long way towards nature empowerment, the study shows that the female heroines represent an appeal to maturity, and experience an unprecedented journey of self-discovery, affirmation and emancipation. Therefore, the result of the study projects the female characters as empowering leaders capable of restoring the natural world and establishing balance and harmony between humanity and the environment. Certainly, these female leads highlight triumphs of unconditional, female familial love without a male presence, glorifies female bonding and redefines values attributed to female's femininity and males' masculinity.

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# **General Introduction**

## General Introduction

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In an ever-changing world filled with reasonable judgments and logical conceptions; in a cosmos characterized by a continuous evolution of technological inventions, the universe of literature permits a pure evasion for enthusiastic lovers of artistic narration. Exultant for its creativity, acclaimed for its multifariousness, literature lays down a princely assortment of literary movements and genres that mesmerize readers and displace their state of a good sense into a world full of aesthetically inventive creations. Sometimes pleasantly cheerful and at other expressively plaintive, literary writings are said to be the mirror of society; the projector of the unthinkable and the verboten. Reading literature has, ergo, become a settled choice for unravelling the inconceivable and the unutterable.

Recounted to avoid boredom, narrated to echo fears, wounds and desires, marvellous stories do possess outstanding themes and structures that are quite universal. Indeed, quite marvellous and wondrous, and handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth, the wonder tale genre earned an unprecedented status, both as, inspiration for literary artworks, and for the aggregate, lucrative entertainment. Perceived as a social rite depending on a kind of magic pact where the storyteller is a ferryman between generations, the fairy tale or what the Germans call a Märchen is according to Thomson (Thomson, 1946, p. 8) a chronicle of a mind-blowing event believed to have actually occurred. This account may recite a legend of something that took place in ancient times at a particular place—a phenomenon which has rooted itself to that locality, but which will also be recounted with equal conviction of many other places, even in remote parts of the world. It is, for certain, an animate world where animals can talk, where trees can walk, where time and distances dissent, where items possess a magical dimension and where “they lived happily ever after” is the sole motto to end up the story.

Interestingly, what was ordinarily told and spread orally became recorded in antiquity in writing: what was just a tale commonly dispatched orally became, in an impressive and continuous manner, an established literary genre meant to gain large applauses among its lovers. However, with eagerness and greediness, the fairy tale genre enlarged its wings and migrated to the innovative world of cinema.

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Intriguingly, the wonder tale genre marked a remarkable migration to the cinematic field. Revolutionizing the universe of entertainment, the technology of motion-picture and captivating iconography does certainly suit the universe of magic and enchantment. Particularly, regarded as a fundamental element of the cinematic production, fairy tales promoted the rise of the twentieth-century Walt Disney Company. Making of fairy tales their best companion, the Walt Disney Company portrayed an unprecedented commitment to creativity and an unparalleled storytelling which paved the way for the rise of the new cinematic genre of fairy tale movies. To put it another way, the Walt Disney Company celebrated the wonder tale genre throughout the creation of movies which feature compassionate princesses animated so as to compete for pre-eminence in the collective unconsciousness of its spectators.

Deemed, therefore, a reference to whom girls tend to depend on, and regarded as a denotive example of American girlhood, the 2000 Disney Princess Franchise institutionalized itself as the new lens through which the place and the role of women is explored. Not merely perceived as nothing more than a projection for children or as a meaningless tale devoted to entertainment and leisure, the projected films drip with themes and messages quite polar and significant to the shaping perception of the audience. In point of fact, as the very first tales of this nature were indited for the purpose of transmitting meaningful messages, fairy tales managed to convey important lessons, and unequalled learning opportunities of how to live and perceive the world through multiple lenses. Likewise, the Walt Disney Princess Franchise have learned to include fundamental themes divulged throughout interesting female characters.

Projecting heavy meaning, designing complex and oracular characters, the Walt Disney Princess Franchise served as a fundamental medium for displaying the hidden norms, patterns and stereotypes which dominate the society. Indeed, throughout the three generations spanning from 1937- till now, Walt Disney have learned to write more complex and active female characters throughout time. Denoting, therefore, the representation of women as an important theme which dominates all of the movies pertaining to the Princess Franchise, the place women occupied in fairy tale movies

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is of high significance.

Indeed, in a contemporary postmodern era, the Walt Disney Company revised past literary productions emphasizing female characters representation. Adopting new features and patterns, the projected genre of enchantment became characterized by a heightened fictionality, a highlighted ambivalence and transgressiveness of the female heroines and symbolic open-endings which may lack a happy ending. In other words, the cinematic genre of fairy tales took a different path around the turn of the twenty-first century as it displayed a non-conformity to traditional expectations, and a noticeable empowerment of female characters.

Not only revolving around the portrayal of the woman, but the Walt Disney Company did infuse a considerable ecofeminist attitude to its female characters. Mirroring the profound relationship that exists between the woman and the natural world, Walt Disney unravels questions turning around the unjustified oppression of women and the domination of nature, attempting at demonstrating the way both the lives and the status of women are being conjoined to environmental issues.

As a new philosophy born out of an ancient strand, ecofeminism is an activist and academic movement, which denotes critical connections between the domination of women and the exploitation of nature. Fundamental for the abiding life on earth, the woman and nature voice out a history full of confining exploitation. Emerging in the mid-1970s, the feminist environment philosophy emphasizes ethical perspectives on the interconnectedness among women, nonhuman animals and the natural world. In point of fact, the development of ecofeminism as an intellectual strand within feminism is closely related to its history as a transnational social movement which aims at improving women's socioeconomic and political opportunities as real bases for environmental protection and well living conditions.

Putting a strong emphasis on the common exploitation of women and natural resources, ecofeminists initially believe that women have historically, if not naturally, been more concerned about environmental issues than men. Certainly, to activists in the ecology movements, it became quite obvious that science and technology were

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not gender neutral as women around the globe were always the first to protest against natural destruction; the thing which displayed that the oppressive relationship between man and nature, and the exploitative relationship between man and women were closely interrelated.

Regarded as the founder of ecofeminism, the feminist writer Francoise d'Eaubonne is credited for establishing the feminist ecological philosophy both as an ecological philosophy and as a social movement in the early 1970s. Admittedly, after the institution of Ecology-Feminism Centre (Ecologie-Feminisme) in Paris, Francoise d'Eaubonne coined the term 'ecofeminism' in 1974 in *Feminism or Death*. Blaming the patriarchal culture for a noticeable environmental degradation, d'Eaubonne asserts the existence of a unique and significant relationship between women and the natural world, displaying a peculiar call for women's environmental activism to save and restore the Mother Nature.

Joining d'Eaubonne's recognition of the historical relationship between the woman and nature is the cultural anthropologist Sherry Ortner. In her 1974 *Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture*, Ortner argues that women's subordination to men originates from their symbolic relatedness to nature. Another scholar deemed to be the first ecofeminist to discover connections between sexism, racism, environmental destruction, and other forms of domination is the Christian theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether in his *New Woman, New Earth* (1975).

Raising more awareness about this women/nature issue is Susan Griffin. As a poet, essayist, playwright, and screenwriter, Griffin published an extended prose poem in 1978 entitled "Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her" which explores the identification of women with the earth both as a sustenance for humanity and as a victim of the chauvinistic male rage. Following, then, this intellectual assault with a more academic treatise is the environmental historian and philosopher Carolyn Merchant when she published *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*(1980); a writing thoroughly highlighting the way modern science's industry has given access to a simultaneous subordination of nature and exploitation of women. Therefore, it is claimed that this development of ecofeminism

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in scholarly and literary circles during the late 1970s is for certain associated to ecofeminism's highly expanded intellectual and social impact in multiple countries throughout the universe; a one which never ceased to denote that nature is a purely feminist issue.

Indeed, as a feminist issue provides the necessary tools for understanding, erasing and creating alternatives to the exploitation and domination of women, nature is urgently perceived as such. Likewise, the understanding of natural environmental issues allows for the understanding and clarification of how and why women subordination is related to the unjustified exploitation of nature. Not failing in drawing female characters that demonstrate a strong relationship with the natural world and a deep sense of responsibility for restoring the occurring environmental damages is surely the Walt Disney Company. Quite different from the early portrayed gender roles and represented patriarchal and sexist order populated by stereotypes of gender, race and class, the third generation Walt Disney Princess films are filled with female characters possessing an empowered ecofeminist spirit ready to overcome the unthinkable. Elsa, Anna and Moana as the female leads of the *Frozen* franchise and *Moana* unveil the hardships and struggles women go through in order to attain power and restore a so long lost harmony.

In regarding the Walt Disney Princess movies as a means of expression and reportedness upon the socio-historical connectedness between the woman and nature, this humble research work attempts at unravelling the reason behind the occurring destruction in the natural world and the role female characters play in restoring the environmental damage; and by doing so, reconstructing gender roles and gender stereotypes. The endeavor, ergo, places the choice upon the Walt Disney Princess movies of *Frozen* (2013), *Frozen 2* (2019) and *Moana* (2016).

Aiming at delivering subtle hints of feminism in general and ecofeminism in particular, the Walt Disney movies pertaining to Disney's Revival Era of the twenty-first century have exerted a large effect on the perception of the women/nature relationship, men's patriarchal domination and women's role in restoring harmony and peace to the world. Throughout the 2013 released movie of *Frozen*, the two

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sisters, Anna and Elsa, have become an established symbol of ecofeminism and empowerment. In the Kingdom of Arendelle, the king and the queen give birth to two girls: the oldest daughter Elsa is born with the power of creating and controlling ice and snow, and the youngest daughter Anna with, no magical powers indeed. After accidentally injuring her sister with her supernatural powers, Elsa's father decides to confine her during all her childhood in order to teach her how to control and hide her powers. As a nature embodied female character, Elsa is not allowed to reveal her true self and let go of her real abilities. After several years, the day of Elsa's coronation proved to be a disaster as by anger, fear, and discontent, Elsa engenders the Kingdom of Arendelle in an eternal winter. Therefore, the fearless optimist Anna embarks on an epic journey to find her sister, console her, and convince her to make things right without fearing the restrictions and judgments of society.

More determined than ever, the two sisters continue their quest for the truth and set off on a self-discovery journey in *Frozen 2* to attempt at revealing the origins behind Elsa's supernatural powers. Encountering Everest-like conditions, meeting the angry spirits of the Enchanted Forest resumed as water, fire, wind and earth, and which exist as mystical creatures that harness the magic of nature, Elsa is significantly revealed as the Fifth Spirit, i.e.; a human with powers of ice and snow meant to represent the bridge between nature and humanity, and to undo their grandfather's wrong actions. Suggesting that the sisters represent the two sides of the bridge, both Anna and Elsa were required to erase the curse: Elsa by taming three of the spirits and learning the cause of the curse in Ahtohallan, and Anna by destroying the dam and undoing their grandfather's damage.

In placing a close look at *Moana* as well, the female lead character of *Moana* is the source of harmony and peace between nature and humanity. Moana, as Gramma Tala argues (Musker & Clements, 2016) is atypical. Strong-willed, determined, fearless and physically strong and capable, Moana encounters new experiences and ordeals with the utmost seriousness and stands her ground to fight for what she values and dears the most even when all seems lost.

She represents herself as an imposing force and as an intelligent young lady



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despite her size as she meets the most fearsome beasts and impossible obstacles across the seas of Oceania. Chosen by the ocean to restore the heart of Te Fiti, Moana's spirited and tenacious attitude kept her dreams of experiencing life beyond her island alive, and her will to remedy Te Fiti's rift quite bigger. Moana's immense loyalty and great love towards her family, her people and her island played an actual role in her ceaseless fight for a renewed life in the land of Motunui.

Optimistic during times of crisis, powerful during instances of ordeals, the Walt Disney female characters Elsa, Anna and Moana display power and determination. Throughout embarking on ultimate journeys of self-discovery and maturity under the shadow of patriarchy and the strong call of Mother Nature, these female characters knew how to solve problems by their own and, eventually, reconstruct the damages caused by the patriarchal system order. Showcasing a big desire to reinvigorate honour to the legacy their people left for them, Anna, Elsa and Moana exhibit an extraordinary denial on the potentially devastating outcome of their missions, and rather represent an immense desire for voyaging in the tradition of their great ancestors.

In perceiving *Frozen* as a beautifully animated and smartly written work which creates a singular entry to the Disney canon, and *Frozen 2* as a fulgurant adventure into the unknown, and in claiming that the *Moana* movie is beautiful and attractive in various ways thanks to the brilliance of its animators, its dazzling visuals, enjoyable tunes, catchy performances, clever running gags and overall sense of fun, these contemporary Walt Disney Princess Movies denote a true return to the heights of the Disney Renaissance.

Projecting the place and status of women in a contemporary society, the *Frozen* franchise and *Moana* place a great focus on the woman throughout their female heroines all by revealing a community dominated by a patriarchal system. The ecofeminist philosophy has been to a great extent defined in theories, but in the selected postmodern Walt Disney Princess movies, the realistic façade of it is represented. Kindling the muted silences of a forgotten human being gender, these movies engender their female characters in epic journeys where they explore the

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unknown, empower the alienated, revive the hopeless and reconstruct the wounded.

The feminist ecological philosophy is, indeed, utilized in this humble research work as a tool to strengthen the ecofeminist exploration in the selected movies; it is the theoretical framework upon which the woman/nature connectedness is examined within the gender and ecological contexts. Laying down important themes related to marginalization, gender inequities, power imbalance and female empowerment and natural world restoration, this particular investigation raises some questions which constitute the core spirit of this research work:

- How is the feminist ecological philosophy applied to the women and the natural environment in the selected postmodern Walt Disney Princess movies?
- How does the woman/nature dichotomy function in the face of a purely patriarchal system order in the *Frozen* franchise and *Moana*?
- What experience do female characters go through under the call of Mother Nature?
- How is the feminine energy/strength epitomized in the contemporary Disney fairy tales and is there a difference within the masculine?

Accordingly, the following hypotheses are constituted:

- The feminist ecological philosophy is used as the theoretical framework to explore the nature of the women/environment relationship, the environmental issues, the patriarchal system which leads to natural destruction and the role women sustain in repairing the existing natural destruction.
- The *Frozen* franchise and *Moana* highlight the existence of a great natural destruction as a result of the dominant patriarchal system. In other words, treated equally and perceived in the very same manner, nature and the woman go through the same male-dominant beliefs which results in the confinement and subversion of both the woman and nature.
- Under the pure call of Mother Nature, the female characters represent an appeal to the psychological maturation of the modern woman. Deemed

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to be a refugee for unravelling the real self, the female heroines of the *Frozen* movies and *Moana* experience a journey of self-discovery, self-affirmation, female bonding and complete maturity in their long road of saving the earth.

- The female characters of the selected movies play a fundamental role in overcoming the existing natural destruction throughout the use of their feminine values of care and nurturing. Reversing the roles and redefining gender construction, these heroines reveal themselves as powerful leaders capable of restoring life and balance between humanity and the natural world. They, therefore, trace the progress made and depict the power granted to the female protagonists in the Twenty-First Disney Princess movies.

The language of oppression and domination makes clear, therefore, that this is a value-movement: ecofeminists argue that both the exploitation of women and domination of nature are wrong, and must be fought and erased. However, the nature of the connectedness between these twin subversions has been understood in many different ways and, accordingly, the best way of eliminating these twin oppressions is as well contested. To kindle the inquiries this humble research work investigates, this work has been divided into four chapters, pairing in a complementary way to tackle the main interests of this research.

Based on theoretical and methodological tools, the following research will lay down a variety of concepts and elements deemed essential to unravel the sustained inquiries of this work. To begin with, this research work opens up with two successive chapters which establish the theoretical support needed in this thesis. The first chapter is devoted to the exploration of definitions and concepts related to certain literary genres and movements. It touches upon the evolution of fairy tales in time, Romanticism and the way these two have been redefined and rewritten in the postmodernist zeitgeist.

The second chapter, however, considers the representation of a thorough review

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on the tools used to investigate the women/nature dichotomy and functioning in the selected Walt Disney Princess movies: *Frozen* (2013), *Frozen 2* (2019) and *Moana* (2016). It is consecrated to the understanding of the feminist ecological philosophy, the conceit concept in literature, and to the current literature related to film adaptations. In other words, it explores the way these ecological feminist attitudes have been transported and inculcated in cinematic adaptations; mainly the fairy tale cinematic genre of the Walt Disney Company.

As for the third chapter, it will in its turn provide an analysis and synopses of the selected Disney movies. It will display a profound look into the representation of masculinity and femininity in Disney's *Frozen* franchise and *Moana*. It as well unravels the presences of the theme of wilderness in both stories. At the end, it investigates the occurring natural destruction as a result of the dominant patriarchal system.

Representing the pivotal part of this thesis, the fourth chapter is an analysis of the way lead female characters experience self-awakening and attain a maturity under the call of the natural world. Given that the aim of the research is to explore the functioning of the women/nature dichotomy and environmental issues as a result of patriarchy, this chapter mirrors female characters as powerful and determinate young women capable of restoring life to nature and establishing balance between humanity and the environment. In doing so, these female heroines restructure gender roles.

Consequently, on the ground of the investigation maintained and result revealed in the final chapter, it is worth declaring that these female characters are given voice and positive agency to use their ecofeminist spirit and attitude and solve the existing issues in the natural world. In using their feminine values of care and nurture, they redefine the so long established gender roles, let go of their fears, inquiries and uncertainties by giving a voice to both the woman and nature, and ascertain that women can be relied upon to restore and reconstruct harmony and balance.

# Chapter One

*Fairytales between  
Woman and Nature:  
An Act of Propulsive  
Relation*

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1.5. Conclusion

“...Once upon a time – for that is how all stories should begin”

John Connolly in *The Book of Lost Things*

## 1.1. Introduction

Deviceful and originative, discerned by the inventive intentions of their authors and the munificent as well as perceived aesthetic excellence of their execution, literary works have always been regarded as a form of human expression lavish in evincing ideas and circumstances of permanent or universal interest. Indeed, such transcripts in their immeasurably artistic, varied forms intensely intrigue the curiosity of their massive investigators; an aim that this following opening chapter intends to expose. In point of fact, as this research work aspires at divulging the staggering but quite out of the ordinary relationship between women and nature by dint of establishing agonistic comparisons of works from both romantic literature and postmodern fairytales, the setting motive of the present chapter is thoroughly concerned with a spectrum of conceptual definitions and implications.

As Novalis Schriften declares: “Allesistein märchen” (Everything is a fairytale), this chapter first endeavours at bringing into the open an understanding and definition of the quite charming and enchanting fairytale genre along its passionate evolution in time; and the way this account moved from oral to written traditions. Somewhere between “Once Upon a Time” and “They lived happily ever after”, few subjects of thought are as alluring as the history of fairytales; being cognizant of it forth rights one towards the root of fiction.

Moreover, if the history of fairytales is to be envisioned as a map, several monumental landmarks enveloping Charles Perrault, Giambattista Basile and the Grimm Brothers will overrun the surface. Essentially very opulent, this map of fairytales still encompasses, however, unexplored areas and abundant terra incognita, and eagerness to discover new corners of it is everlastingly growing.

Comparably celebrating the fanciful and the imaginary, opposingly possessing



a sceptical attitude to anything that belongs to the past, and rationally rejecting traditions while glorifying reason and science, romantic literature as a true revitalization of wonder tales and Postmodernist zeitgeist as a new tradition of storytelling feature as crucial scopes in this chapter's overview. They essentially set in context the extended metaphor made between the woman and nature. This chapter, therefore, touches upon the evolution of fairy tales in time, the Romantic spirit and its fanciful convictions and the way these two have been redefined and rewritten in the postmodernist zeitgeist giving birth to fairy tales perfectly romanticized in a contemporary era.

## **1.2. Fairy Tales through Time: From Oral to Written Tradition**

Throughout the centuries, the fairy tale genre has undergone numerous phases of change. It has been the subject of interest for several writers. Therefore, it is of fundamental importance to have a look at the way this genre migrated from the oral to the written tradition with all its themes, conventions and characteristics. It is essentially primordial to scrutinize the aggrandizement of the wonder tale genre.

### **1.2.1. Once Upon a Time: The Fairy Tale Genre Defined**

To console the void firmly ingrained in the unpretentious, dogmatic and unidealistic intellect of any human being, the majestic fairy tale genre imports its readers into a universe full of enchantment and fantasy. Originated from the Latin word "Fata", the fairy is the prosopopoeia of the wondrous. Historically designing the Fates, Gods of Hades who swirled the fates of human, fairy tales are short narratives remarkably familiar to their audiences. Filled with ambition and optimism, dripping with fierceness, dullness, intrusiveness and persistence, wonder tales –another alternative term for "fairy tales" from the German Wundermärchen- display untruth and brusquely shape a different world; a counter world, wherein social justice is more promptly reachable than in the real world; wherein malfeasance, hypocrisy, competition and moral corruptions ascertain the result of social and political interactions as well as exasperated social relation states and attributes.

In his book *The Brothers Grimm: Complete Fairy Tales Grimm Vs Disney*, di Kastiaux exclaimed: “Fairy Tales signifies belief in the supernatural not the suspension of belief. We all believe in the extra-ordinary of Once Upon a Time” (cited in Zipes, 2011, p. 222). Falling under the broad definition of fiction particularly when looking at genres of fantasy and science fiction, fairy tale characters, being a resplendent fairy or old, devilish fairy, are inevitably immortal and own supernatural powers allowing them to grant qualities or curse, protect or doom to dolefulness, and finally maledict or confer prosperity.

Furthermore, male figures are more frequently differentiated and pictured as expedient magicians, alleviating dwarfs and giant and disfigured ogres, Griffins, goblins, mermaids, unicorns and above all talking animals certainly add magic and mesmerism to the tale. Instrument of enchantment, the magic rod par excellence; being made of simple wood or real jewel; provides the narrative with much significance and symbolism. Finally, love is vigorously reached after several trials by ordeal to be therefore placed under the enchanting heading “they lived happily ever after”, as asserted Bettelheim (1976):

Struggling against serious difficulties of life is unavoidable and is an integral part of human experience, but if instead of turning back, we firmly face unexpected and often unfamiliar ordeals, we overcome every obstacle and finally end up victorious (Bettelheim, 1976).

Moreover, magic tales display the complex journey of its dashing characters from childhood to adulthood. In this very same context, the Russian philosopher, commentator and folklorist Eliezer Maletinsky (1994) claimed: “it is even possible to say that the fairy tale begins with the breakup of one family and ends with the creation of a new one.” However, it as well depends on what is implied by fairy tale. Specialists in the domain, folklorists, define the fairy tale as a story of magic or wonder tale. Stith Thomson define the fairy tale in his 1977 edition of the *Folktales* as:

A tale of some length involving a succession of motifs or episodes. It moves in an unreal world without definite locality or definite creatures and is filled with the marvelous. In this never-never land, humble heroes kill adversaries, succeed to Kingdoms and marry princesses (Thomson, 1977).

In his statement, Thompson exalts the fairy tale genre claiming that fairy tale readers are allowed to escape life obstacles and delve into a world of bondless leisure. Taking place in a fictitious universe whose time clock is famed, readers run into audacious heroes and fearless heroines who surpass chivalrously every kind of ordeal in order to offer the story a happy ending, and the wonder tale lover an ornate reading.

Indeed, the fairy tale has sure enough been written down as to include the “wondrous element” (Propp, 1968). In other words, to pioneering scholars in the field like Vladimir Propp and Jack Zipes, the wondrous element is a super natural power which brings about change in a character’s life. Propp (1968 p.80 ) further asserts that: “plenty of fairy tales do not become fairy tales when written; some produce fables and others become mythsorepics.”

But, for a folk tale to become a fairy tale, it is compulsory to include a “wondrous element” (Zipes, 2012). Parallely, other scholars suggest that the fairy tale primary feature is to encompass marvelous phenomena; an aspect that the Professor of German and Comparative Literature at the University of Minnesota, Jack Zipes, entitles “the celebration of wondrous change” (Zipes, 2006). Zipes (2015) goes on to confirm in his second edition of *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* that:

Afterwards the protagonist will have encounters with all sorts of characters: a deceitful villain; a mysterious individual or creature, who gives the protagonist gifts. The gifts are often magical agents, which bring about miraculous change. A wonder or miracle is needed to reverse the wheel of fortune (Zipes, 2015).

Undeniably, as now the protagonist is endowed with gifts that usually take the form of three different animals or creatures, or magical wands, he or she is now ready to deal with hostile forces and quite undesirable ordeals. Indeed, everyone and

everything forming up the fairy tale could be transformed; miraculous change occurring in wonder tales could but offer optimism, hope and wish fulfilments.

However, it is worth mentioning that in spite of the many definitions denoted above, the fairy tale as a genre encountered deficient, debatable definitions put forward by curious scholars in the domain. Put differently, as the genre is astonishingly volatile and fluid and undeniably desired from the folk story –a story which recounts a tale created by a community over many generations and passed on orally- the failure to provide one definition is quite predictable and expected. In point of fact, in one of the most groundbreaking descriptions of the struggle by scholars to define the fairy tale, intellectual Donald Haase (2008)remarks:

Despite its currency and apparent simplicity, the term “resists” a universally accepted or universally satisfying definition. For some, the term denotes a specific narrative form with easily identified characteristics, but for others it suggests not a singular genre but an umbrella category under which a variety of other forms may be grouped. Definitions of “fairy tales” often tend to include a litany of characteristics to account for the fact the term has been applied to stories as diverse as “Cinderella”, ”Little Red Riding Hood”, “Hansel and Gretel”, “Jack and the Beanstalk”, “Lucky Hans”, “Bluebeard”, and “Henny-Penny (Haase, 2008, p. 150) .

In addition to that, disagreement in the terminology of the genre merits to be conjured up to the surface. For English literary criticism scholars, works in this genre are pinpointed as “fairy tales”, “art-tales”, “literary fairy tale”, and more often “fantasy”. In Scandinavian criticism, originating mainly from the German terms “Kunstmärchen”, Scandinavian critics lay down various terms, but not commonly employed, as “Saga” or “Konstsaga”. Moreover, embracing the same meaning as “Konstsaga”, both literary adaptations and artistic stimulations of fairy tales were entitled “literary tale” in the extensive Russian and Soviet literary criticism.

Notwithstanding, despite the quite alluring disagreement in the fairy tale genre definition and intriguing debatable terminological confusion among literature traditions and meaning, wonder tales still produce a magical state of reality throughout leading to enchantment, astonishment and wonder. Indeed, a genre containing much excitement and upheavals insert avidness to explore new corners of it; a particular desire to scrutinize the place where everything started: where fairy tales sprung into being.

### **1.2.2. Roots and Origins: Birth of the Marvellous**

“Once upon a time – for that is how all stories should begin” (Connolly, 2006). Indeed, as “Mär” stems and is the diminutive of the old German word “Märchen”- signifying a little story of wonder- altogether with the very common as well as prevailing beginning of “Once Upon a Time”, a fairy tale or märchen dates certainly back to a very long time ago when telling stories by means of mouth was of immense popularity. Undeniably derivative of the “folk tale”, which is a tale created by a community over many generations and handed down among the common folk by word of mouth, the fairy tale is a sub-class of the folk story as Professor of English Steven Swann Jones (1995) asserts: “The oldest forms, from Panchatantra to the Pentamerone, show considerable reworking from the oral form” (p. 36).

In fact, as aged as the human’s ability of producing words, the oral tradition of the wonder tale came long before the spoken versions of tales were considered. Put in other words, fairy tales’ ultimate origins date back about 5000 years as tales were only told and not written down.

In truth, to Andrew Teverson (2013) similar stories and plots “begin(s) to appear in writing between 1250 and 2000 years before the birth of Christ”(p. 42). Earlier and in the very same context, Zipes (2012) declares that “though it is impossible to trace the historical origins and evolution of fairy tales to a particular time or place, we do know that humans began telling tales as soon as they developed the capacity of speech”(p. 96). Scholar J.L Dessalles (2007) goes on even to claim that “they may have even used sign language before speech originated to communicate vital

information for responding and adapting to their environment for survival”(p. 145). These tales were, therefore, simply told to communicate knowledge and experience, to warn about danger, to explain what seemed inexplicable and to merely deliver magic, miracles and fantasy.

For that particular purpose, Marina Warner commented more than once that “mass literacy is a recent phenomenon” (cited in Zipes, 2012, p. 97). A claim that goes conjointly with Zipes (Zipes, 2012) avouchment: “Fairy tales are rooted in oral traditions that eventually engendered literary tales such as those by Charles Perrault, the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen” (Zipes, 2012, p. 96). He further adds that “these oral tales were never given titles, nor did they exist in the form in which they are told, printed, painted, recorded, performed and filmed today” (Zipes, 2012, p. 96).

However, it is worth mentioning that it was only in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries that folklorists elucidated few enigmas surrounding the genre’s origins. This investigation laid a serious dichotomy of Print Vs Oral controversy by intellectuals like Wilem de Blécourt in *Tales of Magic, Tales of Print* (2011) and Ruth Bottigheimer in *Fairy Tales: A New History* (2009); all promoting the idea that fairy tales have literary rather than oral origins. Indeed, folklore scholars generally highlight a clear distinction between the wonder folk tale and the literary fairy tale pinpointing that the former originates in oral traditions throughout the world, and the latter stems from the oral traditions through the arousing mediation of print manuscript.

One of the contemporary German scholars to analyze and expose the distinction between the oral folk tale and the literary fairy tale is Jens Tismar; the owner of two important studies: *Kunstmärchen* (1977) and *Das dentshe kuntmärchen des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* (1981). In his 2015 second edition of *Kunstmärchen*, Tismar says that the literary fairy tale (das kunstmärchen) as a genre:

Distinguishes itself from the oral folk tale (das Volksmärchen) in so far as it is written by a single identifiable author; it is thus synthetic, artificial, and elaborate in comparison to the indigenous formation of the folk tale that emanates from communities and tends to be simple and anonymous. The difference between the literary fairy tale and the oral folk tale do not imply that one genre is better than the other; in fact, the literary fairy tale is not an independent genre but can only be understood and defined by its relationship to the oral tales as well as to the legend, novella, novel, and other lit fairy tales that it uses, adapts, and remodels during the narrative conception of the author (Tismar, 2015).

Certainly, Tismar's principles are quite informative when addressing the distinguishing features of the literary fairy tale. Dreadfully impressive, the literary fairy tale did impose itself as a genre by befitting various topoi, signs, motifs and characters from folklore and, then, adorning them with sophisticated elements from other literary genres. Put differently, as more and more fairy tales were codified in the fortieth, fiftieth, sixtieth and seventieth centuries, the reading public formed by the aristocracy, clergy and middle classes unpredictively grew bigger; an adding motive for the literary fairy tale to establish its own enchanting conventions and magical fundamental plot principles.

Howbeit the existing conflictual Print Vs Oral dichotomy, the distinction between the oral folk tale and the literary fairy tale carefully conserves the unique socio-historical nature of the genre. It is indeed this appealing distinction that displays the magic of the genre while at the same time permitting its curious investigators to cultivate it so it never stops flourishing.

Investigating a route from points further fast, the wonder tale genre owes as well much of its origins to the *Arabian Nights*; the also known as *The Thousands and One Nights*. Originally, an epic collection of oriental tales in the Arabic language, *Alf Laila Wa-Laila* (in Arabic) highly evolved into a puissant vehicle for western fantasy writing since the early eighteenth century. Portraying a fascinating development from the oriental oral and literary tradition of the Middle Ages, into a classic work of

Western readers, the *Arabian Nights* possess a quite long and convoluted history which unveils the narrative structure's complexity; one astonishing story evokes the other so as to constantly open wide horizons for imagination and draw the reader into a constraint free narrative whirlpool.

The very first documentary evidence for the Arabic title, however, belongs to the notebook of a Jewish book dealer from Cairo around the year 1550. Moreover, Zipes (2015) sustains that “the oldest preserved manuscripts, comprising a core corpus of about 270 nights, appear to date from the 15<sup>th</sup> century” (p. 24). He further denotes that “the tales in the collection can be traced to three ancient oral cultures, Indian, Persian and Arab, and they probably circulated in the vernacular hundreds of years before they were written down sometime between the ninth and the fifteenth centuries” (ibid). In addition, displaying the framework story of a caliph who, for three years, murders a new wife each night after taking her maidenhead, the evident model for the literary versions of the narratives was a Persian book under the name of *Hazar Afsaneh (A Thousand Tales)* translated into Arabic in the ninth century.

Moving onto the next seven centuries, one could notice that various storytellers and scholars started recording the tales from this collection and shape them either differently or within the framework of the Scheherazade/Shahryar narrative. Tellers and writers, greatly different in styles and age, were anonymous sharing a distinguishing feature which is writing in the colloquial but quite peculiar in grammar and syntax language called Middle Arabic. By the fiftieth century, however, there were

Three distinct layers that could be detected in the nucleus of what became known as *The Thousands and One Nights*: (1) Persian tales that had some Indian elements and had been adapted into Arabic by the tenth century; (2) tales recorded in Baghdad between the tenth and twelfth centuries; (3) stories written down in Egypt between the eleventh and fortieth centuries” (Zipes, 2015, p. 24).

Becoming, hence, the tradition of the upcoming centuries, the *Nights* exhibited four



authoritative Arabic editions known as: *Calcutta I*, 1814, 2vols (also called *Shirwanee edn*), *Bulak*, 1835 (also called the *Cairo Edition*), *Calcutta II*, 1839-42 (also called *W.H. Macnaghten edn*), and finally *Breslau*, 1825-38 (also called *Maximilian Habicht*).

Another crucial element part of the intriguing tradition of the *Nights* is the various translations, which is a vital tool to preserve literature and establish communication between different cultures offering a much larger audience for years to come. Indeed, a part from Richard Burton's unexpurgated translation named *The Book of The Thousands Nights and a Night*, Antoine Galland was the first European translator publishing *Les Mille et une Nuits* in twelve volumes from 1704 to 1717. Relying on a four-volume Arabic collection, Galland added few stories, such as *Aladin and the wonderful Lamp* or *Alibaba and the Forty Thieves*, which were told and written to him by Youhanna Diab or Hanna Diab –a Maronite Christian Arab from Aleppo.

Framed to arouse curiosity, wonder and astonishment in the public, *The Thousands and One Nights'* powerful figures do awaken emotions in their audience who typically demands for yet another story. The frame narrative of Scheherazade and the Sultan Shahryar, for instance, generates a parallel of series of intertwined tales told to delay and save from unpleasant disaster. Author of *The Art of Story-Telling: A Literary Study of the Thousand and One Nights*, Mia. I Gerhardt (1963) says that "the fairy tales in the *Arabian Nights* are classifiable thematically: powerful demon stories, talisman stories where a magical object protects and guides the hero, quest stories, transformation tales, and tales of demons under restraint" (p. 368).

Veritably, in this huge collection only one true fairy appears in the Persian story of *Ahmed and Peri Banu*, but frequently coming into court is the 'ifrit' diversely translated as 'demon', 'genius' or 'jinni'. A story in which such character is present is *The Trader and the Jinni*. In it, a powerful ifrit craving revenge for the death of his son is being stopped by a series of tales affiliated by three passing Sheikhs, who negotiate for the presumed assassin's life. Such characters, therefore, provide a quite appealing atmosphere to the tales and compel the genre to maintain its ever

flourishing conventions and influence.

As a conclusion, in regard to the ceaseless development of the fairy tale as a genre in the West, *The Thousand and One Nights* undeniably had a great impact, and played and continues to play a unique role in the development of the literary fairy tale. Indeed, from the moment Antonie Galland “translated and invented *Les Mille et une Nuit*, the format, style and motifs of the so-called *Arabian tales* had a profound effect on how other European and American writers were to define and conceive fairy tales” (Zipes, 2015, p. 25).

Considering the history of the fairy tale from an antithetic version, wonder tales as literature for children do fulfil a large place in the genre’s rootage and origins. Verily, besides folktales and the *Arabian Nights* as prominent landmarks in the genre’s historical map, fairy tales as literature for children do undertake a large corner of it. In other words, wonder tales as an entertaining unique literary writing style supplies a crucial place in the genre’s rootage and origins. As a matter of fact, though highly complex to trace the first children’s fairy story due to children literature oral tradition, the chapbook –a small book made of a single sheet faded several times containing poems, fairy tales and plays- was interestingly an early form of literature accessible to children.

“Provocative and persuasive” as denoted by The Boston Globe, but as well “a splendid achievement brimming with useful ideas, with insights into how young children read and understand, and most of all overflowing with a realistic optimism and with an experienced and therapeutic good will”, as claimed Harold Bloom in The New York Review of Books, fairy tales suit the minds of both creative and average children leading to an appreciation of all higher things in life.

The poet Louis MacNeice claims that;

Real fairy stories always meant much to me as a person, even when I was at a public school where to admit this meant losing a face. Contrary to what many people say even now, a fairy story, at least of the classical folk variety, is a much more solid affair than the average

naturalistic novel, whose hooks go little deeper than a gossip column. From folk tales and sophisticated fairy tales such as Hans Andersen's or Norse mythology and stories like Alice books and *Water Babies* I graduated, at about the age of twelve, to the *Faerie Queen* (cited in Bettelheim, 1976).

Unlike any other form of literature, wonder tales help the child discover his identity all by suggesting various experiences needed to develop his character further. They also evince that a good rewardful life is one's reach despite hardships –but only if one does not fear facing the hazardous struggles without which one can never reach true identity. These stories, in fact, promise that if a child dares to confront and defy the unknown and the dreadful, he will succeed, as benevolent power will come to his aid. In the very same context, literary critics such as G.K Chesterton and C.S Lewis assert that fairy stories are “spiritual explorations” and hence “the most life-like” since they unveil “human life as seen, or felt, or divined from the inside” (cited in Bettelheim, 1976).

Moreover, equally enchanted by the genre of magical stories; just like immeasurable millions of children throughout the ages, the world-famous Charles Dickens deeply expressed the formative impact that these resourceful wondrous figures and events of fairy tales had had on him and on his inventive genius. Insisting on the great contributions wonder tales have on children and on their most hard-fought yet most important chore: attaining a more mature consciousness to refine and civilize the chaotic influence of their unconscious, Dickens marked the history of fairy tales as he stated: “Little Red Riding Hood was my first love. I felt that if I could have married Little Red Riding Hood, I should have known perfect bliss” (ibid).

Notably, in light of the winner of the National Book Award and National Book Critic Circle Award, Bruno Bettelheim's *The Use of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* is “a charming book about enchantment, a profound book about fairy tales” according to John Updike in *The New York Book Review*. To put it another way, regarded as one of the greatest child psychologists of the twentieth century, none of his books in fact have perhaps been more influential than this

indicatory study of wonder tales and their universal significance in tracing and understanding childhood development.

From the tales of *Sinbad* to *The Three Little Pigs*, *Hansel and Gretel* and *The Sleeping Beauty*, analyzing a wide range of traditional stories enabled Bettelheim to demonstrate the way the grotesque, sometimes vicious, but always profoundly important narrative strands of the classic fairy tales can help in finding and establishing meaning for one's life via providing a unique way for children to come to terms with the dilemmas of their inner selves. Today, therefore, and as in the past, the mental landscape of both average and originaive children can certainly be allowed to an appreciation and discernment of all the higher things in life by wonder tales, moving easily to enjoy the greatest work of art and literature.

Alternatively, in reporting about the rootage and origins of such a rich and affluent literary genre, it would be of quite great miserableness not to evoke the origins of the term 'fairy tale'. In point of fact, for many years in Western countries story tellers and writers never used the term 'fairy tale' until the very triumphant French fairy tale writer Madame Catherine Anne d'Aulnoy coined it in 1697. Indeed, during a period spanning from 1680 to 1710; during a time where the dominant fairies in the French texts was salient, the literary fairy tale was regrettably not considered a genre and did not have a name. Not as well associated with children, the literary fairy tale was simply named a conte, cunto, cuento, shazka, story and märchen. Until the creation of the term, no writer had tagged his or her tale a fairy tale in print. To clearly elucidate the fact, Zipes (1989) claimed that;

The Italians were among the early writers of vernacular fairy tales in print, and there were some fairies or fate in the Italian tales, but they were not singled out for attention or played the prominent role that they were assigned by the French seventeenth-century women writers, also known as conteuses and salonnières (cited in Seifert, Lewis, Stanton, 2010).

Another key example to recall is Giovan Francesco Straparola's collection of stories

containing a few fairy tales under the name *Pleasant Nights* or *Le Piacevoli Notti* (1550/1553), and Giambattista Basile's book entitled *The Tale of The Tales* or *Lo Cunto deli cuncti* (1634).

Indeed, never wrote a word about why she used the term nor quite aware of the 'fairy tale writing' epidemic trend among her acquaintances and other members of her social class, Madame Catherine-Anne d'Aulnoy enriched the world of literary terms when she published her first collection of tales, *Contes de Fées*. Unconsciously originating the term, therefore, it was and still is greatly symbolic that she chose to call her stories *Contes de Fées*; literally meaning 'tales about fairies' (cited by Jasmin in Zipes, 2012, p. 98).

However, generating a creative as well as a contagious explosion featuring powerful and precocious fairies written by highly educated and talented writers is when d'Aulnoy included the wonder tale *The Island of Happiness* in her novel *Histoire d'Hippolyte, Conte de Douglas* in 1690. In other words, what hitherto had been a simple oral folk tale or a printed favela became the well-known established genre, and the passionate talk of the seventeenth century prestigious salons de Paris – salons hosted by aristocratic women meant to exchange matters of society and various topics such literature, arts and politics. To this end, the widespread utilization of the term sets a declared beginning of difference and resistance. To further put it in the words of Jack Zipes (2012):

It can be objectively stated that there is no other period in the Western literary history when so many fairies were, like powerful goddesses, the determining figures of most of the plots of tales written by women –and also by some men (p. 99).

For a genre told; therefore, in different modes and styles defying the norms and carrying fantastic themes and heavy history, other significant writers -beside Catherine- who helped prepare the way for the fairy tale to flower and flourish as an independent genre are certainly worth investing as their presence in the genre's history is preeminent.

### 1.2.3. Wundermärchen- Delineation of the Genesis

Delineation of the genesis of a fully enchanting writing; of a completely independent fairy tale writing genre extending from Francesco Straparola and Giambattista Basile to the conteuse and Charles Perrault to finally Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm is of tremendous excitement to the loving minds of evading, enthralling voyages.

#### 1.2.3.1. Giambattista Basile's Subversive Tales

It is between the Fifteenth and Seventeenth centuries where the formation of fairy tales as a genre begins (Teverson, 2013, p. 44) for Jack Zipes and most fairy tale scholars. Indeed, though Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* set pilot light for writers thanks to his novella form and the specific stories framing device, writers as Giovan Francesco Straparola and Giambattista Basile are crucial for the understanding of the rise of the genre.

Written in succinct Tuscan or standard Italian, Straparola's *Le Piacevoli Notti* (*The Pleasant Nights*, 1550-53) encompasses fairy tale motifs and structures borrowed from oral wonder tales. Effectively, "in amongst the 74 stories....scholars have identified about 15 stories that can be described as literary Märchen, including early variant 19 of Puss in Boots, The Sorcerer's Apprentice and Beauty and the Beast" (Teverson, 2013, p. 46). Yet, within the publication of Basile's *Lo Cunto de li Cunti*, *Overro lo Trattenenientode Peccerille*, a fully inaugurated genre containing illustrious literary fairy tales was established.

To put it simply, marked by luxuriant baroque style with peculiar metaphors and striking idioms quite difficult to decipher until today, "Basile's tales of enchantment and marvels lightly laid the foundation of the literary fairy tale genre" (Zipes, 2015, p. 22). Zipes further avowed that Basile's tales are often "bandy, irreverent, erotic, cruel, frank, and unpredictable. The endings are not always happy. Some are even tragic; many are hilarious" (ibid). According to most scholars, therefore, Giambattista Basile can be regarded as "the creator of the first complete and integral collection of authored, literary fairy tales in Western Europe" (Zipes,

2006, p. 16).

In spite of the great influence Basile's writing had on the latest seventeenth century Western writers, Basile's works of arts never became as popular among the literary audience as the later writer and later French Collections.

### **1.2.3.2. Aggrandizement of the Wonder Tale Genre**

In the seventeenth century, severe as well as pragmatic Western societies, although other various Italian writers such as Casare Cortese and Pompeo Sarnelli engendered fairy tales, the oral tradition as well as the realistic novellas and tales continued to be dominant in Italy. Alarmingly inauspicious for the genre to take root, this was also the case in Great Britain. In other words, despite the great influence of Giambattista Basile and the strong interest in fairy tales in the 1590s transcended in the writing of Sir Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590-96), and in the magical events of William Shakespeare's best plays: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*, the trend to pave the way for utilitarianism and Puritanism and to ban the fairies' enchantment in the English society governed the atmosphere. It was only the late seventeenth century in the French court of Louis XIV that the next fundamental time period for the wonder tale to become a decent genre took place.

In point of fact, during the time where numerous female writers like Mme d'Aulnoy, Mme d'Auneil, Mme de Murat and Mlle Bernard introduced fairy tales into their literary salons, "the fairy tale could establish itself as a legitimate genre for educated classes" (Zipes, 2006, p. 23) particularly, Catherine d'Aulnoy's *Histoire d'Hypolite, Conte de Douglass* encompassing the philosophical fairy tale of *L'Île de la Félicité* "baptized" (ibid) the genre as 'fairy tales' giving birth to "a rash of fairy tales in print" (Teverson, 2013, p. 49).

Among a large group of male and female writers –conteurs and conteuses- Charles Perrault alternatively published a magnum opus landmark in the history of wonder tale genre; a 1697 collection entitled *Histoire ou Contes du Temps Passé: Les Contes de ma Mere l'Oye*. From that moment on and by the end of the seventeenth century, "a recognizable genre was formed and displaced" (Zipes, 2012, p. 99).

Embracing the finesse in words and sophisticatedly adapted to the literary penchant of the French countries, Perrault's stories were quite easy in understanding and very short in length. Rationalizing and morally exploiting fiction, to Teverson (2013), "Perrault wrote in an economic style" (p. 58). Furthermore, marked by stylistic immediacy and moralizing references at the end, Perrault's wonder tales made sure to address both children and adults. Witnessing a worldwide success, Perrault line of work prevailed as "it was closer in style and plot to the folklore tradition and fully accompanied by true censorship and work ethic" (Zipes, 2006); true works of art which paved the way for Perrault's fellowships to authentically institutionalize the genre.

### **1.2.3.3. Institutionalization of the Fairy Tale Genre**

On board of the Nineteenth century German writing; the beginning of a century where the existence of the literary wonder tale genre secured its presence and dominance once and for all. The pivotal works that fulfilled this task is *Kinder-und Hausmärchen*: Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's cosmopolitan collection. First published in 1812, the Grimm brothers were especially influenced by the doctrines of Romanticism and greatly motivated by the "desire to recover authentic German tales that might reflect an 'authentic' German identity" (Teverson, 2013, p. 62). In line with this purpose, the German brothers published their collection of eighty-six numbered stories. They immediately proceeded with the second volume by the end of 1814 as the reception among the public was quite positive and delightful.

Joyfully approving the Grimm brother's writings as the highest expression of the gathering and displaying of folk heritage, the contemporary scholar Teverson (2013) further asserted that:

The Grimms substantially reworked their material to suit their own culture outlook and their own aesthetic standards, and that the stories may, therefore, be read as an expression of the world-view of the Grimms and their social circle. At the same time, however, the brothers mediated, with a degree of fidelity that was uncommon in



the period, traditions that were widespread in popular culture and that genuine folktales therefore remain the sine qua non of their collection. (pp. 70–77)

After *Kinder-und Hausmärchen* tremendous occurrence and attainment, numerous enchanting writers rose to the floor among which the Danish figure of Hans Christian Andersen is a must to cite, as publishing fairy tales collections emerged as the new captivating trend in Europe and United States. The literary fairy tale genre has undergone, therefore, numerous deceiving and disappointing phases to establish itself as a newly independent genre. Nevertheless, thanks to the three previously investigated landmark authors, the fairy tale genre knew a bright, promising future. Exploring the genre's historical significance and implication from a female's corner seems to be an interesting depart.

#### **1.2.4. Female Writers Excelling in the Marvellous**

In a fairy tale universe; in a peculiar world of magic and wonder where carpets can fly, trees can extend tongues and vocalize and humans can command wings and fly, female writers made of the wonder tale their favourite companion. If French women writers, and in particular Marie Catherine d'Aulnoy, played a seminal role in the institutionalization and aggrandizement of the literary fairy tale genre, it is hence very legitimate to acknowledge women as triumphant writers during the French civilizing process. Delivering huge ramifications in Opera and theatre, the French writer d'Aulnoy launched an inventive explosion -promptly becoming contagious and ferocious- as highly educated French female writers wrote more than twenty books about fairies.

Indeed, highly sophisticated and ironic, the conteuses produced a total number of sixty eight out of one hundred and twelve tales between 1690 and 1709. In a relieving place where they shared their tales, made alliances and exchanged ideas by looking upon themselves as fairies, for women the genre signified much more than tales about fairies. Delighted in embracing a fairy vogue without submitting to a particular code, “women writers aimed at celebrating women's writing through the

liberating fairy tale genre” (Lieberman, 1972, p. 400).

Intending to be symbolic commentaries and authentic portrayals of the mores and costumes of their time, wonder tales aimed at championing the concept of ‘écriture féminine’; an artistic creation often defined as writing by women, about women and for women. Demonstrating new diverse standards of behaviour, the fairy tale openly allowed writers to criticize the domestic subjugations and political oppressions. In other words, “it was only in a fairy tale realm, not supervised by the church or the dictates of King Louis XIV that they could project alternatives that stemmed from their desires and needs” (Zipes, 2012, p. 99).

Imprisoned by horrid social regulations placed on their sex, the fairy tale was therefore resisting confessions of pain and undermining qualifications. It projected as Zipes (2012) states “moral and ethical conflicts in alternative words” (p. 99).

Certainly, the numerous reasons why enchanting narratives became an outlet for female writers is quite captivating. Brides confined in humiliating, forced marriages, and human beings only seen as creatures fitting the domestic world, are the women of the end of the seventeenth century. To put it another way, if earlier women maintained and occupied a prominent place in society and court, they were more and more marginalized by the end of the seventeenth century. But, as the wonder tale occupied a high status, writers used the narrative “as a covert means of commenting upon, and even in some cases criticizing, elements of court culture” (Teverson, 2013, p. 52).

Considering the recently revised role of the woman as the mostly criticized French aristocracy aspect, most of the female writers, therefore, “published fairy tales in which women use social and political authority with tact, moderation and skill, and in which the heroines are complex willful agents who endeavor to take some measure of control over their own destiny” (ibid, p. 55) . Notably, wonder tales as the mirror of survival and suitable schemes to endure the cruelty of life at a time where women had few public sphere privileges is a strategy that according to Robert Darnton equates “shrewdness and wit”.

In point of fact, neglected for so many years, contesuses of fairy tales have been renoticed and gathered just recently demonstrating how heavy their values were. Female writers used wonder tales as a powerful weapon at the court of Louis XIV to reassess the status of the women and the bitter truth of not neglecting neither her role nor existence in the society. In additions, it could be debated that fairies in their tales signal the actual resistance to the conditions under which they lived rejecting comportment and structures governing their daily routine. Their fairy tales, thus, meant “to transform the relationships between men and women” (Zipes, 2012, p. 99).

In this sense, French female writers desired to live their lives as specifically valued artists and specially gifted creatures throughout the fairies drawn and created. Not always benevolent and just, the authors made fairies which could also be “witch-like”, possessing supernatural powers to implicitly outspoke the intense choler and outrage that women were undergoing under men’s supremacy and control. The wonder tale characters are, therefore, a great aspect of the literary fairy tales.

### **1.2.5. Interpreting Fairy Tales: Seeing Through the Lenses of Various Approaches**

Displaying conceptual viewpoints using a variety of methodologies, the literary fairy tale has been of scholarly interest since the nineteenth century. Representing the critical, cultural and historical contexts and circumstances in which they have been created, conceptual approaches to literary texts are, in fact, always supported and formulated by ideological assumptions about relationships between literature, language, meaning, narrative, society and literary audiences. No single approach or methodology is, thus, able to attain a ‘correct’ interpretation of the fairy tale. Instead, various methodologies suit different critical and ideological aims. The folklorists, sociological, psychoanalytic, feminist and historicist are to be the chief approaches to the literary wonder tale emerging in the twentieth century.

To start with, constituting a different literary sub-genre from the oral folktale, the oral folktale has yet had a tremendous influence on the seventeenth century emerging literary fairy tale. In point of fact; the “Finnish”, also known as historical-

geographic, is a method developed by Thomson, Krohn and Aarne aiming at restoring the history of particular tale types by gathering, indexing and finally analyzing all of their first variants.

Marked by two main underlying assumptions denoting the folklorists' work, the first affirms that folk tales have their origins in oral traditions and the second claims that a single version of specific tale as it may have existed in the oral tradition could be recreated based on its variants. In a pure attempt to avoid subtractive trajectories of folk-tale history, the Finnish method asserted that scholars take all known versions of a story into consideration.

Moving onto the psychoanalytic approach to the literary fairy tale, shared assumptions about age, narrative and the universality of meaning is adopted in spite of the Jungian and Freudian conflictual interpretations about tales. Moreover, whereas psychoanalytic scholars view fairy tales as vivid portrayals of collective and individual psychic development, the historical as well as sociological theorists, on the other hand, consider such tales as representations of social and historical conditions. On the other hands, they are on the mirror of the relationship between literature and reality; the mirror of social conditions as they are transcended in literary texts.

Indeed, throughout the examination of the social conditions within which folk and fairy wonder tales are produced, the extent to which such narratives both represent and reflect gender inequalities and differences are quite omnipresent. In point of fact, feminist approaches which are censorious of wonder tales tend to focus on the narratives which evince 'negative' female character models; that is, heroines who are submissive, passive and dependent upon the prince charming to save them. Such presented evaluations also tend to enhance women's role and presence in society all by dismissing male chauvinism and patriarchy.

As a conclusion, such progressive critical and creative approaches implied on fairy tales generate a rich history of adaptation, interpretation and reception; a history where, as Tartar (1987) exclaimed: "every rewriting of a tale is an interpretation; and every interpretation is a rewriting".

### **1.2.6 Characterization: A Staple Aspect of the Literary Genre**

Deemed to be a projector of bitter truth and passionate reality, for a wonder tale to breathe into life there must be the decisive presence of characters. Throughout the enchanting written words, fairy tales are considered as artistic representation of human life. In other words, to enlighten the story's various included characteristics such as the plot, setting and narration, characterization is of elementary importance.

More than just an impersonification, characterization is an acute glare into self-knowledge and human being's psyche. Providing readers with an ability to detect the author's real intentions, the character carrying enough depth and consistency can but only render readers eager to analyze, discover and explore the long voyage of the personage. To better elucidate this idea, E. M. Forster highlights seven aspects he deems universal to any work of fiction in his 1966 *Aspects of the Novel*; a work where characters are ranked and considered of primary importance. There could be no work of fiction without characters; an idea once spread and accepted.

Claiming that in fictional writing characters must represent, embody and dramatize the value of the story, Forster's teachings on characterization in his above mentioned book –particularly in the section entitled “people”- display the existence of two types of characters: ‘flat’ and ‘round’. To Forster, flat characters possess only one or two defining characteristics, while round personages are fully developed. Forster, in fact further explained that the characters in the story are not real people – they could be objects- but most seem like real people; just like nature as an important character to compare with the woman to fully deliver the aim of this humble research work.

As a conclusion, female writers in the fairy tale genre; or in any other literary genre, used their female characters to portray the ideologies and norms of the society regarding male chauvinism and gender oppression. In particular, the idealization of female characters is as well to be denoted in romantic literature, a literature to be successively investigated as a true revival of the wonder tale genre.

### **1.3. Romantic Literature: A True Revival of the Wonder Tale**

A replenishment of a longing literature of the heart in view of the head; a literature whose deepened appreciation of the genius, the hero and the ravishment of nature is glorified, Romantic literature is a truly revived celebration of imagination transcended through the unique ephemeral emotional experience and spiritual truth of every human life on earth. Adopting a general exaltation of emotion over reason, Romantic literature is simply a once again penetrating experience in the Wundermärchen.

### **1.3.1. The Nineteenth Century Romanticism in Literature**

He who seeks to define Romanticism in entering a hazardous occupation which has claimed many victims; a timely warning exclaimed by E. B. Burgum in the 1941 exhibited article on Romanticism in the Kenyon Review. This, however, did not deter scholars in their ceaseless endeavours to arrive at some definitions of this term. In point of fact, the definitions are numbering, legions and almost as many as those who have written in the subject.

Varying between a movement eclipsed by the Age of Enlightenment, and by a genre at times referring to the imaginative and the fictitious, or the sentimental, the aim of this treatise, therefore, is not to argue about the various penchants or different elements embraced by Romantic writers, nor to add one more definition to the list under the illusion that it might be the ‘correct’ one. The target is to rather explore the manifestation of this literary movement and the way each author ornamented the nineteenth century Romantic zeitgeist.

Often referred to as the Romantic Era, Romanticism in literature is a literary intellectual and artistic movement originating and emerging in Europe toward the end of the eighteenth century. Rejecting the rationality, physical materialism and the percepts of balance and idealization of the typified Age of Enlightenment and Neoclassicism, Romanticism spurns tradition and places special rebellion in art and literature and in lives empty of personal, spontaneous and emotional spirits. Out crying an urgent return to nature, the rustic life for Romantics reflects the human heart, emotions, feelings and a way for humans to connect with the spirit and the soul.

As life on earth is undoubtedly impermanent, the Romantics further asserted that the humans must live life to the fullest by going intensely in search of sensation and emotional indulgence. Significantly emphasizing a life of the soul and not of the mind is Percy Shelley in his powerful poem “*Ozymandias*”. In other words, symbolizing the collapse of not only individual human lives, but as well the ruins of the greatest ancient empires and civilization, Percy Shelly’s work suggests that all lives, no matter how great and powerful, succumb to time and mortality and are eventually forgotten. So, too, do Kingdoms and empires fall and fade into nothingness. The only thing that survives and endures, the poem suggests, is art; an additional reason for the outlet of emotions and imagination.

The imaginative indeed; this human’s ability of escaping the harsh intellect and the political reasoning into a world where the exotic, the mysterious, the enchanting and the occult is permitted, formulated a great aspect of the romantic words as it meant a major turn to the self and heightened exploitation of the human living’s personality, moods and mental potentialities.

Projecting the very same view is Louis Cazamian when he interestingly declared that: “Romanticism is an accentuated predominance of emotional life, provoked or directed by the exercise of imaginative vision, and in its turn stimulating or directing such exercise” (cited in Milne, 2010). Frank Laurence Lucas exclaimed as well that “it is a liberation of the less conscious levels of the mind; an intoxicating dreaming” (ibid). C. H. Herford on his turn further asserted that romanticism is an “extraordinary development of imaginative sensibility” (ibid).

Romanticism was, therefore, a celebration of the individual, transcendental, inventive and supernatural. It was “a desire to find the infinite within the finite, to effect a synthesis of the real and the unreal. The expression in art of what in theology would be called pantheistic enthusiasm” (cited in Earnest, 1941). As it was inevitably a glorious triumphant of the individual, each of the romantic writers embraced various characteristics of literary Romanticism, including nature, individualism, the female experience and the supernatural.

What was of great matter, hence, is the inventive spirit and the exceptional figure accompanied with exceptional passions and inner struggles; a redisplayed view of the artist as a supremely individual creator overcoming all sort of strict adherence to formal rules and traditional norms and procedures and that what once upon a time fairy tales did.

### **1.3.2. Between Enchantment and Romanticism: Shared Aesthetic Dimensions**

Autonomous and powerful, holding no purpose of redundancy except of displaying this parallel world which is based on the important artistic relations between the various organic parts, Romanticism and fairy tales are all about creation. To put it differently, to these writers of freedom of the soul and liberation of the inventive intellect, works of art are all but a recreation of reality. In point of fact, a work of art is similar to nature as it is an organic totality in form and meaning; the body of elements it creates is imagination and fancy. In his magnum Opus, *The Biographia Literaria*, S. T. Coleridge (1817) defined imagination as:

The imagination then, I consider either as primary, or secondary. The primary imagination I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary imagination, I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and unify (p. 200).

According to Coleridge, therefore, imagination is the principle faculty consorted with creativity and is the basis for the power of perception, shaping and unifying. Fancy, on the other hand, as a way of associating logic; a possessed power of conception and representation in artistic expression, is perceived by Coleridge (1817) in his own words as:



Fancy, on the contrary, has no other encounters to play with, but fixities and definites. The fancy is indeed no other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space; while it is blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word CHOICE. But equally with the ordinary memory the fancy must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association (1817).

As powerful as well as enriching techniques of ornamenting, elevating, conceiving, associating, but also exploiting any art of literary production, imagination and fancy's investigation go hand in hand with the research's motifs as they provide a solid ground for establishing the woman/nature comparison.

Rebellious and expressive, occult and inventive and a genuine liberation from the pre-set boundaries and structures, the Romantic Movement proved to be flourishing and popularized mainly in France, Britain and Germany. In France, perhaps the most negative aspect of romanticism is the promoted defiant nature of the French as the movement occurred alongside the French Revolution. In Britain, on the other hand, the use of romanticism was quite calmer as its greatest social effect was the diffusion of the romantic spirit of the time from Britain to the United States.

Obsessively interested in folk culture, national and ethnic cultural origins, Germany certainly absorbed the best of what romanticism could offer. In other words, perceiving and adopting romanticism as a great opportunity to unite and redefine the Germanic literature throughout a special focus on the ideas, language and culture of the common people. During Germany's romantic period of time, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm collected and published their first collection of tales enabling the fairy tale genre to secure its place among the rich world of literary genres.

In point of fact, when early German romantic writers and critics, including Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel, Friedrich von Hardenberg (under the pen name of Novalis), and Ludwig Tiech, thoroughly started scrutinizing the newly approach they were creating, it is little wonder that they glanced themselves at the

cutting edge of a movement able not only to change literature, but society, the individual and the intellect as well. At the heart of the Idealism of Kant and Fichte and the rise of German rationalism, “the romantics believed they were destined to usher in a poetic Golden Age, where science and religion, art and philosophy, society and the individual, would all be reconciled in a poetic synthesis based on the alchemy of the imagination” (Schlege, 1967).

Moreover, assigning themselves the merited title of romantics in tremendous honor of the inherited medieval legends expressed and written in the vernacular, it is absolutely of no astonishment that the fairy tale came to be adopted as the special literary form of the time. In his introduction to *German Literary Fairy Tales*, Gordon Birell declares:

It was not until the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century, in the context of German romanticism, that the folk fairy tale was first acknowledged as oral literature of the highest order. Significantly, the endorsement of the folk tale went hand in hand with the creation of a new and far more ambitious variety of literary fairy tale, a narrative invention of such extraordinary appeal that it became for a brief period, the very centerpiece of romantic literary theory. (cited in Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe et al., 1997)

Indeed, establishing itself as both a product and an expression of the interestingness of the Teutonic folk culture, a new sense of German Nationalism arose among the intellectuals as romantic poets, such as Clemens Brentano and Ludwig Achim Von Arnim published *Des Knaben Wunderhorn (The Youth's Magic Horn)*; a collection of pure traditional folksongs and legends. Allowing as well for imagination to rule supreme, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's collection of fairy tales was a major production of the Romantic Era. Furthermore, agreeing to stem the use of the German language and culture from women, children and common workers, unites proudly with the nineteenth century romantic doctrine; the belief that knowledge could only come from the common man.

Writing under the pen name of Novalis, the visionary young man George Friedrich Von Harden Berg did conjoin to an aesthetic philosophy which he named Magic Idealism. Believing in a new gateway in perceiving reality, Novalis wrote poetry in both prose and verse. The meridian of Novalis fiction, however, in *Heinrich Von Ofterdingen*: an unfinished novel which follows the journey of a young man in search of the spirit of poetry in imaginary Middle Ages. Ending with a dense, allegorical fairy tale, the incomplete novel intends to glorify poetry and wisdom over skepticism. Throughout the world of grandeur, humor and passion that Novalis creates, this fairy tale which concludes Novalis' novel delights the reader and displays an ideal vision of the Early Romantics' world.

A tremendous impact meant to last much longer than his short life of twenty-eight years; i.e., acknowledging sincere debt in their own fairy tale works are George MacDonald, C.S.Lewis and Herman Hess, Novalis' wise decision to exploit the philosophical approaches dear to his heart and intellect was, in fact, inspired from Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe's wundermärchen: *The Fairy Tale or the Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily*. Found in anthologies of romantic-period wonder tales, Goethe' tale of the self-sacrificing green snake and the beguiled princess Lily combines both traditional German and French fairy tale aspects with classical mythology, delivering a profound delightful philosophical meditation.

To further assimilate the great impact the Romantic Movement had on the traditional fairy tale in rendering it a unique and separate literary work, it is worth citing few other outstanding examples in the genre. Utilizing the traditional fairy tale elements of the love of a noble knight for his beloved, and of the adopted poor girl by a witch and befriend with talking animals, Der Blond Eckbert's tale of *The Fair Eckbert* informs about tales of enchantment as both a source and a product of psychological repression and the latest dark evilness inculcated in each one of us.

In contrast to the gloomy, psychological nature of Der Blond Eckbert's tales, E. T. A. Hoffmann's late Satiric Romantic fairy tale novel *Small Zaches, Called Zinnober (Klein Zaches, Genannt Zinnober)* is a lively Satire on the type of Rationalism that bans and rejects fantasy, magic, enchantment and all various

elements invented by imagination. Other Romantic *wundermärchen* digné of note are Josef Von Eichendorff's *Das Marmobild* (*The Marble Statue*) and Clemens Bretano's *Geschichte Von Braven Kasperl und dem ScharenAnnerl* (*The Tall of Hones Casper and Fair Anne*).

In the end, however, it is neither powerful addressing social and psychological themes nor idealistic philosophical foundations that render the *märchen* of the Romantic period as much a delight to explore and read today as when they were produced. Their true strengths and their ageless timelessness resides and is the result of a pure storytelling and an authentic imagination; those attributes that allow the reader to feel magic and wonder, and to sense enchantment and free will.

### **1.3.3. Other Characteristics: The Romantic Zeitgeist**

Endorsing the pure right of adopting any element of Romantic literature to explore the philosophical concept closest to the heart of the artistic writer, the Romanticist movement is chiefly concerned with a thorough breaking of traditions and a celebration of the individual. Indeed, the most common characteristics of literary Romanticism are the glorification of individual experience and spirituality, the female idealization and nature; elements certainly found in the *wundermärchen* as well.

#### **1.3.3.1. Celebration of the Individual and Spirituality**

Triumphing subjectivity over reason and rebellion over tradition, it is no wonder that the Romanticists highlighted the importance of the individual. Turning inward a sincere valuing of the individual experience, Romanticism is the cult of the individual, i.e.; the cultural and psychological celebrated expression of the self, the inner spark of deity that links all human beings to the larger truth. Pre-occupied with the delighted self-analysis, the Romanticists in return strongly heightened spirituality in Romantic narratives in addition to the occult and the supernatural.

In other words, Romanticists took on a quasi-religious status not only as a moral leader, but also as a divinely inspirational means enabling nature and the common men to find and establish their voices. Believing that what is special in a man is to be

highly valued and represented, Romantic individualism, therefore, celebrated man's inner natural goodness and fantastic ability to possess emotions all by demonstrating that the strength of traditions, moral codes and established laws only but crushes the individual conscience, hearts, inventive minds, and wills and desires.

### **1.3.3.2. The Idealization of the Woman**

Representing idealized love creatures and interests; pure and beautiful but never intelligent or relied upon, women in Romantic literature are harshly marginalized. Thoroughly infused with the concept of women being ideal perfect beings to be loved, mourned and hardly valued or respected, women in the works of literature were obliged to submit to male chauvinism and patriarchal system.

Though in a body of literature that is, indeed, supposed to triumph the common man; the individual among which the female creation is part of, female characters continued to live under the shadow of the man, and under the constants and restriction of the society. To the imprisoned souls and spirits that it meant to free, Romantic literature did only aggravate the long-lasting applied patriarchal norms on women.

### **1.3.3.3. Nature: Glorification and Celebration**

Defining Romanticism as the return to nature by J.J. Rousseau, Romanticists chose to make of the rustic world their new home and refuge. Perceived as a source of poetic inspiration and as a giver of great spiritual dimension to life, nature became an idealized place as life in the country was way more virtuous. Adopting the strong experience of the awe-inspiring power of nature, Romanticists were searching for a renewed humanity based on the organic connection between man and nature.

In point of fact, Romantic written works of arts' fixation on nature are heavily characterized by the dense use of both personification and pathetic fallacy. Artistically enabling the author to transpire life and motion, personification is a common form of metaphor in the recognizable human behaviours, and emotions are attributed to intimate objects, animals and even abstract ideas. In other words, relying upon imagination for understanding, personification as a figure of speech is a

technique in which a thing or idea is attributed human feelings and is spoken of as if it were human.

Pathetic fallacy, on the other hand and which is not to be confused with personification, is defined in Britannica as “a poetic practice of attributing human emotion or responses to nature, inanimate objects, or animals”. Coined by John Ruskin in *Modern Painters* (1860), Pathetic Fallacy is a means of enriching any work of art by assigning emotion and feeling to things; i.e; it is hence quite common to find smiling or dancing flowers; cruel or angry mountains, moodily minds, brooding trees, moping birds of Minerva, or happy and delighted barks as well.

Effectively creating an imaginary world full of vivid pictures, personification and pathetic fallacy are, indeed, special literary devices adopted by the writer to make of his work interestingly rich and creative, but also quite appropriate techniques to elucidate the aimed concept and made point of his research work.

This quite excessive idealization of nature, however, only denotes and strengthens the highly shared and common aspects between woman and nature. Similarly subject to the patriarchal mores, control, needs and desires of the opposite sex, literary Romantic works are in fact, perfect projectors of this woman/nature shared treatment of submission and enslavement, but also a proof of their common resisting and surviving nature; a major motive of this humble research work accomplished throughout the selected fairy tales.

#### **1.3.4. Female Writings: New Lenses into Romanticism**

Overshadowed by the subversion of male ego, violated by an exposure to an amok running male imperialism and strongly identified with a small number of ‘geniuses’- most of them poets but all of them men- Romanticism left no equitable space for Romantic female writers to place their chef d’oeuvres. Equally eclipsed by the masculine line of writings, female Romanticists did go through the same complexity of voicing their works to the large public lovers of literature. This, however, did not cease their thirstiness of producing literary masterpieces; all by continuing the revolting journey of their seventeenth century fairy tales’ fellowships.

Never giving up on the place that women's writings should endorse in the canon of literature, many female writers rose to the floor and amazed scholars, critics and readers with their elevated techniques, exalted styles of writing and excellency in delivering high-minded complex narratives. It was, however, thirty years ago with words of faint praise that Harold Bloom (1965) promoted a long-neglected writing by a woman for its more "successful and sophisticated" brother-texts pontificating that:

What makes *Frankenstein* an important book, though it is only a strong, flawed novel, is that it contains one of the most vivid version we have of the Romantic Mythology of the self, one that resembles Blake's *Book of Urizen*, Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, and Byron's *Manfred*, among other works. Because it lacks the sophistication and imaginative complexity of such works, *Frankenstein* affords a unique introduction to the archetypal world of the Romantics (p. 215)

Completely dismissing the intricate as well as expressive style of the writing, Bloom's declaration urged Feminist critics from Ellen Moers to Gayatri Spivak to read *Frankenstein* on independent terms: as a cry out against the 'monstering' of female creativity, as an allegory of childbirth and child death, as an autobiographical inscription and as a portrayal of male supremacy. In the 1980s, the novel would finally settle itself into literary prominence as an adding-rich touchstone for literature.

The canonization of *Frankenstein* with all of its valorization and sort of recuperation on Romanticism's existing terms; a term that valorized a 'mythology' full of imaginative daring, solitary fancy and sublimity, and finally a complex archetypal ideology bound to native as first priority, other female writings marked canonical Romanticism. To name few of these are Mary Shelley and Jane Austen, Lady Morgan, Dorothy Wordsworth, Maria Edgeworth and Harriet Martineau.

The Romantic Movement, as a conclusion, unleashed and greatly freed the creative ambitions as well as the inventive intellects of nineteenth century female novelists. Shaping a harsh intrusion onto the literary scene of the masculine line,

women writers succeeded in dawning awareness of the significance of women's productions.

Sauphie Moreau's "An einen Baum am Spalier"; a poem graciously donated by Gisela Brinker-Gabler to take part of the Sophie Digital library which is a collection of full-texts searchable source of literature written by German speaking woman from Medieval times through the twentieth century and covering a broad genre spectrum of long neglected literary works, does commemorate that Romanticism has long been denoted with challenges to constraint and conformism. Bearing and greatly resisting binary rigidities, it is no wonder that Romanticism could place women's writings in an authentic dialogue that regenerates the understanding of the movement and the period.

Adding to the list the long-lost masterpiece of Bettina Von Arnim, *Das Leben der Hochgräfin Grita Von Rattenzuhausbeiuns*; a work of art masterfully translated into English by Lisa Ohm under the title of: *The Life of High Countess Gritta Von Ratsinourhouse*. Indeed, the wife of Ludwing Achim Von Arnim along with her daughter, Gisela Von Arnim, would voice a warmer and more affectionate humanist message than the abstract philosophy of literary theory: the outrageous right of girls to pursue their dreams and that of children to grow in a steady environment empty of abusive authority figures.

As writers, social activists, writers of fairy tales for children and female writers' advocates, their fairy tale is a perfect embodiment of such values. On good terms with magical elves and enchanting talking animals, the above mentioned fairy tale narrates the story of two girls: one who is the portrait of traditional restraints as she marries the prince; whereas others portray and form a dreamy, utopian women community via becoming musicians, artists, herbalists and master artisans. The ladies, therefore, learn to defend themselves from those who would exploit them and steal their dreams.

Endorsing all of the elements of a literary masterpiece: a fascinating plot, audacious characters, elevated writing styles and surely timeless message, the Von Arnim ladies' märchen did in no way lose the appeal, the enchantment and the



simplicity of the traditional wonder tale. By viewing Romanticism through the lenses of women writings as a distinctive movement, one can certainly assure the project of female writings' recovery. By picturing the Romantic Movement out of the humiliating identifying position of the period, one can definitely bring to the front new prominence of writings of women from Mary Prince to Mary Alcock, from Sophie Von La Roche to Stephanie de Genlis without detaching them from their own visions, and from their own values.

After a thorough exploration of the fairy tale genre along its influence and continuity during the late eighteenth century Romantic Movement, jumping onto and penetrating in the avant-garde postmodernist vision to see the new tradition of writing fairy tales and Romanticism is of highly importance, as they shape the rich background and solid ground under which the selection of this research work's corpuses as well as research work's analysis of the women/nature dichotomy is laid upon.

#### **1.4. Postmodern Philosophy- The Tenacious Quest for Truth**

Belonging to the contemporary aleatory and ambivalent global condition, challenging the rationalistic and humanistic attributes of the modern period, the postmodern is undeniably an ever-new repetition of the modern. Eager for questioning all that has been laid down for granted, the philosophical issue in postmodernism is to be conjoined with Kant's "Copernican Revolution"; i.e., to Kant's assumption that human beings cannot "know things themselves and that objects of knowledge must conform into our faculties of representation" (1787). Postmodernism is, henceforth, in a constant tenacious quest for truth; a truth deemed significant for all humanity.

##### **1.4.1. Postmodernism- Penetrating in the Avant-gardist**

Witnessing ever-changing events and phenomena, the history of human kind is full of stubbornly unyielding instances of uncertainty, turning points, rejection, adoption and, most importantly, various imposing zeitgeists. Indeed, perceived as a landmark is the Age of Enlightenment; a major radical change throughout the Industrial Revolution. Urging for a democratic as well as an egalitarian system, the Enlightenment brought about a wave of rational and empirical reasoning on which

people aspired for better living conditions. Dispatching a self-conscious break with old traditions, the spirit of the time came to meet a significant sense of modernization; a one that will span two centuries later to postmodernism.

Modernism, the movement from which the postmodern philosophy seems to grow, emerged in the later nineteenth century as an achieved reality; as an age where science and technology, including the massive networks of communication and transportation, reshaped human kind's perception. Aiming at reaching a sustained order and control of the world, scholar Mary Klages (2001) declares in this regard that:

Modernity is fundamentally about order: about rationality and rationalization, creating order out of chaos. The assumption is that creating more rationality is conducive to creating more order, and that the more ordered a society is, the better it will function (the more rationality it will function). (para. 12)

Emerging, therefore, right after the Second World War, postmodernism withdraws the modernist belief of men undertaking control of the world, and highly emphasizes reflexivity with self-consciousness, fragmentation and discontinuity, ambiguity and simultaneity, and consequently all of the subject matters which de-structure, decenter and dehumanize the human being. Coming into the philosophical lexicon through the publication of Jean-François Lyotard's *La condition Postmoderne* (1979) –translated in English in 1984 as, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*- the term 'postmodern' radically revolutionized the period by importing a new vision that vent beyond impressionism.

Utilizing Wittgenstein's language game models and concepts from speech act theory, Lyotard accounted for what he entitles "a transformation of the game rules for science, art, and literature since the end of the nineteenth century" (1984). In accordance with Lyotard, J.A. Cudden declares that postmodernism is:

A general (and sometimes controversial) term used to refer to changes, developments and tendencies which have taken place (and are taking

place) in literature, art, music, architecture, philosophy, etc since the 1940s or 1950s. Post-modernism is different from modernism, even a reaction against it (1999,pp. 689-690).

Certainly, many proponents of postmodernism argue about the viability between the natural and the artificial experience emphasized by technology, perceiving in achieved modernism a problem post-modernists might refer to as de-realization. Impacting both the subject and the objects of experience, de-realization greatly affects and helps in dissolving the sense of identity, constancy and substance. Unlike ancient and medieval communities, the modern public did become a creation of the press; the only device able of gathering the mass of unreal individuals “who never are and never can be united in an actual situation or organization” (Kierkegaard, 1846).

Moreover, suggestions about this de-realization; about this instrumentality that renders society a realization of abstract thought kept together by an artificial device speaking for everyone, are to be found in Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Twilight of the Idols*. For Nietzsche, the distinction between the ‘real’ and the ‘apparent’ world retraces from Plato to his own time make of the “true world a useless and superfluous idea”, continuing by asserting that de-realization is “the last breath of a vaporizing reality” (Nietzsche, 1889,pp485-86).

Searching for a new beginning that demises modernity and fades away the promised illusion progress, positivism and emancipation, postmodernism or more precisely, the ‘post’ according to Lyotard denotes “something like conversation: a new direction after the preceding one” (cited in Harvey, 1990, p. 72). Accordingly, the conversion means the postmodern view upon the carbonized optimism that modernism offered and that reason and science could no more be relied on for solving the problem of existential issues of human kind. On the contrary, it brought “its own destruction (WWI and WWII) liner chronology is replaced with post-historical view point” (ibid).

Subject to various explorations, postmodernism is represented as an ideology by The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy as “a complex set of reactions to modern philosophy and its presuppositions, rather than any agreement on substantive doctrines” (Audi, 1995, p. 634). Philosophically, however, “it is a rejection of foundationalism (existence of structure of knowledge and epistemic justification), essentialism (metaphysical theory that objects have essence and appearance) and objective realism (objects exist independently of our perception and experience)” (ibid).

Postmodernism is, hence, “very ambiguous since it defies classification for it is more as a time-period than an official ideological movement, and yet it is considered as a turn of thinking process, the theories of which differ amongst themselves, for some of them conceive of it as a threat and others as the final solution to the problems that the modern enterprise inflicted upon humanity” (Dockery, 1995, p. 13)

For certain, postmodern sensibility no longer grieves the loss of narrative coherence, but rather the loss of the human being. Overshadowed by a philosophy whose ideological precursors are major thinkers like Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, postmodernism reevaluated the modern enterprise and its confining patterns of empiricism, rational reasoning and predictably controlled functioning of society and people, letting no space for freedom of the soul and experience.

Moreover, perceived appropriate in the socio-economic platform, this empirical thinking was adapted and adopted to offer a program in which the individual’s freedom and social rights are preserved. Claiming to ensure self-emancipation and to assure the pursuit of self-interest, Hobbes laid down a new social order he entitled the “social contract” in his 1651 *Leviathan*.

Representing an accommodation of politics to the rational reasoning, *Leviathan* is one of the most influential works on political theory in Western history. In *Leviathan*; a book named after considering the human nature as being evil, Hobbes urges each one to think selfishly and to look for the creation of an authority that will preserve his natural rights. In other words, within the social contract, life and

sovereignty belongs to the most powerful.

Inspired by Locke's and Bacon's logical empiricism, *Leviathan* only reinforced and forwarded a thorough restriction of the individual's freedom; a system which according to Stephen Bronner (2004):

As soon as authority ceased to defend the fundamental rights of human life, the members of society could break the contract and overthrow the rushing government. Both Hobbes and Locke thought of the state in terms of a utilitarian device which supported how law sanctions and regulated the competition of the market. They both identified the public realm with the state and the private realm with the interplay of particular interests and personal property (pp. 43–44).

Overwhelmed by a rigid system and confronted to an age of mass media, technology and propaganda, the human being's freedom and imagination is now limited and obstructed. In this sense, John Wyver claims in his 1986 *Television and Postmodernism* that: "We live in a man culture to which we do not simply submit. We take its images, its narratives, its formulations of desire, and measure them against our real experiences of a real world" (cited in Bertens, 1995, p. 100)

Confronted, therefore, to a plurality of rules without a concept to unify them, aesthetic judgment is a particular model for the issue of justice in postmodern experience. Reflective rather than determining, judgment has to be aesthetic for not generating denotative knowledge about a determinable state of affairs, but for rather shedding light on the way human's faculties interact with each other one moving from one word of phrasing to the other; that is, the prescriptive, the performative, the political, the cognitive and the artistic. In the terms of Emmanuel Kant, such interactions register an "aesthetic feeling". In such a confining period, the feeling of the beautiful as a harmonical interaction between imagination and understanding – imagination and reason- is simply in disharmony, harshly leading to the feeling of the sublime.

In this regard, Kant (1787) claims that "the sublime occur when our faculties of

sensible presentation are overwhelmed by impression of absolute power and magnitude, and reason is thrown back upon its own power to conceive ideas (such as the moral law) which surpass the sensible world.”

For Lyotard, however, in *What is Postmodernism?*; appearing as an appendix to the English of his *The Postmodernism Condition*, addressing the avant-garde art in terms of the aesthetic of the sublime is of great significance. “Modern art”, Lyotard claims, “is emblematic of a sublime sensibility, that is, a sensibility that there is something non-presentable demanding to be put into sensible form and yet overwhelm all attempts to do so... A work can become modern only if it is first postmodern, for postmodernism is not modernism at its end but in its nascent state, that is, at the moment its attempt to present the unrepresentable, and this state of consent. The postmodern, then, is a repetition of the modern as the ‘new’, and this means the ever-new demand for another repetition (Lyotard, 1984 [1979], p79).

#### **1.4.2. On Postmodernism and the New Tradition of Storytelling**

Renowned for its rebellious approach and strong willingness to challenge boundaries, postmodernism is essentially a reaction or response to modernism; a movement which displays a fragmented view of human subjectivity and history as something tragic to be lamented and grieved as a loss. As a tendency which begun to emerge by the late twentieth century, postmodernism in contradiction champions fragmentation, provisionally and incoherence, all by conceptualizing the world as being impossible to strictly define, understand and submit to control.

Lasting for more than two centuries as both a traditional period as well as a self-critical evaluation of the modernist attitude, postmodernism emphasizes that truth is not portrayed in human understanding as King Oedipus claimed, “there is only one truth that is obey your fate”, but rather constructed as the human’s mind attempts to understand its own personal reality.

Indeed, postmodern doctrines might fairly be denoted as the straight forward denial of the eighteenth century general philosophical viewpoints. Dismissing the belief that there is an objective natural reality, postmodernists much often belief in a

selfish alienation of the human being. Brought about by the intellectual assumptions and values of the modern period in the history of Western philosophy, postmodernists conceive the man as being alienated and dehumanizing due to materialism and capitalist system. Consequently, a growing sense of individualism accompanied by rationality deemed to create chaos more than order reigned, letting no empty room for freedom and creativity.

Valorizing history as well as past established intellectual traditions, postmodernist philosophy rejects reason and logic as universally valid truth. Certainly, the rejections of an absolute objective natural reality lead to a constant quest for the truth. Embracing, therefore, a skeptical attitude towards the trustworthiness of a modern Western philosophy, postmodernists measured the validity and reevaluated the supposedly past truth contemporary man inculcated in reported narratives. Landmark of a transitional period for certain, this skepticism egressed in all fields of research, including the philosophical, literary and artistic. Preeminently ascendant, this skepticism is privileging in the human being's most valued and appreciated form of expression; literature.

Eager to reconstruct history and redefine reality by means of implementing factual elements into fictional accounts quite open to a multitude of interpretations, the literature of postmodernist philosophers is marked, both stylistically and ideologically, by a spirit of resilience against the standard modernist literary search for meaning, and by a specific reliance on literary convention and stylistic techniques to engender works which convey multiple meanings. Mirroring a continuous desire for reflecting and returning to history to evaluate the authenticity of reported accounts, postmodern fictional genre is conjoined to "historiographic metafiction"; a term coined by the Canadian Scholar Linda Hutcheon in 1988.

Hutcheon continued claiming, however, that postmodern literature is ironically contradictory since it relates both the fictitious element with the realistic historiographic genre of reportedness; the meeting point of both represents the poetics of postmodernism.

Postmodern fiction is, therefore, history-related as it embodies historical facts within fictional elements of writing. It addresses a genre which encapsulates both history reportedness and fictional creativity, or rather imagination, through the use of unconventional fictional writerly techniques such as pastiche, intertextuality, temporal disorder, fragmentation, paranoia, and open -ending closures of narratives- which give it a form of experimental literature (Sim, 2001, pp. 121–133).

Accordingly, postmodernism as a literary movement serves as a resilient pattern to the boundaries established between ‘high’ and ‘low’ forms of literature and to the various distinctions settled between genres and forms of writing. Indeed, stylistic techniques of intertextuality, metafiction, magical realism and reader involvement clearly reverse and dispute the popular modernist literary style.

Mocking the ideological and stylistic limitations of the literature that came before it; a modernist literature which portrayed the world as troubled and on the edge of disaster by writers, like Earnest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Albert Camus, Virginia Woolf and Thomas Mann, postmodern authors tend to display the world as having already experienced a myriad of destructions and being beyond understanding or redemption; a world which left a number of writers with a deep sense of paranoia. J. W. Aldridge (1983) describes, henceforth, postmodern fiction as a fiction where:

Virtually everything and everyone exist in such a radical state of distortion and aberration that there is no way of determining from which conditions in the real world they have been derived or from what standard of sanity they may be said to depart. The conventions of verisimilitude and sanity have been nullified. Characters inhabit a dimension of structureless being in which their behavior becomes inexplicably arbitrary and unjudgeable because the fiction itself stands as a metaphor of a derangement that is seemingly without provocation and beyond measurement (p. 65).

This was, indeed, the literature of a purely postmodernist zeitgeist. This was a literature which glorifies past historical facts and deliberately delivers them throughout fictitious narratives. Provocative and appealing, it was a literature that



challenges traditional fictional narration techniques throughout intertextuality- the recognition of previous literary works within another artwork-, magical realism- the introduction of impossible or unrealistic events into a realistic narratives-, and the pastiche- the reliability on different earlier writings and literary styles and mingling them to extract a new style-

It is, certainly, a literature which emphasized a return to humans' liberation of imagination and expression in the greatest attempt of drawing direct address to the reader and the open recognition of the fictional nature of the events being delineated. In this regard, the German philosopher Hans Robert Jauss (1982) denotes literature as a "dialectical process of production and reception" in which:

A relationship of work to work must now be brought into this interaction between work and mankind, and the historical coherence of work among themselves must be seen in the interrelation of production and reception. Put another way; literature and art obtain a history that has the character of a process when the succession of works is mediated not only through the producing object but also through the consuming subject- through the interaction of author and public (trans 1982, p. 15).

Consequently, reader involvement in literature is of supreme importance. Producing various comprehensions, the literary artwork reading experience is therefore rendered quite personal, and the literary meaning meant to deliver is deemed to acquire a multiplicity of understandings all of which are open to acceptance and tolerance. On close analysis, postmodern literature revolutionized an age where human's imagination was blocked and shut down.

More specifically, in tending particular care and attention to past literary ideologies, conventions and stylistic techniques, a genre such fairytales and a movement like romanticism were reevaluated and brought once again to the surface to revive the dead emotions and the lost fantasy of a completely empirical time period.

### **1.4.3. Fairy Tales: New Existence of an Old Genre**

Set against the backdrop of a conflict waged among certain groups of French and English literature; a so-called quarrel set between the ancients and the moderns, the postmodernist library superseded all what have been muffling human's history, and empirically limiting the individual's freeing imagination, and have become animated by the spirits of its creators. Constituting a concrete realization and exhibition of the author's artistic beliefs and poetics, each of these writers is a valiant worrier very much convinced of his side's superiority; a keen awareness of his own status perfectly displayed throughout the writings.

Amongst these is the French academician Charles Perrault; a leading figure in the Querelle, a fighter for the moderns and an author best remembered for his fairy tale collections both in verse and prose. Generating an impressive multi-volume in which he evaluates the merits of both ancients and moderns under the title: *Parallel des Anciens et des Modernes qui regarde les Arts et les Sciences* (*Parallel of the Ancients and the Moderns regarding les Arts et les Sciences*, 1688-1692).

In point of fact, Charles Perrault's fairy tale collections might be acknowledged as a practical manifestation and a rhetorical defending spirit of modernist conventions. Conjoined with expressions of literary self-consciousness, Perrault's fairy tales largely display the shape of metaliterary literary reflection and formal experimentation. Indeed, if scrutinizing the existing scholarship embracing such particular ideologies, the focus would mostly lean on postmodern fairy tale adaptations done by writers, like Robert Coover and A.S. Byatt.

A highly recognized feature of postmodern literature, literary self-consciousness is scarcely a postmodern invention as few devices of it have been around for centuries ago in some of the four canonical titles belonging to a tremendous corpus of well and lesser known historical works: Lucian of Samostia's *True Histories* (2<sup>nd</sup> century, AD), Guillaume de Machault's *Le Voir Dit* (*True Accounts*, 1363-45), Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605, 1615) and Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759).

Accordingly, there is an absolute truth to Elizabeth Harries (1977) reflection

that “because we have ignored or forgotten other moments in the history of fairy tales, we fail to see the continuities that run through it”, and that, “[self-conscious play and critique have been part of the genre of the literary tale almost from the beginning” (p. 16). Fortunately, with the gradual emancipation of fairy tale studies from Folklorists, this inattentive amnesia was being remedied. In other words, approaching the fairy tale as an established literary genre; not mysterious, timeless and changeless, but with a rich traceable, documentable history of its own engraved within the evolving patterns of peculiar literary streams, scholars have grown comfortable with exploring matters of literary self-consciousness throughout the wonder tale genre’s history.

The result of such varying specialized efforts pulled onto specific authors, texts and time periods is astonishing; i.e., way before postmodernity, the fairy tale traditional canon had already generated a multitudinous of tales and collections which self-consciously relate to and experiment with their own status as literary texts and their connectedness to other hypo (texts), genres and current aesthetic and artistic movements’ conventions.

Examples of such literary productions tract from the early framed tale collections of Giambattista Basile and Marie-Catherine D’Aulnoy, to Christoph Martin Wieland’s idealistic triflings in fairylands, to the wonder tales deconstructions of decadent authors like Catulle Mendés and Anatole France, and the High Modernist tales of Robert Walser and Virginia Woolf. This recurring connections, henceforth, between the genre of enchantment and literary self-consciousness does not denote some sort of coincidental cases with a predictable development in postmodernity, but rather a conspicuously well-portrayed diachronic phenomenon running throughout the literary genre’s history.

Dwelling on the two major expressions of such phenomenon; that resume to first the metaliterary reflection throughout peritextual discourse and metafiction and secondly literary experimentation, is of high importance.

Beginning with the former, the most straightforward mean of inculcating meta-literary reflections to a fairy tale- literary and figuratively- is by means of peritextual

pieces, such as epilogues, introductions, frontispieces, notes and book covers. Conjoining the work with broader literary and artistic contexts, the author greatly engages in theorizing the work through matters which concern the genre, language and style, the function of enchantment in literature, and tradition versus innovation. The author right also exposes the relation between the story and cultural identity, without neglecting the lens through which to encourage readers to read, evaluate and extract deeper wisdom from the humble tales' form at hand.

However, it is of high significance to acknowledge that not all wonder tale peritexts are easy to decipher; while some require knowledge of their literary-historical context, others will turn out to be fully fictionalized; if not thoroughly fictions intending to mislead. This leads, for certain, to the underpinning vehicle for metaliterary reflexion; metafiction.

As a matter of fact, metafictionality is an important function of all fictional writing in the broader sense that such art work cannot but situate itself and is automatically situated to other texts and cultural repertoires under the large web of intertextuality. Exerced consciously or unconsciously, to write, invent, adapt or translate is to repeat, interpret and reject other texts and discursive conventions, constructing a form of a dialogic response. Indeed, even the most 'loyal' translations or adaptations of fairy tales might be read as a metafictional perspective on its own text.

Therefore, throughout a wide scope of metafictional devices, fairytales do spur on readers to give careful consideration to the literary constructedness of the text itself, and to enlarge the literary questions that exceed it in order to complement, supplement or replace the more or less direct metaliterary statements plausibly found in peritexts. Devices such intertextuality, deconstruction of narratorial voice and genre conventions, the author's identification with characters like the conteuses with their refined and powerful fairies, and the embedding of tales with narrative frameworks, enable the author to contextualize the act of storytelling and writing itself throughout expressive fictional characters. Inventive personage that highlight the significant connections between fairytales and ordinary life counter fight their

importance and artistic merits, and display the undeniable impact marvelous tales have on the audience.

Moreover, a less prototypical expression of literary self-consciousness which needs to be investigated is literary experimentation. Defined as the conscious digression from patterns and conventions aiming at trying something new based on the author's understanding of the literary field, fairy tales as a genre popularly associated to the term tradition is, indeed, an outlet of artistic novelty; i.e., literary experimentation. For certain, throughout the fairy tale's history, the proved to be very much proteanas it constantly continued to refashion and readapt itself to other developing genres and growing artistic movements.

Portraying a maturity that goes beyond the ideology of the fairy tale genre itself, wonder tale authors did not respond to these developing artistic movements a posteriori; many of them acted presumptuously and took the lead to delve in and venture in the very vanguard of literary experimentation and innovation. Related par excellence to the fairy tale's status as a fictional genre, the driving power behind such a provocative stance from authors with great penchant for literary theory and debate is, for certain, related to the fairy tale's long maintained status as an underdog genre, and to its openness and suitability for reflexivity and experimentation.

The fairy tale's strongest generic marker lies, henceforth, in its ostentatious digression from all of the conventionally accepted attributes at a peculiar time and place as a representation of historical empirical reality, by means of marvelous beings and enchanting objects and events.

Nevertheless, in spite of this historically hidden, rich vein of postmodernist literary self-consciousness with the fairy-tale tradition, the modernist rational spirit and empirical reasoning and ideology overshadowed the genre of enchantment, and muffled human's imagination and ability to venture and get lost into a world of magic and marvels. Delving into a wide spectrum of criticism and rejection, fairy tales have been marginalized for their creativity and inventive, remote characters and settings.

Extant examples of such criticism burst from the *Abbot of Villiers* dialogic

writing (1966) against the fairy-tale vogue when claiming that “not a single philosopher or able person that I know has ever invented or composed fairy tales”. As it is a genre “in bad taste”; to the Dutch Librarian Jacob Geel’s observation (1899) that “a deeply imprinted belief in that magical world [of fairy tales] in young minds may give rise to a nauseating, dim-witted narrow-mindedness that surely cannot be the goal of man’s higher education” (p. 9).

Consequently, the very repression of fairy tales occurred in the mid-twentieth century. Enabling fairy tales to resurface their contents, meanings and ideologies in accordance with the needs of the new social environment, the postmodernist zeitgeist conjoined the enchantment of the genre, permitted for a revival of imagination and creativity, and allowed fairy tales to further exploit and extend its incarnation and utilization of postmodernist patterns and devices, paving the way for the newly existence of an old genre. Functioning in the vernacular as a synonym of lies, the history of popular fiction is suffused with fairy tales spanning from Shakespeare to Shrek. However, a perceptible shift in the use of fairy tales by novelists and filmmakers did occur in the postmodernist era.

From the point of view of fairy tale studies and narrative studies, Adam Zolk over displays an interceding vision on these new contexts of the fairy tale in his article: *King Rat to Coraline: Faerie and Fairy tale in British Urban Fantasy*. In fact, contemporary British fantasy fiction, like China Miéville’s *King Rat* and Neil Gaiman’s *Neverwhere* and *Caroline*, utilize the fairy tale narrative structures but still waive its remote, enchanting dimensions. Set in present-day Britain, these novels use features of the fairy tale (quests, talking animals, etc) to defamiliarize this environment, to take it to the edge of plausibility.

Furthermore, recognized as an integral part of this postmodernist wave of reevaluation of the most waved and fashionable fairy tale scenarios, *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* by Angela Carter constitutes a canonized collection in the postmodernist era. Appropriated into the new genre of gothic fiction, Carter’s collection has become a repair and some sort of exemplary work of the postmodern fairy tale. Indeed, in contrast to the most important features of traditional fairytales,

of black and white characterization, remote temporal and spatial dimension, repetitiveness and a happy ending, Angela Carter's work portrays the way new meanings are generated when there exists a performative relationship between two texts. Investigating the relationship between Perrault's folk tale *Bluebeard* (1697) and Angela Carter's novella *The Bloody Chamber* (1979), Carter demonstrates the way intertextuality might be used in postmodernist fiction to revise past literary production and female characters representation.

Postmodern fairytales rose, therefore, with newly adopted features and patterns. This genre of enchantment became characterized by a heightened fictionality and opaque textuality, an emphatically altered style endowed by techniques of magical realism, complex and different characterization, highlighted by the character ambivalence, transgressiveness and symbolism, open-endings accompanied with a possible lack of a happy ending, the synergism of fairy tales and literary criticism-feminist in particular- and high analytical portrayal of human sexuality as well as the relationship between the two sexes.

As a conclusion, the fairy tale genre took various different paths around the turn of the twenty-first century. Adapted and adopted into new genres of Gothic fiction for teenagers, to postmodern ballet and surrealist film and paintings, fairy tales became stories to think with. Embracing a plurality of postmodernist devices, the genre of marvels and enchantment did display a non-conformity to traditional expectations, an emphasized empowerment of its characters' non-conformity to traditional expectations, and allowed for the establishment of revisited adventures without altering and erecting the essence of fairy tales; that of captivating and delighting.

#### **1.4.4. New Romanticism: A Modern World Romanticized**

Joining fairytales in their strong desire to revive imagination, the exotic and the unfamiliar, seeking for the representation of internal feeling of terror, awe, horror and love, Neo-romanticism emerged to cover a variety of movements in philosophy, literature, music and architecture. Regarding human emotions as important as the

supernatural, Neo-romanticism embraced a spirit tending to veer towards the natural and the historical. Promoting ideas such as perfect love, the beauty of youth, heroes and romantic death, this new wave bosomed a conscious and an intellect incarnated with a nostalgia fused with ideas of the past shorn of their stern realities.

Expressing the somber experiences of war and the empirical reasoning of an industrially modernized era, the Neo-romantic writers and poets such as Lewis Carroll to Alan Ginsberg diffused relieving poetics at the time. In particular, J.R.R. Tolkien was greatly influenced by the landscapes of Sarehole village in comparison to the ravaging industrial revolution. Containing various neoromantic characteristics, Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* greatly displayed this juxtaposition as he compared the love of nature seen in the Hobbits and Rohan against the industrialization imposed by Saruman.

Indeed, towards the simplified beauty of a bygone era, the persistence of romantic thought and literary practice throughout the late twentieth century is significant in various contexts; from the philosophical and ideological conception to the constituted form and themes of contemporary fiction and poetry. Best acknowledged as a call for humanity to connect with nature in a way that strongly denies both the modern lifestyle and pre-industrial tradition, the term 'Neo-romantic' was first coined by the writer and editor Raymond Mortimer in 1942.

Nebulous as the artistic style it described, expressive as its shared affinity with landscape and the natural world via which authors mirrored the swirling internal feeling of the interwar period, Mortimer succinctly defined the term 'Neo-romantic' as an "expression of an identification with nature" (Mortimer, 1942). In point of fact, Neo-romanticism neither embedded an organized union of artists nor an art theory, but rather an acute, intimate, spiritual way of perceiving the world; a vision developed from the illusionist forebears and amalgamating desperate patterns of the twentieth century Modernist movement.

Certainly, the early Neo-romantics namely George Sutherland and Paul Nash began by scrutinizing the original romantics themselves. To the 'ancients' ranging



from Williams Blake, Samuel Palmer to Edward Calvert, delivering images of Arcadian Shepherds evading through woods and camping at moonlight only urged for a grand emphasis on the sublimity of nature; on her all-encompassing splendor in contrast to defected man. A metaphor proving to be strongly appropriate amidst the mechanized and industrialized world, Neo-romantics once more leaned upon landscapes and natural world in quest for answers.

Replaced by new machines soon to be deemed powerful symbols of the Neo-romantic vernacular, gone was a freeing pastoral world accompanied with local farmhand. This, as a matter of fact, led to defining the Neo-romantic art movement by three key characteristics stated as follow: A criticism of modern society as unconnected from nature, a strong desire for a Utopian connection to nature uncoupled from social expectations and tradition, and finally a rejection of the dichotomy between society and nature. Since then, Neo-romantic artworks were being produced based upon the above mentioned characteristics.

Inspired by the rigid critique of society by the realists, the Neo-romantic desired an idealized version of landscape. Depicting nature as a desolate, scarred victim of human industry and civilization, Neo-romantics sought to revive nature as a refuge for man to escape to. It was, therefore, in landscapes that Neo-romantic writers developed their vision; their aesthetics around introspection aiming at mirroring the deep, rich, indicative condition of the human life.

In accordance with such beliefs and production, in his introductory essay on the McDowall collection of Neo-romantic art, Dr. Peter Wakelin described the way the Neo-romantics “looked two ways across the channel to Picasso, Ernst, Dix and others, and back to Turner, Blake, Palmer and the life and landscapes of the British Isles” (Wakelin, 1930). Looking forwards as well as back, Neo-romantics traced the path from the Ancients to the avant-garde attempting to reconcile the physical, visual reality of landscape; its earthiness, greenery, geology and topography throughout the emotional, imaginative movement. It was for certain an attempt to claim that “the unknown is just as real as the known, and must be made to look so” (cited in Rousseau, 1969).

The animism of landscape ornamented by patterns in which unmoving stones, broken trees and exanimate shrubs are rendered vivid and of great possession of a living, breathing spirit naturally embracing deep, personal resonances from its artistic masters. Henceforth, the approach trusted by Neo-romantics was far from being 'faithful' in the sense of fundamentally displaying a strict, realistic representation; but rather, centered and championed the idea of the genius loci; the 'spirit of place'. Neo-romantics imbued a mirror in the landscape and natural world to express their own emotional experience of place. Worth stressing as a personal element of Neo-romanticism; 'self-expression' is an author's work to which individuality and identity were significantly more glorified than stylistic codes, was an authentic manifest of the Neo-romantic zeitgeist.

In this sense, the pioneering German figure of George Phillip Friedrich von Hardenberg- under the pen name of Novalis- says that:

The world must be romanticized. In this way its original meaning will be rediscovered. To romanticize is nothing but a qualitative heightening. In this process the lower self becomes identified with a better self. In so far as I present the commonplace with significance, the ordinary with mystery, the familiar with the seamliness of the unfamiliar and the finite with the semblance of the infinite, I romanticize it (cited in Vermeulen & Akker, 2010).

As a matter of fact, these lines were long ignored by the thematic of modernity; impeded by discourses controlled by the postmodern. In the early 2000s, however, they have gradually begun to come forth; they were openly expressed at art shows in London and Berlin; they were widely repeated in pamphlets and papers in New York; they were reprinted in Max Hollein's catalogue entitled *Ideal Worlds: New Romanticism in Contemporary Art*; but most importantly, they were once again confidently embedded throughout literary artworks paving the way for a novel sense of the Romantic to reemerge.

Furthermore, representing an engagement with the everyday and the

commonplace; particular attributes quite central to both modernity which can be qualified by an unpleasant misfortune in the lane of universalism and postmodernity as the neurosis to deconstruct it in accordance with lines of race, gender and place, New Romanticism seeks to both: neither reconstruct and nor deconstruct the commonplace. It aims to establish a connection long ignored with the commonplace, all by discrediting the empirical enthusiasm of the time and destructing reasons. These newly displayed Neo-romantic engagements were often mistaken for the postmodern conventions.

Accordingly, De Mul firmly stated that Romanticism can be understood as the irresolvable tension between postmodernism and modernism. Yet there is a crucial difference: in Romanticism, this rather ‘postmodern’ irony is employed to hold the somewhat ‘modern’ aspiration in check; in the postmodern it is used to annihilate it. Romantic irony is intrinsically bound to desire; postmodern irony is inherently tied to apathy. The romantic art work deconstructs the modern piece by emphasizing what it cannot present, what it cannot signify: that which is beyond reason; the postmodern work deconstructs it by emphasizing exactly what it presents, by exposing precisely what it signifies (ibid).

In truth, inhabiting a spirit just like that of the fairy tales, there has been little like Neo Romanticism throughout the history of literature. Unveiling a treasure trove of astonishing, undiscovered gems, New Romanticism remains a turning point in the twentieth century art and literature. Defined by the previously mentioned characteristics, Neo-romanticism adopted many of the postmodern techniques to its literary productions among which the representation of the female character is of unique significance; a singled out based feature in the postmodern analytical reading of both fairy tales and Neo-romantic master-pieces.

#### **1.4.5. Postmodernism and the Feminist Politics of Representation**

Foregrounding the very truth of narratives being constructions, which embody both of the characters’ and readers’ perception, literary works have always been an important element of transferring the most significant and pertinent factors and

components constituting society and culture. An alive conscience of literature released from self-deception criticism is, for certain, a leading tool of literature to creativity. Selecting various procedures in the frame of their proficiency, authors have always leaned upon current societal and cultural ideologies and conventions to create meaning and inculcate substance in their narratives.

Indeed, every single work produced and ornamented by the setting, mood, and mainly characters reflects upon the circumstances of its period. Creating urgency and anticipation, elements of every rising literary movement established a well perceived and an undeniably noticed difference between literary works; a difference at times rendered a similarity in the postmodern era.

Departing from an absolute aim and desire to create a vivid world in a written version; a world stemming from the reality of the time, characters are in fact considered as a criminal element for attaining vivacity and motion. Infused with real feelings, authentic visions and reliable beliefs, literary characters are the perfect means for authors to transfer concerns and vexations of theirs. Regarded for centuries even for millennium, as a central entity to the work of literature is the female personage. In point of fact, postmodernists writers revived genres such as the fairy tale and movements like romanticism to create newly provocative interpretations of the female character in a myriad of contemporary versions which tend to challenge the tradition and underestimating perceptions of the ‘Ancients’.

Relying on various postmodern narrative strategies, through which women are represented, contemporary writings aim at articulating some of the 1970s Second-Wave feminists’ concerns such as female sexuality, gender equality and domestic violence to simply question and highlight the legitimacy of the female role and sexuality as constituted and shaped by the patriarchal society. Subverting, henceforth, the traditional representation of women as passive, innocent and beautiful naïve creatures, contemporary literary productions acknowledge the way postmodernist narrative tools like intertextuality help in revising past literary productions to extract an authentic, valuable image of the portray of female characters.

Accordingly, challenging norms and ideologies, the postmodernist feminist politics of representation are endowed with a strong desire to dismiss perspectives on women as historically presented as objects, and rather create powerful, active and unsubmitive female characters to the chauvinistic beliefs in general, and to men's mercy in particular. Indeed, pertaining to the post cultural approach, the body of the female character is of premium importance in contemporary writings.

Suggesting the importance of the physical show a great interest in exploring and investigating the importance of the representations of skins for identity formation and perception transformation in the new world. In other words, disregarding the 'white' stereotype of the female character, postmodernists aim at including all of the marginalized races throughout the centuries to for mostly strengthen, glorify and empower the female gender.

Proving strong will to unveil the general nature of 'patriarchal bargains'- the social structures and ideologies which shape women's resistance and consent- the most significant elements of this humble research work namely the 'woman' and 'nature' are greatly displayed in postmodern writings. Indeed, somehow between survival and resistance, women and the feminized nature are granted power to act according to their will, and strength to out speak their desires, needs and motivation and essential feelings. Quite alike in their inner nature of resisting and fighting against the injustice exhibited over them, the 'woman' and 'nature' knew for certain the way to enrich the female characters of produced literary artworks.

Manifesting, therefore, cultural contexts and societal circumstances postmodernist feminist politics of representation did surely change the way women are perceived in the real world. Throughout vivid and active female characters, the established written narrative knew the straight forward way of captivating readers and importing them into a world full of adventures. Full of ventures and hazardous disputes, the postmodernist zeitgeist spread on the newly drawn characters and written stories a new lens for reading fairy tales.

## **1.5. Conclusion**

To pure spirits fond of travel and exploitation, to enthusiastic lovers of artistic narration, the universe of literature lays down a wide variety for readers to delve in. Applauded for its originality, triumphant for its creativity, literary art works mesmerize readers and dislocate their rationality into a world full of inventive aesthetic creations. Rich in its long varied history, literature embraces an opulent, multifaceted assortment of movements and genres. At times intertextual and at others completely contrastive, each of the literary movements holds close structured ideologies and convictions to make the difference and create the debate in minds that are in a constant quest for the truth.

Likewise, the necessary intrusion of a wide variety of genres and concepts to display the zeitgeist of every movement embellished the universe of literature, inquisitively leading lovers of new explorations and agonistic connections to find pure joy and delight. This led to the exploration of various conceptual definitions and implications including the fairy tale genre, Romanticism to perceive nature's status and utilization, the reemergence of both fairy tales and Romanticism in postmodern movement.

Marvelous and exquisite, and born out of a taste for recounting stories, fairy tales in particular were not institutionalized as the literary genre popularized today; i.e, a whole narrative of its intriguing evolution in time might be traced. In point of fact, though extracting its roots from the folklore tradition, it is only with Giambattista Basile, Charles Perrault, and Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm that fairy tales became an established literary genre. Hostile but bewitching, deemed a lieu of ordeals and exploration par excellence, fairy tales are filled with typical mythical entities, such as giants, dwarfs, mermaids, unicorns and fairies.

Indeed, the fairy tale genre have influenced the upcoming movements to not fear to write, express and set free the imagination of every human kind. Romantic literature in particular as a body of writing whose deepened appreciation of the hero, the natural and the imaginative is celebrated is a true revival of fairy tales. At a time where reason overlapped sentiments, romantic literature came as a truly revived glorification of imagination transcended through the unique ephemeral spiritual

experience and emotional truth.

Throughout time, wonder tales have learned to alter and inculcate new beliefs and meanings to its tales and characters. At the heart of the sociological theory and intellectual movement of postmodernism, fairy tales were greatly characterized by the style and concepts of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophical movement. Characterized by a denial of long-held beliefs and conventions, and best understood as a questioning of the ideas and values associated with a form of modernism that believes in progress and innovation, wonder tales in postmodernism have been redefined and rewritten so as to fit the spirit and ideology of the era. At a time where women have earned power and positive agency, fairy tale female characters have moved from passiveness to fully powerful, independent and active personages.

In a new era, therefore, and in sharing aspects with romanticism, the romanticized postmodern fairy tales have projected new experiences and values for the reader to delve in. A better way, in fact, to fully transfer meanings and beliefs to the audience is done by means of transporting written narratives to the screen; leading to the rise of a newly appreciated entertaining industry; Cinema.

Consequently, the following chapter investigates the migration of the fairy tale genre to the cinematic field all by unveiling the way contemporary wonder tale female characters have been endowed an ecofeminist spirit. As the core of this study relies in unravelling the nature of the relationship between the woman and nature, this chapter presents concepts that help in understanding both the historical connections and the compared exploitations of women and mother nature.

# **Chapter Two**

*Woman and Nature*

*Conjoined*



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“Mutation, or transformation that brings about the creation of a new idea. This phase is the phase of creation or invention. If new ideas are not created, there is also the possibility of another kind of mutation—the loss of an idea or a custom. The innovation will not be transmitted unless there is a desire to teach it, that is, to disseminate it and to learn it.”

Luigi Luca Cavalli-Sforza

### 2.1. Introduction

From ink to screen, from purely read stories to tales fully projected on the screen, the fairy tale genre has known an unprecedented migration to the world of cinema. Indeed, with the acclivitous emergence of cinema as a new art of narration, fairy tales were rendered crucial for the cinematic production, chiefly upgraded and diffused by the twentieth century Walt Disney Company.

Accordingly, by means of enchanting moving motions, Disney elated the fairy tale movie genre, and projected works which embrace princesses and fervent features. Enchanting though, the Disney enterprise made sure to create female characters holding strong ideological values and mirroring societal conventions and rigid, realistic male chauvinism; a progress from a normative traditional to an empowered female agency that might be noticed throughout the three different generations of the Disney Princess Franchise.

Therefore, in the purest attempt of discovering, investigating and establishing a relationship between the woman and nature, the following chapter unveils the ecofeminist concept and the conceit concept in literature as the main frameworks upon which the woman/nature entity is set on. The word conceit is, ergo, used as a valuable analytical tool for any work of art. In this sense, the word conceit in this humble research work is used in both meanings.

To further clarify the idea, the conceit is used as both an extended metaphor to establish the comparison between the woman and nature, and as a general guiding concept of the research represented. Carrying its various connotations and utilizations, the conceit undeniably supplements any art work with fanciful meaning and striking elaborate representations of connections and definitions.

By the same token, an antithetic concept that supports widening and understanding both the historical connections and the compared exploitations of women and mother earth is ecofeminism. As a vital branch of Feminism, ecofeminism scrutinizes the connections between the subjugation of women and the domination of nature; which are quite significant areas of this study.

Decisively, the last part of this chapter clears up the entrance of wonder tales in the cinematic field, and the rise of the new cinematic genre of the Walt Disney Company. Rendered primordial, cinematography is indeed quite indispensable to the research as the cinematic movies of the *Frozen* franchise and *Moana* are utterly used for the contextual case study.

## **2.2. Women and Life on Earth: The Shaping of Ecofeminism**

To those who cogitate the unfathomed abstraction pertaining to the woman and the natural world. To those particularly calling into question the unjustified oppression and domination of the woman and nature. To those who are making tremendous efforts to understand how the lives and the status of women are being joined to environmental issues, the most inventive and sophisticated philosophical ecology of all under the name of ecofeminism does indeed kindle the muted silences of every wonderer.

### **2.2.1. Ecofeminist Theory: An Overview on the Woman-Nature Relation**

Canonical for the abiding life on earth, the woman and nature vociferate and bosom a history empty of delight and freedom, but quite full of confining subversion and lucrateness exploitation. A new term born out of an ancient wisdom, the ecofeminist theory was born a few decades ago out of the thorough analogy between

the oppression of women and the domination of nature. In the context of urgency and collapse and as a concept of the convergence of struggles resurfaces, ecological feminism- as a branch of ecofeminism- is an intellectual critique as well as an activist and academic movement views a profound connection between the exploitation and degradation of the natural world and the subordination and oppression of women.

Emerging in the mid-1970s alongside the second wave of feminism and the Green movement, ecofeminism imparts elements of the feminists and green movements, while at the same time laying down a challenge to both. In other words, the feminist environmental philosophy borrows from the green movement a concern about the effects of the human activities upon the nonhuman world and from feminism the view of humanity as gendered in ways that exploit, oppress, and subordinate women.

Indeed, born out of a quite unique and special connectedness, Mother Nature is the abyssal terrain of this woman- nature entity. Just like the woman, nourishing and embracing all of the lives on earth, mother nature is a personification of nature which focuses on the life- giving and nurturing aspects of nature by embodying them in the form of the mother. Stemming out of the Latin word “Natura” and signifying birth or character, the “Natura” and the personification of mother nature were tremendously popular during the Middle Ages.

Standing between the properly divine and the human, mother nature as a concept might be traced to Greek Mythology. Just like what the Algonquian legend claims: “beneath the clouds lives the Earth-Mother from whom is derived the Water of Life, who at her bosom feeds plants, animals and human” (cited in Merchant, 1980), Gaia, Demeter, and most other deities of nature were goddesses as nature represented fertility. Nature, therefore, in its most extreme abundant and diverse creation is called ‘Mother Nature’ as she produces, she consumes, she provides and cares, she gives and takes, she breathes and most importantly, she even is delighted by her beautiful sunny day, or miserable by her tempest and outrageous storms.

Another key element quite essential to the understanding and enlightening of this woman/nature parallels is a woman and nature as being the subject of the male gaze. As patriarchy has manipulated and controlled women's movement, rights and autonomy, the seamless and organic ecosystems alive in nature, juxtaposed by mechanical masculinity of capitalism and technology, were too subject to manipulation and exploitation. Driven to near exhaustion and even revolt, according to the writer of the Anthropocene: *The Human Era and How it Shapes our Planet*, human beings made their entrance into a new epoch- the Anthropocenes- ;i.e., a geological age conducted by human impact on earth.

It is, in fact, a time and era where, as Christian Schwagerl (2014) asserts: "man has become the biggest influence on the biosphere". More so than humans certainly, men did push the planet into a new epoch due to the system of production and consumption created by them. Using nature as canvas and colours to create the world desired, man-made economies, laws and policies predominantly established a status quo that prioritizes men and growth.

However, quite disconcerting than the creation which man-made systems urged in producing devastating changes to the earth, in males supreme hubris; his very idea that he can be the saviour of the destruction he has created. Defined as the belief that technology can 'solve' the earth climate crisis by controlling the earth systems, there is certainly nothing more evident than the discussions and plans surrounding geoengineering. Aiming to manipulate earth climate systems by artificially changing oceans, soils and the atmosphere, the geoengineering technologies are unprecedentedly ambitious in their scale and realization, but quite destructive and demonic in their nature.

As a response to the intended modern capitalist development model based on technologies and economics, which insatiably drives 'men' for the search of unrestrained riches stemming from the old desire for patriarchal power, Carolyn Merchant in her *The Death of Nature, Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution*, claims that: "until the rise of capitalism, the Earth was held in high esteem and reverence as a living mother, the Earth was alive and considered to be a

beneficent, receptive, nurturing female” (Merchant, 1980,p28). Nature, therefore, went from being honoured and treasured to being exploited and destroyed.

In light of such systems deemed manipulative, nature in a very similar way to the woman has long been the object used for the technological and production progress without accountability. Ecofeminism is, thus, a worthwhile lens to revolt against the exploitation and deconstruction of the various forms of male domination in society. Intently exploring the relationship between women and nature via the utilization of the gender concept to analyse the relationship between humans and the natural world, ecofeminists require that feminism and environmentalism play a key role in overcoming the chauvinistic boundaries set for centuries.

In generating, on close analysis, the woman-nature link; this very particular perception of nature as female and, more specifically, as maternal undergoing the exact male patriarchal practices, the ecofeminists address the inherent inequalities in world structures which allow men to dominate nature, and if the final outcome of the present world system is a global threat to life on earth, it is of tremendous importance to revive and nurture the impulses and determinations inherent in all living things to survive.

### **2.2.2. Nature as a Feminist Issue: Historicalization**

In a grand movement that seeks important contributions to social theory and ambitious empowerment and elevation of the woman, penetrating into the rootage and origins of feminist environmental philosophy is of eminent worth.

#### **2.2.2.1 Feminist Environmental Philosophy Genesis**

Once upon a time in displaying the dogmatic doctrine of analogy; a one that unveils the lack of respect, the place assigned and the rendering invisible of existence and contribution as similar characteristics between the exploitation of women and that of nature, the genesis of an informing ecological philosophy to the feminist and environmental activist and artistic movements came out into view. First emerging in North American and European circles in the 1970’s , ecofeminism came forth as an

outgrowth of the feminist movement specifically linking the subjugation of women to humanity's oppressive relationship with nature. In point of fact, the emergence of ecofeminism in the United States of America and Europe is chiefly related to the nuclear arms race inbuilt in the Cold War.

Denouncing the militarism of society in the United States, the woman's Pedagon Action gathered two thousand women following the accident at the Three Miles Island nuclear power station in March 1979 to halt the political orientation of the government in maintaining a strong military force and using it aggressively in defending or promoting national interests. In Britain, on the other hand, the motive was quite different.

In other words, throughout an organized peace camp, women protested against the nuclear missile storage project at the former Royal Air Force station in the civil parished of Greenham and Thatcham in the English country of Berkshire; the RAF Greenham Common. As a quite pacifist and dovish movement, the peace camp was established and promoted by women who saw war unacceptable and strongly desired to preserve the lives of their children, and, more specifically the future of humanity and the planet.

Moreover, influenced by the liberation theology as well –a radical movement that sought to apply religious faith in helping the poor and the oppressed through involvement in political and civic affairs- American ecofeminism also includes deep in its roots a spiritual current of theologians who protest against the fact that God is male, nature is certainly not important and hence not taken into consideration, and that women are harshly expelled to the background. However, alongside this ecofeminism of the West, there is also a more Southern ecofeminist vision in its emergence.

Indeed, the Third World Southern ecofeminist awareness emerged out of environmental issues, such as floods, droughts, cyclones and deforestation. Greatly affecting people and more intensely impacting women, several movements were in fact formed. Numerous forests being monopolized by the British colonial rule

remaining state property with strong military influence even after independence. The Chipko Andolan movement was of huge impact. Under the aim of saving the forests from industrial and commercial exploitation purposes, the Chipko Andolan movement was a forest conservation movement led by women; indigenous women affected the most by the 1970s deforestation.

Certainly, for women living in their own in villages that adjoined forest on the intern of the Himalayas as men migrated to the city to work, lands covered with trees and shrubs were of tremendous importance. In the name of the protection of the environment that was the habitat and refuge of these women, Indian peasants ferociously started encircling trees to prevent them from being cut down. Their home ground meant so very much that they physically interposed their bodies between them and the army approaching to cut them. Not daring to draw close and attack women, this action was for certain an enormous success.

Another movement exemplified is the Green Belt Movement in Kenya. Established to respond to the needs of women, the Green Belt Movement was founded in 1977 by Wangari Maathai. Denouncing and denoting dehydration of water supplies and the evaporation of food supplies, women for certain suffered in securing food and water, and were obliged as well to hollowly walk further and further to get their wood for fuel and fencing. The Green Belt Movement in Keneya, joined with the Chipko Andolan movement were alternatively foundational for the departure of the ecofeminist philosophy.

Joining the movement and adding an important vision in the commencement of the ecofeminist theory is the leading Indian philosopher, Vandana Shiva. Turbulently denouncing, among author things, demographic policies which hold women responsible for overpopulation, Shiva opposes what is unfairly viewed as the cause of environmental crisis, birth control. To put it another way, deemed inhumanly cruel in its inception, Vandana Shiva contended the denied productive rights which led, with the aid of the army, to the abortion of thousands of foetuses of girls mainly as they were less valued and estimated than boys.



Another key fact to add to the historical beginning of ecofeminism is for the most part related to the Buen Vivir concept. Contributed by the indigenous people of Latin America, Buen Vivir is a way of thinking based on a harmonious relationship between human beings and nature. Women as advocates playing an important role, this concept greatly approves the quality of life rather than the acquisition of a quantity of objects.

It is, therefore, through exerted strenuous and labored efforts that women have come to articulate feminist and ecological issues all to intersect the harsh battles against the supremacy defeated by women and nature, allowing consequently their emancipation. Connected in their nature and quite reinforcing to one another in patriarchal culture, the central thesis for departure of ecofeminists, such as Vandava Shiva displayed a parallel between the pregnant women which permits the selection of foetuses and portrays the way scientists try to dominate and shape culture, and the unhuman erasing of wild plants for the expansion of monocultures. To put it more simply, the ecofeminist outgrowth highly developed and matured through the impressive collective, creative, inventive and nonviolent experience of women; a harsh root for reaching liberation, preservation and emancipation.

#### **2.2.2.2. Origins of the Ecofeminist Theory**

Carrying a heavy origin's calendar, the human is certainly the starting point for most feminist ecological theory. Indeed, greatly sparing the patriarchal and hierarchal history of civilization, the dominant forms of development and globalization are perceived as a continuation of the project of domination of nature, women and indigenous peoples; a part added to the supremacy of the 'other'.

Significantly, quite different from classical colonialism, the dominant powers' exploitation of the weakest by means of military conquest, bureaucratic administration occupation, and pitiless industrial profiteering, neo-colonialism successfully attains many of the same goals through national elite and for certain a more powerful and advanced technology. Development is, therefore, seen as a transformation of colonialism, and such 'maldevelopment' is a sure enough reduction

of both women and nature to passive objects manipulated by economic and technological forces. Consequently, this reduction is not only displayed in the realm of ideas and values but also carries out a long historical project of pacification and disempowerment of women.

Advocating, therefore, the ‘feminine principle’ as an antidote to environmental devastation by means of attributes that nurture nature, the first time the term ‘ecofeminism’ was displayed was in 1974 by the French author and leader of her country’s feminist movement Francoise D’Aubonne. In point of fact, as the late 1980s and early 1990s was a fertile time period of ecofeminist writings which explain the link between women’s inequality and environmental degradation, the inaugural fundamental practical impact of ecofeminist thinking was felt and dispatched in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) of 1992. Embracing women’s environmental organization lobbying for women’s and environmental rights to be carefully reckoned in tandem, the UNCED along with the 1995 forth Women’s Conference in Beijing concurred for the first time that both women’s and environmental rights are not to be disentangled.

Despite the plausible influence unveiled through the UN initiatives, by the late 1990s withal, the output on ecofeminism has significantly gone down in value as there was almost a sense of it being gone out of stream. However, it was only in the new millennium and by the rise of a new generation of writers, researchers and activists that ecofeminist debates surged once again to the surface.

To put it another way, it was only through the ecological feminist debates which encompass high considerations of ecofeminist citizenship, challenges to some earlier critiques and insertion of feminist concerns and involvements into environmental justice and political ecology that the ecofeminist theory that regained prompt consideration and adoption. Admiring a resurgence through a brand new generation of academics aiming at developing and portraying ecofeminism from a sympathetic position, the ecofeminist theory arose all by embracing four main principles.

First and foremost, it is quite important for ecofeminists to display that both the

oppression of women and the degradation of nature are conjoined by cause. In other words, the patriarchal dominance along with its presupposed masculine attributes as more valuable and deserving recognition has established the degradation of nature along with the marginalization of the woman. This oppression was seen as the hindrance of the capitalistic doctrine as it places value on productivity by any means and consequently violates many attributes regarded feminine, including nature itself.

Therefore, since the 1980s strong ecofeminist concerns with nuclear warfare and militarism, materialism and capitalism, and toxic waste pollution and deforestation, a new vision which refers to the linkages of people , gender, culture, environment, nature was put forward; a one through the lens of environmental feminism.

Furthermore, the second ecofeminist principle advocates the strong replacement of culture of domination with a humanistic ethic of care. Urging for such change is the American ecofeminist philosopher and historian of science, Carolyn Merchant in her *The Death of Nature*, Merchant (1980) declares that: “ecofeminism is calling for an ethic of care and an ethic where decisions are made equitably.”

Joining the very same vision is the Professor of sustainability and English and an ecofeminist writer, Heidi Hutner, when she explains that “when we poison the Earth, we are poisoned, and it all comes from the history of patriarchal domination where whoever holds the most power has this right to dominate, control and exploit everyone else” (cited in Merchant, 1980). When erasing, therefore, this entire chauvinistic system of domination and exploitation and substituting it with an ethic of care, a more humanistic benevolence and acting in a way that subordinates care for the others will invade the world.

The third key principle of feminist political ecology is the banning of all form of oppression, i.e.; under ecofeminism all forms of oppression are unacceptable. Katharine Wilkinson, author and vice president of Project Drawdown, explained that “if you are a person, a community, a family, or even a country that is already facing many threats, whether that is around health, inequity, whatever the case might be,

climate change layers on and makes all of those threats more intense” (Wilkinson, 2018). She further continued by saying that “in a patriarchal system, women and girls- particularly women and girls who are poor- women and girls of colour, indigenous women and girls- are already on uneven footing layer on climate change, and those existing vulnerabilities become heightened” (ibid). For environmentalism to be all-inclusive, it definitely has to take into account all people for when these issues converge, their effects become more compounded.

The final and fourth principle of ecofeminism claims that understanding these connections is quite essential for and even handed change. Indeed, for the occurrence of a real and equitable positive impact in both eccentric causes of ecological degradation and the subordination of women in particular, ecofeminists urge for an understanding of their linkages to patriarchal society.

Specifically, feminism has to take into consideration ecological concerns and vice versa. As stated in *Gender Dynamics in a Changing Climate*: “it is really critical that we understand the gender dynamics around climate impacts because we need to have strategies and approaches through adaptation and resilience that respond to those inequities” (Webb, 2015).

As a conclusion, the ecofeminist movement has for decades drawn attention upon gender inequality intersects with the environmental crisis. Highlighting a marked resurgence in an era of new open-minded academics, the rootage and origins of ecofeminism has unveiled a history full of periods of high and low interactions and acceptance. Indeed, investigation of the intersectionality of race, class and gender oppression applied in the arena of environmental activism did gender the ecofeminist environmentalists.

This, in truth, leads to the revolutionary rise of a variety of approaches to thinking about and acting on behalf of the environment; while still all recognising the necessary linkage between a healthy ecology and equitable salubrious lives for women.

### 2.2.2.3. Feminism and Ecology: Canonical Types

Emerging in various geographies around the two conjoined categories of ‘ecology’ and ‘gender’, and established as a critical subfield within feminist theory and environmental theory holding as central tenet women’s subjugation under patriarchy as fundamentally joined to the oppression and exploitation of nature under capitalist, colonial and modernist powerful influences, the field of ecofeminism has since evolved by means of an intersectional lens that regards strong links between gender, race and ecology.

In point of fact, early works which centered its attention upon women/gender and the environment has been unconditionally influenced by US and international ecofeminist scholarship. Indeed, women’s relationship to the environs and to natural resources was celebrated and deemed quite different from that of men’s. As ecofeminists during the 1970s thought in various lines and in a variety of forms, it is thus of great importance to identify and shed light upon the four ecofeminist main stands: cultural ecofeminism, social ecofeminism and materialist ecofeminism.

Sometimes labelled radical or spiritual feminism, cultural ecofeminism was developed in the early 1970s. Historically regarded as the first stand of ecofeminism, cultural ecofeminism reforms women-nature connections as strongly liberating and empowering expressions of women’s abilities to care for nature. Assigning women as a closer entity to nature than men, various cultural ecofeminists provide evidence of women’s reproductive capacities as a biologically approximate tie with nature. Considering women’s ways of thinking and moral reasoning appropriately suited to environmental problems, other cultural ecofeminists argue that women’s closeness to nature is embodied in profound social and psychological patterns.

Some, furthermore, claim for a revival of pre-patriarchal religious and spiritual practices, such as Goddess worship or pagan rituals which glorified women’s bodies and reproductive powers. In spite of the different beliefs, however, all cultural ecofeminists consent upon women’s special and useful bond to the physical world; a one quite essential for ending the unjustified dominations of both women and nature.

In other words, the cultural ecofeminist strand initially based women's focus on a mutual subjugation under chauvinistic systems. Frequently regarded as essentialist, this position bases its understanding of the relationship between women and environment on an important characterization of women as closer to nature.

Following the scientific revolution, the dualisms of women/men and nature/culture are perceived as parallel with man and culture's positions of dominance. Taken as a source of power and aiming to reverse dominance positions, these dualisms are not denied under cultural ecofeminism; i.e., the association of women and nature is gendered; a common image to consider this association is Earth as Mother. regarded as an establisher of essentialist, universalist and ahistorical claims about both women and nature, the predominantly essentialist cultural ecofeminist stream was partially replaced by a social ecofeminist strand.

Emerging during the 1990s, the social ecofeminist strand was quite constructivist in its nature. Regarding women's identities as socially constructed, historically trended and materially strengthened, the social ecofeminist position socially constructed gender roles of childcare and the gendered division of labour. Rejecting the vision of inherently associating women to nature, social ecofeminists position women closer to nature through their labour.

In fact, as the focus has been primarily put on child upbringing or other nurturing roles, the social ecofeminist strand of the developed world conceived these roles as an explanation for women's fundamental involving and activism is environmental health issues. In the third world, on the other hand, as primary sources for meeting immediate human needs, such as drinking water provisions and firewood collection for meal preparations, women are designated as possessing responsibility for subsistence production and natural resource tasks. These gender-based responsibilities are deemed to generalize women as the first to become aware of environmental exploitation and to locate their gender-based aims in line with those of environmental conservation and emancipation.

To put it another way, a gender roles approach declared in the 1990s that

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women's roles and responsibilities render them resource users and managers, providing them with interests in both natural resources and special knowledge of those natural resources. Moving onto materialist ecofeminism, however, a relieving middle ground is displayed.

Adopting for certain a quite socio-cultural mingled vision, materialist ecofeminism declares that women-nature linkages and connections are both socially constructed and biologically predisposed, i.e.; women's biology including their bodies and reproductive capabilities has historically played a major role in both women's oppression and women's identification with nature. Women's biology is yet not destiny. The social, material and political relationships between women and nature are instead more important and significant.

Nevertheless, embracing this ecofeminist general outline, it is of high possibility to extract three primary established influences that various variants of ecofeminist thought have dispatched on geography's perception of the connection between gender and the human-environment connections. As a first influence is the examination of nature as feminine. Opening new horizons, the dualistic amalgamation of women with nature and men with culture was primary adopted as a source of strength, and women's connectedness to the environment regarded as superior to men's.

Later developed into a more critical framework, this elementary embracing of nature as female lead to complex assessments of ideas of natural landscapes as female, with investigations of the sociocultural mechanisms via which nature becomes feminized in particular and explorations of the impact this feminization has on human-environment relations in a broader sense. Moreover, as a second impact of the three strands is a highly focussed interest on shared oppressions. In fact, the newly coming out visions of science feminist critiques regarding ideas of situatedness of knowledge conduced to a clearer treatment of the relationship between women and nature as quite different from the relationship between men and nature.

In other words, women do embrace a different perspective on and knowledge of the environs as they are oppressed through gender structures just as much as nature

is oppressed by male-dominated society. Viewed by some as superior to men's, this perspective and knowledge is more recently regarded as simply different and is only an outcome of all the different attributes of a person's identity including gender.

Last but not least, the final influence to be stated is the assumption adopted about women's privileged access to nature through gender roles and responsibilities. Indeed, envisioned as a central core to the understanding of women's relationships to the environment is women's material connectedness to local environs through their labour. The taken approach, hence, may greatly differ from an essentialist position which foregrounds women's child care and subsistence delivery to a constructivist belief that investigates gendered labour divisions peculiar to a time and place.

At the close, in spite of conflictual beliefs and different visions, all of the three ecofeminist strands helped in highlighting the relevance of ecology and environmentalism to the feminist approach. While contemporary feminism has certainly made huge efforts and showed considerable progress in unveiling the interconnections of various forms of human oppression as sexism, racism, heterosexism and ethnocentrism, all ecofeminists take a firm stand in extending feminist analyses to portray the relationship between the unjustified domination of nature and the degradation of the woman. This, however, did not spare the field from criticism; an arena revealed in the upcoming section.

#### **2.2.2.4. Towards a Revised Ecofeminist Philosophy**

The feminist environmental philosophy, particularly as formulated in the 1970s and 1980s, did receive much criticism from feminist philosophers for its essentialist inclinations disposing women as closer to nature. Certainly, ecofeminist works which encompass academic, literary and popular texts insisted on women being biologically and socially linked to nature. Critical scholars and activists of ecofeminism considered, therefore, this long continued relatedness of women with nature as problematically strengthening existing patriarchal patterns which subjugate women.

Accused for creating a single unified portrait of the woman, feminist scholars primarily criticised the ecofeminist essentialist learnings accompanied with an



ignorance of the differences among women and the intersections of gender with other social structures.

Quite concerned with the political ecology of resource access and control, feminist geographers have perceived ecofeminism as a major problematic for understanding the gendered structures of nature and environments. As a foremost shaper of ecofeminist thought with respect to Third World women and environs, Vandana Shiva theoretical positions has been problematic.

More specifically, Shiva's 1988 *Staying Alive; Women, Ecology and Survival in India* unveiled and dispatched the negative impacts on the Green Revolution in India on both agrarian women and the environment.

Highlighting a feminine principle deemed to be crucial for maintaining humanity's concordance with nature, Shiva's principle mirrors rural Third World women's different spirituality and relationship to the environment being greatly significant for the occurrence of a balanced and sustainable growth. Many geographers, however, perceived Shiva's argument as romanticizing of both the feminine and indigenous as antidotes to a damaging and capitalist development.

Furthermore, another key point under criticism in the ecofeminist field is the framework applied upon women and nature intersection, i.e.; on the constructed and produced binaries, such as man/woman, culture/nature and self/other. Falsely categorizing opposing groups, unfairly attributing disproportionate value to one grouping and inhumanly encouraging hierarchal thinking, binary definitions have much been influenced by structuralism and semiotics. Cultural metaphors as exemplified by Merchant and Kolodny : "women are commonly, but not necessarily, associated with nature, and landscape, the fertility of the earth, the waxing and waning of the moon, with passivity, and the hearth" (Kolodny, 1975; Merchant, 1980), did for certain shape individual lives as well as public discourse.

In point of fact, numerous literary and philosophical texts related to nature encompass certain "cultural premises" which often take for granted the presence of themes of dualism and domination there within (Mallory, 2001, p. 83). Aiming,

therefore, at unveiling the origins of women's oppression and the degradation of nature and the connectedness between the two, various ecofeminist philosophers pulled a lot of efforts in discovering the root of the structures of dualism and domination. Strongly eminent in the oppression of men over women and the oppression of humans, there certainly is a peculiar way in which domination manifests itself. In an attempt at demonstrating the steps via which the process of domination occurs, Victoria Davion (2001) reports that:

There are (i) back grounding, the oppressors' creation of a dependency on the oppressed while simultaneously denying that dependency; (ii) radical exclusion, constructing supposed differences between oppressors and the oppressed in terms of radical differences in order to justify subordination of the oppressed; (iii) incorporation, the construction of the devalued size of a dualized pair as lacking morally relevant features associated with the other side; (iv) instrumentalism, the construction of groups seen as morally inferior, lacking any morally important interests; (v) homogenization, the denial of differences between those on the underside of dualized pairs (seeing all women or all slaves as the same). (Davion, 2001, p. 235)

Based on Davion's description, it is therefore undeniably rid of obstructions that acts of domination depend greatly on dualism. Generated to justify the domination of one over the other, radical exclusion as an example is based on the formation of overemphasizing differences occurring between two parties, such as male and female and natural and cultural. "This kind of dualism" as stated Young (2011) "is common in the patriarchal worldview which, historically and contemporarily, sees everything through the lens of division and hierarchy." ( p. 130).

To put it another way, as oppositional dualism is complimented by the construction of hierarchical structures where cultures provide more value and power to one side of the binary, ecofeminism perceives hierarchies exposed in gender relations through chauvinistic social structures, and in relations with nature through an anthropocentric view that humans are more important and valuable than nature and all other human beings.

Approved to function for maintaining, explaining and justifying institutions, connections and practices of unjustified domination and exploitation, and oppressive conceptual framework is patriarchal. Used to justify the subordination of women and nature by men, a conceptual framework is defined by Warren (2013) as “a set of basic beliefs, values, attitudes and assumptions that shape and reflect how one sees oneself and one’s world.” Sharing conceptual roots in the five aspects of an oppressive conceptual framework, “sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism and ethnocentrism” are perfect examples of what Warren entitles “issues of domination”.

Regarded as the first feature of value hierarchal perception is Up-Down thinking. This feature provides greater value and estimation to that which is ‘Up’ than that which is ‘Down’. In canonical philosophy, value patriarchal thinking places men Up and women Down; culture Up and nature Down. By giving greater value to that which is ranked higher, the Up-Down organization of real life serves to justify a legitimate inequality “when, in fact, prior to the metaphor of Up-Down, one would have said only that there existed diversity.”

Furthermore, the second feature is oppositional and mutually exclusive dualisms, which place higher value on one group over the other. Moreover, enabling the wealthy to not perceive the way socioeconomic status is an important challenge to equality of opportunities, the third and fourth features of oppressive conceptual framework are the perception of power and privilege as means of systematically advantaging the Ups over the Downs. Last but not least, the fifth and perhaps most significant feature of an oppressive conceptual framework is the logic of domination; a moral premise that superiority justifies subordination.

As a conclusion, binary definitions allow the rise of oppositional dualism; unfair definitions where one side is not only exhibited as different from the other, but as its complete opposite. Existing in conventional definitions of humanity’s relationship with nature, oppositional dualism in a such case positions the natural environment as an obstacle to be overcome or as a resource to be exploited.

Within this framework, human emancipation is seen as opposite to the

protection of nature; tremendous reasonings behind the subjugation of both women and nature. Expressed through masculine cultural norms, oppositional definitions are indeed used to justify masculinized acts of violence and submission of both women and natural world.

### **2.2.2.5. On Ecofeminists' Perspectives**

Alternative in its nature and captivating in its arguments, visions and definitions that it represents, the ecofeminist philosophy did draw tremendous attention from various fields. Indeed, rich in the way she exhibits the relationship between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature, the linguistic perspectives of such a treatment are greatly important to discover. "The language one uses mirrors and reflects one's view of oneself and the world" (Wittgenstein, 1953).

Indeed as Ludwig Wittgenstein declares, language plays a significant role in one's conceptual framework. In point of fact, according to ecofeminist philosophers, language is quite crucial for the construction of problematic concepts of women and nature; concepts that contribute to the justification of the degradation of women and nature, and the strengthening of the oppressive framework. To elucidate such perspectives, exploring the way the English language does this is much interesting.

In various circumstances where women and non-human animals are already considered inferior to men and male-identified culture, the English language animalizes and naturalizes women in cultural contexts. Pejoratively named, women are referred to as dogs, cats, catty, pussy cats, queen bees, vixen, crows, cows, whales, elephants, bird-brains, serpents and foxes. Animalizing women in a patriarchal culture which perceives animals as inferior to humans reinforces and attempts to legitimately assert women's inferior status to men.

Likewise, the English language "feminizes" nature in cultural contexts which consider women and nature as inferior to men. In this sense, the woman is put under control and submission of patriarchal norms, and Mother nature is raped, exploited, mastered and all her, not his, secrets are penetrated. The exploitation of nature is, thus, explained by feminizing (not masculinizing) her; and the exploitation of the

woman is permitted by animalizing (not humanizing) and naturalizing (not culturalizing) her. “Language that feminizes nature and naturalizes women”, as Carol Adams (1990) declares, “describes, reflects and perpetuates unjustified patriarchal domination by failing to see the extent to which the dominations of women, animals and nature are culturally (not just metaphorically) analogous and sanctioned.”

Within patriarchal contexts, the majority of nature and animal terms are consequently employed in describing women, and the various female terms used to describe animals and nature do function differently from the animal and nature terms to describe men. Within a sexist circumstance indeed, they are employed to devalue and underestimate women, animals and nature aiming at reinforcing the unjustified domination and exploitation of all the three.

### **2.3. Fanciful Conceit- Revolutionary Literary Technique**

Fancy as well as creative in its representation, literature did portray throughout the centuries a continuous experiment in form; a myriad of writings of recognized artistic value adorned with decorative pattering. Proved to be in constant evolution by means of reworking and transforming the genres, motifs and conventions obtained from a past tradition, ornament in literature gave birth to some of the most astonishing creations of the human being’s imagination skill. Nurturing, a vibrant and original ornament style of its own, conceit is amongst the writing tools which provide any writing with dazzling meaning and thrilling significance. It is for certain a literary device deemed of being explored and defined.

#### **2.3.1. Historical Perspective of Metaphysical Movement**

Regarded as a complex phenomenon, distinguished by the acquisition of various characteristics, the metaphysical movement might be defined as a way of writing, or more specifically, as a way of consciously manipulating the writings’ conventions and structures. Consisting of pivoting a special focus on a specific element or structure in a work, the metaphysical movement may also be defined as a way of reading; a critical paradigm which lays down a new way of investigating literary art works all by unveiling meaning structures deliberately reached through the interplay

between writing and reading.

In point of fact, denoting a process of volatile reasoning, of a conjecture about the nature of universe and of a peculiar focus on feelings and personal experiences, the term ‘metaphysical’ has been used to portray the special characteristics of the seventeenth century poetry of John Donne and his followers.

Used to “communicate a unified experience and stress imaginative presence and intensity” as R.G. Cox exclaims, metaphysical poetry as designated by the Cambridge Dictionary “identifies with the piece of theory that is tied in with getting presence and information”; whereas theory is “the effective reason in viewing things with the aspect of the present reality and presence.” Combined of two words; ‘meta’ meaning ‘beyond’, and ‘physics’ which refers to ‘physical nature’, metaphysical poetry embraces poetry which goes beyond the physical world of the sense, and aims at exploring the spiritual world.

Delivering frequently new and rave considerations in value, metaphysical poetry is a collection of highly intellectualized poems which encompass a strange and significant imagery allowing the audience to think and consider thoughts that have never been explored before. Linking physical to the poets’ spiritual purposes, metaphysical poetry made use of paradoxes, exaggerations, comedy lines and puns, and contained extremely complicated thoughts rarely found after the seventeenth century group poets of metaphysical poetry.

Indeed, the history of seventeenth century English verse seems at first sight to coincide with a period of an almost unnatural tidiness. Marked by a significant separation between the metaphysical and the neo-classical in poetry, 1660 was for certain a decisive year in English political history stigmatized by works of Donne, Crashaw, Vaughan and Cowley on the one side; and John Dryden on the other. The 1640s and 1650s were, hence, studded with collections of metaphysical poems.

Written by a group of highly educated men whose education was their entire endeavor as they neither duplicated nature or life, nor they copied matter or presented aspects of intellect, the expression “Metaphysical poets” was first coined by the critic

Samuel Johnson. Deriving from a chapter of his remarkable work; *Lives of the Most Eminent English poets*, Samuel Jackson denotes the appearance of a group of the seventeenth century British poets sharing an elaborate style and special common characteristics of unit, blend of passion and thought, fusion of passionate feelings and logical reasoning, a mixture of sensual and spiritual experience, carelessness in diction and use of colloquial speech.

Ambiguous and sensuous in their writings, members of the loose group were considered to have made original and significant changes in English literature which includes John Donne as a prominent poet of metaphysical poetry, George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, Thomas Treharne, Andrew Marvell and Richard Crashaw.

However, cause must precede effect, and when the effect is embodied in a tremendous literary revolution, the cause is likely to have taken place years ago. Portraying an interesting example of the constant and inspirational interaction of philosophical thoughts and literary practices, Thomas Hobbes philosophy of restoration of a notable concept is of high impact. *A Brief of the Art of Rhetorique*, containing in substance all that Aristotle has written in his Three Books of that Subject, except only what is not applicable to the English tongue; such as the title of a duodecimo volume by Aristotle.

Containing the Latin notes of a version of the rhetoric, Hobbes in 1637 spotted Aristotle's treatment on the subject of the metaphor throughout Aristotle's claim of "metaphors must not be farfetched, or they will be difficult to grasp, nor obvious, or they will have no effect" (cited in Jess, 2015) and freely enlarged upon it. In other words, enlarging it into a kind of metaphor that "gives life to the lifeless"; continuing to say that "such metaphors as these come into a man's mind by the observation of things that have similitude and proportion one to another. And the more unlike, and unproportionable the things be otherwise, the more grace hath the metaphor" (ibid).

Since then, as an advocator of literary unproportion, Hobbes enters the metaphysical camp by distinguishing the conceit from the conventional metaphor. As a leading character of metaphysical poetry, metaphysical poets proved an

unprecedented fondness for conceits. Intellectually inventive and elaborately striking in its unconventional and stretched comparisons between a physical matter and a spiritual aspect, metaphysical conceits amalgamated the heterogeneous ideas by viciousness. Nature and man as worth examining, representing and interfering are examples of the surprising correlations between things that are dissimilar. Quite inventive, the conceit was therefore of central importance in metaphysical art works.

### **2.3.2. Conceit: A Staple of the Metaphysical School**

Adding richness and value to the metaphysical school, attracting the minds of curious writers to explore, adopt and use, the conceit was surely a recognized aspect of the metaphysical school.

#### **2.3.2.1. Elaborate Conceit Defined**

In strictly per capita and expatriate manners, the conceit succeeded in gaining a strong recognition and appreciation in the world of literature. Purely aiming at discovery and determining the nature of man both as an individual and as a member of the society, the conceit delivers improbable comparisons between two unlike things. Regarded as a fanciful literary device, conceit formulates an extremely cunning parallel between apparently dissimilar objects or situations. Coming into prominence in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Renaissance literature, a conceit is a highly extended metaphor in which strained comparisons are made between the two things.

Used to compare their lovers to the most exquisite things in nature, the conceit was widely used by poets in Petrarchan sonnets: 14 line love poems. It was only in the seventeenth century that conceit was greatly popularized by the school of poets earlier discovered; the metaphysical poets.

Inviting readers to engage more fully with the imagery, utilization of an unusual comparison makes of the conceit a unique literary device. Rendering the extended metaphor more attractive and intriguing to discover, the conceit evokes a great word to the writing, and heightens the emotions of a scene. Allowing for a great imagination to flow for an inventive creation to blur, the conceit creates an undeniable



atmosphere by means of communicating a glimpse into a tremendous plane of truth; a one that becomes a sort of a dream reality which not only influences the story but greatly impacts the way readers perceive its events. However, when scholars argue about the more technical definitions of the conceit, they usually reckon the existence of two main types: Petrarchan conceit and Metaphysical conceit.

### **2.3.2.2. On the Petrarchan Conceit**

Particularly popular with Renaissance writers of sonnets, the Petrarchan conceit was certainly a crucial feature of the Petrarchan sonnet; becoming even more so after being adopted by the fifteenth English Renaissance poets. Named after the Italian classic poet Francesco Petrarch, the Petrarchan conceit is an extended metaphor that governs the entire poem. Throughout a high outlet of feelings, the hyperbolic comparison is most often established by hurt, suffering lover of his delightful beloved to some physical object, such as the ocean, or the sun.

Compared to something dramatic, parts of the woman's body might be used in the same way in other instances; i.e., the skin might be compared to white snow, or the lips to bright red coral. A work of art that epitomizes such utilization in Edmund Spenser's poem, *Epithalamion*, which characterizes the beautiful mistress's eyes as being "like sapphires shining bright", Spenser continues extending the metaphor when comparing her cheeks to "apples which the sun hath ridded" and her lips to "cherries charming men to bite". By highlighting similarities, the poet creates connection between her and the concept of everlasting beauty and love. Viewed, thus, as a strong poetic convention, the Petrarchan conceit added ornament and fancy to the fourteenth and fifteenth century literary writings.

### **2.3.2.3. On the Metaphysical Conceit**

Greatly associated to the Metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century, the metaphysical conceit takes the Petrarchan conceit further as it deliberately selects unexpected comparisons. Regarded as a more intricate and intellectual device, the metaphysical conceit provides an analogy between one physical entity's spiritual qualities and an object in the physical world.

In point of fact, something of high significance to recognize in the comparison displayed is that the two things do not possess an obvious relationship to one another; it is indeed the conceit inventiveness which frequently is more important, striking and attractive to the readers. A famous example of a conceit in the seventeenth century is to be found in John Donne's, *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning*. Comparing the two lovers' souls to drafts person compass, this elaborate metaphysical conceit was widely loved and appreciated for its highly skillful and astonishing application.

Utilizing analogy, Donne draws the picture of lovers being like compass magnets, puddled particular directions; and in this case, the opposite ones. Used, therefore, extensively and with such heavy hands, the metaphysical device fell out of fashion over time as people started perceiving conceits as being strained rather than fanciful. Nevertheless, opening new vision and angles of how to perceive conceit, this unconventional and far-fetched elaborate subtype of metaphor has also been used in Modern literary criticism; an orbit to be enlarged in the forthcoming segment.

### **2.3.3. Conceit and Concept: Intense Guiding Aspects**

Central to a large wave of exploration, unsustainably striking and attractive in its vision of comparing and creating elaborate connectedness between various entities and objects, the conceit has for so long been the target of both modern and ancient literary criticism. Displaying continuous defying efforts to fix generic boundaries for determining their meanings, modern and ancient literary criticism contributors aim at building upon or forcefully critique current generic hypotheses; and most importantly introduce recent insights and developments in genre theory.

Indeed, Baroque Wit highlights the creativity of the intellect, and the liveliness of fancy which displays remote connections of ideas and objects; a one that is greatly able to discern similarities in the dissimilar, or conjointly in contradiction, or even reality as paradoxical. As an important marks of the Renaissance Neo-Platonism, preoccupations with juxtapositions and with a thorough search for the 'coincidence of paradoxes' have been presented is an intellectual world where Wit has appropriately been associated.

Beginning to question terminology, the complete development of Wit is for certain symbolized by the emerging device of the last two decades of the sixteenth century; the conceit. In fact, similar to other complex terms, the ‘conceit’ has been so fashionably utilized in the past that it was often difficult and ambiguous to determine its meaning in peculiar contexts.

Certainly, for historical literary criticism, the conceit is restricted to one single meaning: it is related to metaphor or simile. Joining the same line of thinking is Dame Helen Gardner when he generated the following definition of the conceit: “A conceit is a comparison whose ingenuity is more striking than its justness. All comparisons discover likeness in things unlike; a comparison becomes a conceit when we are made to concede likeness while being strongly conscious of unlikeness” (cited in Parker, 1982,p19). Historical literary criticism embraces, thus, a conventional definition as well as usage of the term conceit.

Importing a newly insight to the term ‘conceit’, modern literary criticism completely changed and developed the conceit in genre theory. Based on the fact that ‘conceit’ is derived from the Latin word ‘conceptus’, modern literary critics extended the elaborate device meaning and utilization to a very complex and effective rhetorical tool to continue the narrative. In other words, not strictly limited to poetry, the word ‘conceit’ is now used to refer to the central premise or guiding concept of a novel, movie or any other art work. Emphasizing the exclusiveness of this modern sense and its great significance for the history of literature is K.K. Ruthven (1969) as he declares that:

Instead of [like Aristotle] dissociating the perceptual from the ornamental, we have separated the functional from the decorative, metaphysical conceit from soneetering conceitthe unconventional from the trite, the seventeenth century from the sixteenth, great rooted blossoms from flowers stuck in sand. It is impressively tidy and schematic, and perhaps even accurate. ... What is amazing is that we have been able to create an influential critical principle as well as a literary-historical concept of period out of what was merely a rhetorical distinction in antiquity between

the act of thinking and the expression of thought (ibid, p. 7).

The word conceit is, therefore, used as a valuable analytical tool for any work of art. In this sense, the word conceit in this humble research work is used in both meanings. To further clarify the idea, the conceit is used as both an extended metaphor to establish the comparison between the woman and nature, and as a general guiding concept of the research represented. Carrying its various connotations and utilizations, the conceit undeniably supplements any art work with fanciful meaning and striking elaborate representations of connections and definitions.

#### **2.4. Writings on the Screen: Rise of the new Cinematic Genre**

Embarking on a different world of moving motions and captivating iconography, the art and technology of motion-picture did certainly revolutionize the universe of entertainment. Appreciated for its own particular language and elaborate aesthetics, defined as “a representation of a story by means of motion pictures” by Merriam Webster online dictionary, “a form of entertainment that enacts a story by a sequence of images giving the illusion of continuous movement”, by Word Web Dictionary, the stories recorded by a camera hold a central place as a form of art deemed highly creative.

Fitting perfectly the universe of fascinating pictures and attracting animations is for certain literature. In particular, rendered a crucial element of the cinematic production, fairy tales contributed to the rise of a new trend; the Walt Disney Company. Highly instructional, the fairy tale genre in the cinematic field served not only to diffuse meanings and morals, but to also display a long history regarding women representation through female characters; an inquiring of high importance to discover and investigate in the forthcoming section.

##### **2.4.1. Film Adaptations and literature- An Artistic Cohesion**

“In the era of interdisciplinary, nothing is healthier than trying to see the literature’s verblativity from the perspective of cinema and the movie iconicity from the perspective of literature” (Brito cited in Gualda, 2010, p. 202). Indeed, while cinema is regarded

as a great instrumentality that disperses moving pictures, and literature very much as an inventively recognized body of writing of elevated artistic values, conjoining the two is but a creation of a true work of art. Quite appealing and appreciated, the connectedness between cinema and literature is deemed iconic.

Possessing a particular ability of translating profound and abstract ideas and thoughts to the screen as magnificently as the literary artworks, the nature of the relationship between literature and cinema is impressive as Dr. Omar Rahmoun explains:

Much has been said about literature and cinema. Although both are abinitio distinct arts that leave us to think that there is no room for any kind of analogy, comparing them seems to be a reasonable endeavor that allows us to discuss the fascinating relationship. (Rahmoun, 2017, p. 50)

In point of fact, literature and cinema embrace a myriad of mutual points. Very much similar to literature, cinema is a highly realistic medium of expressing and delivering a unique and surreal vision of the world. Moreover, increasingly inspired by literature as much as literature inspired by cinema- an ambition of the ancients as the author Joseph Conrad made obvious back in 1897 in the preface of his novel, *The Nigger of the Narcissus*: “My Task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel it before all, to make you see”, literature and cinema adopt a mutual influence chiefly justified by their possession of two key common factors: narrative and storytelling.

Exposing the viewer to either a mental or visual stimuli which enables them to perceive, interpret and assimilate elements according to their own understanding, reasoning and background, both of literature as “an experience that engages the reader in a versatility of emotions” (Rosenblatt, 1985 qtd in Many and Wiseman 1992), and cinema as a deliberate mean of interaction of the senses for while the story is displayed on the screen, “we are focused on a screen and we feel, we hear, we see is an all- encompassing tangle of emotions and senses which no other art form demands” (Stern, 1968, p. 646), embark the reader and the viewer on an emotional

experience fulfilled through the artwork's written words and the film's dynamic visual succession of moving pictures.

In addition, seeking to guarantee a universe for the reader/viewer to escape, allow for an emotional outlet and most importantly develop empathy towards the story and character, both of films and literature create a genuine experience enabling the people who read or watch to hope for "the opportunity to identify with other human beings for a while, and, vicariously participate in their lives" (Boyum, 1985, p. 39). Furthermore, "just like the significance of narrative in human culture can be seen from the fact that written cultures seek their origins in myths which they then record for posterity" (Fludernik, 2009, p. 1), the movie industry desires as well to enrich its history by registering the various acted and played scenes by the human being throughout time (Astruc, 1999, p. 161).

In other words, by virtue of the power of words found in literature and dreamlike audible and graphic attributes adopted by cinema, both of literature and cinema endeavor a history of their own; a long recorded narrative of past events that ensures the continuum of both empires. Therefore, in the greatest attempt of making "the unseen visible" (Flavin, 2004, p. 5), a filmmaker can create a fiction with cinematic tools. Admitably, the French film theorist Astruc (1999) declares that: "the filmmaker/author writes with his camera as a writer writes with his pen" (Astruc, 1999, p. 161).

Relying on a specific narrative structure and embracing a referential nature, film and literature as Orr declares:

Both produce stories which work through temporal succession. Both refer to, or connote, pre-existent materials. Fiction works through a pre-existent language, film through the raw data of the physical world its camera record. In both cases, words and images give off associations which go beyond the immediacy of their physical objects (1992, qtd in Bane, 2006, p. 12)

Either through the power of ink or through captivating imagery and fascinating

sounds, the uppermost aim of both literature and film production is to provide the reader/viewer an unforgettable experience full of high interaction of the senses and great identification to the stories. Displaying an iconically dynamic relationship between literature and cinema, the invention of cinema brought to the front new considerations as well as novel techniques and approaches to the literary text; a revolution that would have not occurred without film adaptation.

Defined by Belen Vidal Villasur as ‘a memory-object of its source’, film adaptations are deemed to be the translation of art works so as to fit a new destination, target and audience. As to adapt according to Oxford English Dictionary is to “make suitable for a new use or purpose, to alter or modify, adjust one thing to another or, to become adjusted to new conditions”, and to Konigsberg (1998) is “a work in one medium that derives its impulse as well as varying number of its elements from a work in different medium” (p. 6), adaptation in the context of literary works can be defined as the translation, transportation, reaction of written texts from a literary source such as novels, poems, short stories and plays into the cinematic mode (Rahmoun, 2017, p. 68). Indeed, one of the extraordinary potentials of cinema is to rework a story from literature to screen done in a number of creative ways.

Regarded as derivative work that displays the transportation of a play, novel, or other literary sources in a form of film adhering- or not- to the source material spirit or differently interpreting concepts derived from the source texts (Vugt, 2011), Belton (2003) claims in this regard that film adaptation “offers an opportunity for filmmakers to read a narrative from another age through the lens of their their own sense of the world” (p. 195). It is rendered quite possible for literature- and particularly novels to “provide essential ingredients for cinematic rendition such as plot and the diversity of narrative points of view” (Corrigan, 1999).

Notwithstanding, translating words into a succession of moving pictures led to the rise of the fidelity criteria among several critics. Deemed impossible for filmmakers to possess the same perception or reading upon the work being adopted, the adaptation issue has been, in fact, repeatedly evoked by various authors and critics, leading to the categorization of adaptation as to diminish eagerness towards

the criteria of fidelity. Indeed, some of the brilliant scholars to discuss the issue of fidelity and display the categorization efforts made by different authors are Brian McFarland.

The first classification to be labeled by McFarland is that of Geoffrey Wagner. That is to say, to Wagner, the fidelity criteria in film adaptations is divided into three categories: the first class named “transposition” meaning the original literary work is laid down without any substantial interference; the second class is labeled “commentary” and herein the original work is intentionally evoked in some respect; and the third class is “analogy” which denotes a “fairly departure for the sake of making another work of art” (cited in Alqadi, 2015, p. 43). To Dudley Andrew as well as Michael Klein and Gillian Parker, on the other hand, labeled this categorization under: Borrowing, intersection and fidelity. Accordingly, for all critics it is of primary importance to first identify the category to which the work belongs.

Whether it be a faithful adaptation, reinterpreted or even transformed, film adaptation never ceased, for certain, to draw the great existing connectedness between literature and cinema. Just like a literary art work, producing a film is producing a continuous unit that tells an evolving story. Permitting for an astonishing transference to occur between one medium and another, it is therefore worth to highlight that “if film did not grow out of literature, it grew towards it; and what novels and films most strikingly have in common is the potential and propensity for narrative” (McFarlane, 1996). Besides the novel, indeed, fairy tales proved to be quite suitable for cinema’s narrative patterns. Somewhere between literature and film industry, the wonder the genre did overturn the universe of cinema.

#### **2.4.2. On Wonder Tales between Literature and Cinema**

Enchanting and surreal, captivating in its nature and dynamic in its characters, the story telling genre of fairy tales; expanding through arts and loads of branches of knowledge, made of literature and cinema its two major representation platforms. To put it another way, through adaptation mainly; an act that Dr. Rahmoun (2017) describes as “the translation of written texts from a literary source such as novels,



short stories and plays into the cinematic sign system” (p. 50), fairy tales proved to fit perfectly into the universe of cinema.

Indeed, joining a universe where action is vested by characters and words are highly and audibly uttered by personages, fairy tales in particular were transmitted and popularized. Structurally speaking, as wonder tales turned up to be quite eligible to the film adaptation narrative patterns, they admittedly were among the very first narratives to be adopted into films.

Inspired by the “fairy tales’ inner and fixed narrative structures” (Propp, 1968; cited in Zipes, 2011) to create the typical structure which constructed every Hollywood film plot, from their beginning until today, wonder tales made profit of a worldwide success mainly due to their captivating and enchanting tales. Dating back to 1896- the year after the first public showing of Auguste and Louis Lumière’s “cinematograph” in Paris in 1895- the very first movie to incorporate fairy tale narratives, motifs, themes and images is attributed to Director George Méliès’ *Le Manoir du Diable*.

Attempting to fill a large void in the world of cinema, fairy tales supplied the universe of entertainment and adaptation with a peculiar touch of the fantastic, the magical, the wishful and the dreamy. Since then, an outburst of short and feature length animated and live-action produced fairy tale films emerged. Highly popularized and specifically dear to everyone among the audience, fairy tale filmic intertexts included explicit or implicit references in the title that might awake previously learnt and adopted beliefs and patterns of a story.

To this end, fairy tales began to be overtly and successfully adapted declaring a revolutionizing turn in film industry. Very much appealing to a mingled-age audience, one of the biggest media corporations in the world to have made of fairy tales their best companion is Walt Disney. Largely responsible for the prominent status fairy tales gained in adults’ cinematographic and television culture, the Walt Disney Company; a one that aims at entertaining, informing and inspiring through the power of reflecting upon creative minds of unparalleled storytelling, is for certain

an industry which at the beginning of the twentieth century paved for the rise of the new cinematic genre of fairy tale movies.

### **2.4.3. Early Twentieth Century: Rise of the New Cinematic and the Walt Disney Company**

Portraying an unequaled commitment to creativity, unparalleled paving the way for storytelling to amalgamate with innovative technologies, the wonder tale undeniably revolutionized the world's entertainment industry. Generating experiences of long-term value, fairy tales became an addictive lollipop enjoyed not only by children but by adults as well. Indeed, with the redact technological invention of cinema, which dates back to the 1890s, fairy tales were deemed to be the perfect narratives transferred and adapted on the screen.

To put it another way, the enchantment of tales, magical structure of characters and marvelous content of the story was amazingly suitable in the captivating production of images in motion. Gaining huge privilege and massive popularity over the written text, the narrative's visual side was highly praised and led to the birth of the newly iconic cinematographic genre; the fairy tale movies genre.

Resembling, therefore, very much the way traditional fairy tales institutionalized themselves as a genre between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, the early twentieth century begun embracing fairy tale movies as a universally popular cinematographic genre. In the same line, Zipes (2011) defines a fairy tale movie as:

Any kind of cinematic representation that employs motifs, characters, and plots generally found in the oral and literary genre of the fairy tale to recreate a known tale or to create an original screen play with recognizable features of a fairy tale (p. 9).

Gone a time where literary authors had the supreme authority as herein it is the team of directors, screenwriters, animators and producers which became vital for the invention of every single film. Considering the number of fairy tale movies watched

by children and adult overtime, those people and the companies that they stand for are, for certain, the public's modern storytellers.

Likewise, the prominent directors like Georges Méliès, Ferdiand Zecca, Albert Capellani and Lucien Nonguest generating films based on fairy tales seemed to be a true passion of theirs. Specifically, widely regarded as 'the magician' for his creative settings, enchanting atmosphere and pioneering special effects, the French filmmaker George Méliès (1861-1938) experienced a lot with the genre with his féeries or trick films (Zipes, 2006, p. 196).

Arguably, the spirit of enchantment and sense of disillusion his movies delivered were uncompetitive; especially when he adapted versions of *Cinderella* and *Little Red Riding Hood* between the 1890s and 1900s. However, since cinema was still in its infancy and most of the basic narrative techniques (for instance film editing) were not developed, nowadays the works of George Méliès and his contemporaries are not considered as a real retelling or rendering of fairy tales (ibid).

In truth, several artists in the first decades of the twentieth century were in charge of translating magical narratives to the screen, but "none of the early animators ever watched the intensity with which [Walt] occupied himself with the fairy tales" (ibid). Embracing tales as they arrived to him through literature, folklore tradition or radio sources, Walter Elian Disney adapted wonder tales on the screen making sure to inculcate his versions and captivate the audience's attention because of the excellency of his marvelous and creative cinematic designs.

As successful and universal as an American motion-picture, television producer and pioneering animated cartoons filmmaker, Disney's fixed formula acted astonishingly as a substitute of the fairy tale itself; a thing that strongly propelled that establishing of the fairy tale film genre.

Accordingly, establishing a forever world's premier entertainment company, the Walt Disney Company was the best-known provider of entertainment and disillusioned amusement of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In point of fact, the genesis of Walt Disney backdates to the 1920s where, along with the help of his

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friend and gifted Kansas City film animator Ub Iwerks, Disney constituted the Laugh-O-grams Films studio and started realizing a series of cartoons based on fables and fairy tales.

Dealing intensively with wonder tale plots and themes at the time, and joined in the studio by several animators notably Hugh Harman, Rudolf Ising, and Isadore Freleng. Walt Disney adopted and adapted many of the Grimm and Perrault's tales, including *Puss in Boots*, *Cinderella* and *Jack and the Beanstalk*.

Consecutively, ambitiously craving for further success, Disney's fabulous career was not restricted in Kansas; he then moved to Hollywood and created the Disney Brothers Studio with his brother Roy. Termed later on the Walt Disney Company, Disney made sure to reflect unparalleled storytelling through the power of elevated cinematography techniques. In the same years, henceforth, he produced the prospering animated shorts, *The Silly Symphonies*.

Not only flourishing, but these 1930s very popular music cartoons paved the way for the next Disney's most wannabee project: *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Investing all he possessed and even asking for loans to finance the project, this 1937 released feature length cartoon in full color and sound laid down the red carpet for a newly envisioned production of fairy tales.

From that moment on, carefully attentive to new technological inventions and meticulously precise about the copyright as royalties of his work, the Walt Disney Company never quitted delighting, never quitted producing, and most importantly, never stopped growing and delivering fairy tale adaptations, including *Cinderella* (1950), *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), *Sleeping Beauty* (1999), *The Little Mermaid* (1989) and *Beauty and the Beast* (1991); a whole collection was productively projected giving birth to an all-encompassing Disney Princess Franchise.

#### **2.4.4. Disney Princess Franchise: From Submission to a Pronounced Female Agency**

Deemed a reference to whom girls tend to lean on, rendered a denotative staple of American girlhood, the Princess Disney Franchise displayed an enormous impact on shaping the perception regarding the representation of women through the female characters. Indeed, since its release in 2000, the Disney Princess Franchise instituted itself as the new lens through which normative female characters are explored and investigated.

To unveil, therefore, the place women occupied in fairy tale films, it is of a high importance to trace the way female characters moved from submitted projects to progressively empowered heroines all along the three different periods of the Disney Princess Franchise which are denoted as the first generation; spanning from 1937-1959, it sets the foundation of the ‘Princess’ genre as a whole. In this generation, *Snow White* (1937), *Cinderella* (1950), and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) were projected. This period sets up the franchise as a whole and establishes the importance of “True Love’s First Kiss” and “Happily Ever After”; the second generation; the period between 1989-1992 where a new type of princess was created: one with more personality and determination.

The movies in this period are: *Little Mermaid* (1989), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *Aladdin* (1992), *Pocahontas* (1995), *Mulan* (1998); and the third generation; representing a drastic change in the princesses compared to the past 72 years, this period’s princesses are no longer married to their titles nor dominated until the end. Movies like *Princess and the Frog* (2009), *Tangled* (2010), *Frozen* (2013), *Frozen 2* (2019) and *Moana* (2016) are the best indicator of what the franchise will evolve to.

#### **2.4.4.1. On Walt Disney Fixed Formula**

Carrying heavy meaning; embracing long established ideologies and conventions, the Walt Disney Company not only dispersed delight and amusement, but also severed as a significant medium for projecting the hidden norms and patterns which dominated the society. In point of fact, the Disney Princess Franchise have caused many to suspect the effect that Disney princesses have on the large audience.

Indeed, infinitely flourishing and boundlessly far-famed, the Walt Disney

Company did establish peculiar characteristics and attributes. Rendered literally symbolic to the company, when investigating the historical evolution of the Disney films, Jack Zipes (2006) denotes that most of the first short films produced by Disney were:

Highly experimental, were generally open-ended and inventive, and expressed surprising vigor and original use of animation art and techniques; they all took place in twentieth century America, tended to be partial to the underdogs in the stories, and had heroes who often resembled Disney or Disney's aspirations (p. 196) .

Notwithstanding, while embarking on the 1930s Walt Disney surprisingly changed the ideology of his movies. Depending on a corporate approach to storytelling which highly prioritizes profitability, the 1930s was a time where Disney erased dreamlike and liberating aspects to instead inculcate more conservative, male chauvinistic and moralistic features in the fairy tale films.

This new Disney fixed formula certainly strengthened solid traditional values like hard labor and subordination as major keys for avoiding problems in life. Disputably, those same ideological patterns would in fact constitute the platform upon which Walt Disney's sequential cartoons were made; chiefly Disney Princess films.

Most of all, the 1937 *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* not only denote a turning point in Disney's career, but depict as well Disney's newborn conventionalized technical and narrative system; a formula that would be applied on every created production. Similarly, another post-*Snow White* successful commercial art unveiling "Disney's methodology and formulation pattern" (Zipes, 2006, p. 204) is the 1950 academy award-nominated movie based on the 1667 Charles Perrault recounting of the ancient wonder tale, *Cinderella* (Tatar, 1987, p. 27).

Truly informative, then, about the type of stories Walt Disney would be narrating, Jack Zipes (2015) classifies this kind of narratives as "a rags-to-riches story". In other words, it is a tale which emphasizes the story of the typical defining

Disney character, the Cinder girl. As a poor mistreated girl, this female character possesses a fancied beauty, seeks romance believing that only the true love of the prince can save her, and is granted a ‘happy ever after’ ending. Women being associated to rigid beauty standards and being outspoken only through the male character became, for certain, the new persisting trend to the broader struggles of female representations; a one which dates back to the ancients; notably naming Charles Perrault.

Indeed, it is first quite important to declare that in his *Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passé*, Charles Perrault did already begin manipulating the representation of female characters in wonder stories. Going “beyond mere stylistic expansion and establishment” (Tatar, 1987, p. 27), Perrault made sure to dress the tale with powerful messages congruous to time demands.

Surprisingly affecting the set relationships between male and female characters, their gender portrayal and the expected acts of female personages, Perrault aimed at creating memorable characters ornamented with astonishing personalities that stick in the reader’s mind and affect his perception; characters that would simply help him in diffusing his puzzling intentions. Adapting his fairy tales to the norms of the dominant culture and in contrast to the conteuses’ active female characters, Teverson (2013) denotes that:

In Perrault’s tales, the heroines are often passive figures awaiting revival at the hands of a bold prince, self-sacrificing models of virtue and chastity who triumph of their willingness to conform to the patriarchal order, or wayward women who have drifted out the orbit of patriarchal control and who need to be chastised for their curiosity or their disobedience (p. 58).

Therefore, Perrault’s extensively manipulated tales only accentuate classic features of obedience, beauty and innocence, denote women’s passiveness and perfectly fulfil male’s worldview and remphish his chauvinistic narcissistic ego. In addition, just as editorialist Maddie Gum highlights, “women’s poor agency is also confirmed by the fact that very rarely they have chances to speak” (Zipes, 2015). That is, this created

feature of silence by Perrault is either a mark of virtue or a way to establish a punishment to the female character. Undeniably, all of the aforementioned characteristics contribute to the Disney 1930s designed formula.

Moreover, in addition to the moral values and conservatism inculcated in Disney's fore-stated story-type cartoons, author ingredients constituting Disney's perfect formula are technical and narrative entities. Presuming a primordial role in the story is the captivating cinematographic proficiency. Just like in the classical Hollywood cinema, then, a highly qualified motion processing guides the story's narrative aspect and escorts the viewer through the story. As the scenes are constructed by well-defined plots, the 'eye' of the camera does not allow the viewer to display various understandings and interpretations rendering this sort of conventionally stereotyped narratives peculiarly comforting to the chauvinistic spectators' ego.

Over decades, the fore-stated elements have undeniably slayed the spectators' expectations about the fairy tale cinematographic genre. Such features did in fact characterize all the post-*Snow White* release fairy tale movies. Searching for a giant leap to the second and third generations of the Princess Franchise, the end of the twentieth century was marked by an outrageous call to alter the stereotypes projected in Disney. That is, scholars from various branches began to critically question the morals displayed through Disney films. In particular, feminist researchers started to extensively unveil and thoroughly investigate the representation of female characters in the Disney Princess Franchise and the roles assigned to them in their proper moving hoping to find the way towards a pronounced female agency.

#### **2.4.4.2. Towards Empowered Female Agency**

Marking the genesis of an all-embracing curious investigation, the end of the twentieth century witnessed a wide-open and critical discussion about Walt Disney's films. As the Disney Enterprise flourished and obtained a worldwide popularity, critics and scholars became very much inquisitive about the meanings and messages transferred through the films projected.



Proved not only to be an innocent entertaining corporation but also an intensively pretentious medium of diffusing morals and societal conventions, Disney movies displayed numerous issues regarding the depiction of female characters. Indeed, the portraiture of gender roles and portrayal of a patriarchal and sexist order fashioned by stereotypes of gender, race and class highly prevailed in the Disney Princess films.

Accordingly, among the first scholars to question Disney's female misrepresentation and explore their roles and their ways of interacting with the opposite sex are, Marcia Liberman and Kay Stone. According to these 1970s critics, *Snow White*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *Cinderella* maintain intensive patriarchal conditions and strong chauvinistic beliefs which often tend to be presented as a neutral matter to the world.

Certainly, for Liberman and Stone, Disney Princess movies hold "proper myth figures", whose impact on the public is tremendous. Indeed, throughout Disney's films numerous concepts about sexuality, gender and identity are shaped. However, gone the time where Disney's female figures were muffled, where unfair societal condemnations were exultant and celebrated, and where power was beheld by man only. In other words, by gone the period of submission to the norms and subjugation to the men as a suitable time instituted itself to elucidate newly empowered female character.

Acknowledged as a contemporary reinterpreted version of the classic fairy tale female character, normative female passivity is now openly replaced by a novel pronounced agency. To put it another way, twisted and reversed, contemporary female characters provide women with more power, control, independence and presence.

In particular, the contemporary Disney official Princess Movies denote that female heroines in Disney's animated Princess Movies have become more active and complex figures overtime. Confident in their nature and owners of their own dreams in their lives, these contemporary figures became self-governing decision-maker,

holding power either in a positive or even negative manner; the only thing that mattered is only holding 'power'. Directed by Bob Iger, this third generation of Disney Princesses including the 2013 *Frozen* series: *Frozen* and *Frozen II* laid down a drastic change; a one that can be considered as the best indicator of what the franchise will evolve to; to something resembling for certain to the fifty-sixth Disney animated film *Moana* (2016).

## 2.5. Conclusion

As the research work aims at decorticating the astonishing but quite strained relationship between women and nature, various concepts have been implicated; i.e., to denote the connection between the confining subversion of the woman and the lucrative exploitation of nature, a selection of concepts ranging from ecofeminism to conceit have been exploited.

Henceforth, for the agonistic analogy to take place between the woman and nature, a reflection from the Contemporary Disney Princess Franchise is made. Likewise, the conceit as a unique literary device that formulates a parallel between apparently dissimilar objects or situations, and ecofeminism as a movement which claims for a historical connection between the exploitation of nature and the degradation of the women will serve as theoretical frameworks upon which woman and nature relations are examined in the *Frozen* Series: *Frozen* and *Frozen II* and *Moana*; an inquiry done and represented in the all-englobing practical upcoming chapter.

The nature of this connectedness appears clearly in *Frozen*, *Frozen 2* and *Moana*. Consequently, synopsis of the movies are quite vital in order to draw a clear image in the mind of the reader to understand, decipher and decode the central premise of this humble research work.

# Chapter Three

*Contested Values-  
Women, Nature and  
Men's Politics of  
Destruction*

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“Nature is like a woman who enjoys disguising herself, and whose different disguises, revealing now one part of her and now another, permit those who study her and assiduously to hope that one day they may know the whole of her person.” (Denis Diderot)

### 3.1. Introduction

For as long as man can remember, fairy tales have played an undisputable role in the lives of people. Opening large gates for enchantment, wonder tales have provided their spectators with the unprecedented ability of embarking on a world full of fantasy, enthrallment and captivation.

It was not once upon a time, but a quite certain time in history that the fairy tale genre migrated to the screen giving birth to the fairy tale movie genre. Indeed, before anyone acknowledged what was happening, Walt Disney threw a spell on the wonder tale, and it has been held imprisoned ever since. Utilizing the most advanced and accurate technological means, Walt Disney managed to captivate a large audience and create an empire. Throughout his technical skills and ideological inclinations, Disney inculcated his own “American” perspective and inventiveness to adopt and adapt the European wonder tale. Overshadowing the names of Charles Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, and Hans Christian Andersen, Disney dispatched his signature and became the symbolic producer of fairy tale movies.

Dripping with ideologies and conventions, the Walt Disney productions are used as a true mirror of societal beliefs and perspectives. The movies of *Frozen*, *Frozen 2* and *Moana* in particular belong to the third generation and are filled with some of the most debatable and controversial themes of the time. Throughout their female and male protagonists, these movies represent a thorough portrayal of gender. In other words, gender representation, or more precisely, attributes of femininity and masculinity are omnipresent in these films; a section that would be fully detailed in this chapter.

Infusing the stories with a quite unusual and grotesque character, Disney became a solid representer of nature. Overtaking a wide place in the stories, the character of nature is of primary importance in the contemporary productions of Walt Disney. The *Frozen* franchise and *Moana* do for certain embrace wilderness at the heart of their scripts. Not only captivating, but these movies do as well portray the great relationship that exists between the woman and nature, and the way these female protagonists look deep into the properties leading to the destruction of the natural world.

Therefore, before diving into the interrelation between women, nature and men's politics of destruction, synopses of the movies under investigation are of primary importance to enlighten and draw a picture of the tales in the readers' minds. Quite mandatory for the study under quest, the events and sequences that make up *Frozen*, *Frozen 2* and *Moana* will be used as a lamp to examine the destruction of nature as a result of the dominant patriarchal system.

### **3.2. Fairy Tale Adaptations: Synopses**

Serving as great lampers to enlighten the perplex research corners of this humble work, used as a basis for answering the research questions, the *Frozen* series: *Frozen* and *Frozen 2*, and *Moana* are fully unveiled in the upcoming section. Indeed, as part of the Walt Disney fairy tale adaptations, the cited works are to be fully discovered throughout thorough synopses.

#### **3.2.1. A Precis of *Frozen***

Released in 2013, worth the waiting for almost all of children in the world, *Frozen* is an American 3D computer-animated musical fantasy-comedy film produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios and released by Walt Disney Pictures. Inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale *The Snow Queen*, *Frozen* recounts the story of a powerfully fearless princess who embarks on an epic journey alongside a sturdy iceman, his loyal Greenland caribou and piteous snowman to find her estranged sister, whose icy powers have unwittingly trapped the kingdom in eternal winter.

Dripping with new perspectives, sharing surprising themes which do not merely include talking about the prince saving the princess, the movie tells about two princesses: Anna (voiced by Kristen Bell) and her older sister Elsa (Idina Menzel). Possessing the curse of manipulating snow and ice, the conflict begins on the night of Elsa's coronation. Struggling during the coronation as Elsa relies on her gloves in order not to freeze everything, the coronation still needs her to take off her gloves. The coronation went successfully and, in the other hand, Anna her sister meets the charming prince Hans (Santino Fantana).

Believing that is true love, the couple asks Elsa's blessing to get engaged; the thing that outrages Elsa as Anna just met the prince. Fighting back against Elsa's harsh refusal, Elsa loses control and accidentally freezes the land into eternal winter. Elsa thus runs away so that she does not hurt anyone, Anna heads out on a quest to find her. Along the way, Anna meets Kristoff (Jonathan Groff), an ice seller who becomes another love interest for her.

In point of fact, the movie begins with some ice harvesters assembling ice out from a frozen lake in the cold regions of Scandinavia. Accompanied by his reindeer Sven, Kristoff is an 8-years-old boy who comes along with the ice harvesters and gets a small size of cubed ice. After gathering enough ice, they all set forth to the kingdom of Arendelle late at night.

At the same time in a grand, enchanting castle, 5-year-old Princess Anna wakes her elder 8-year-old sister Elsa to play, delightfully suggesting to build a snowman. Heading into the castle's throne room, the two sisters create a winter field of snow utilizing Elsa's snow magic and build a snowman, Olaf, who is fond of warm hugs. The sisters enjoy their time with plenty of merriment until Elsa hits Anna with her powers in an attempt to save her little sister from falling; an act leading the loyal family to go to the legendary Valley of the Living Rock to ask for the help of trolls who remove the magic from Anna along with her memory of her sister's magic ability.

Distraught and lonely, Elsa is then ejected from everyone in order to protect her from the world until she learns how to confidently control her powers. Despite the

best efforts and undisputable attempts, Anna is unable to rouse Elsa from her room. Their misfortunate despair only intensifies when their parents die years later.

With dignitaries from around the world coming to visit, including the Duke of Weselton, who aims at running Arendelle's profits dry, it is the day of Elsa's coronation ceremony three years later. Excessively delighted, Anna is excited as they are finally opening the gates of the kingdom; an awaited moment to see other people hoping for the possibility of meeting that special someone.

Elsa, on the other hand, is still concerned about her abilities to control her powers. As Anna walks down the streets, she bumps into a horse that happens to belong to the charming and handsome Prince of the Southern Isles, Hans. Though maddened at first by the maladroitness of the stranger, Anna is attracted by Hans's appearance and looks once she lays her eyes on him.

Sneaking off to spend the evening together, Anna and Hans quickly realize the mutual attraction between them. With the entire night of the young couple being spent bonding, the romantic dance eventually leads to an entire date. However, during their time together, Hans learns of Anna's strong desire of having someone special in her life, especially with her sister Elsa who is developing a dislike of being around her by suddenly shutting Anna out one day when they were kids. Hans, therefore, openly relates to the sad tragedy; a one that only furthers Anna's connection with him. Adding to the princess' absolute joy, Hans promises to never shut Anna out.

By the end of the couple's tour throughout the kingdom, Hans delightfully proposes to which Anna immediately accepts. Heading back to the ballroom, Anna instantly asks for Elsa's blessing on the marriage. Baffled by the shocking news, Elsa is perplexed but Anna and Hans could not appear more excited going on to ramble about the wedding arrangements. Elsa ceases the sudden rambling by denying the marriage, much to Anna's dismay.

The queen requests a private talk with Anna; likely to finally confess her abilities and why it is not wise to marry someone she just met. The younger princess refuses any private conversation, avowing whatever Elsa has to say can be said to



both her and Hans. Elsa, becoming frustrated, outright forbids Anna of marrying a total stranger. Rendered deceived, this causes Anna to his back telling Elsa that all she is good at is shutting people out.

Continuing to refuse and determinately ordering the guards to end the party and close the gates, Elsa denies her blessing on the marriage; a hideous refusal that set off an intense argument between the sisters culminating in Elsa's abilities of being exposed before the party's guests. Panicking and frightened, Elsa flees with Anna in hot pursuit. However, as Elsa becomes more stressed and panicked, the weather begins to turn colder; snow starts to fall, and Elsa rushes along the fjord freezing it with each step, turning the whole body of water into ice and detaining all the ships before spreading throughout the rest of the kingdom. Failing to retrieve her, Anna and Hans return to the castle courtyard where the guests have gathered.

With Hans being left in charge of the kingdom, Anna debarks on her horse to start the long search for her sister. Meanwhile, Elsa reaches the North Mountain where she grievously keens her disability of controlling her powers. Throughout time, Elsa becomes more and more at ease and relaxed, completely free to use her powers as she desires. Singing the song "Let It Go", Elsa passionately creates the same snowman she and Anna built when they were little, an ice castle and an ice dress.

While losing the horse in the process of searching for Elsa, Anna travels on foot until nightfall. Finding herself at Wandering Oaken's Trading Post and Sauna, young Anna asks the shop owner Oaken for winter boots and dresses. After making a small talk with him, Anna then meets Kristoff and convinces him to accompany her to the North Mountain, where the source of the winter is believed to come from.

Henceforth, the gang makes it to Elsa's castle; a place where Anna and Elsa could finally reunite. Delighted to see each other again, Elsa still shields fears of hurting her sister Anna. Despite Anna's auspicious avowals of standing by her sister's side and supporting her, Elsa only grows more nervous and churning causing her magic flaring.

This time, however, it strikes Anna in the heart. Desperate to get her sister to

safety, Elsa creates a giant snow creature-a one that Olaf calls "Marshmallow"- to throw them out. As revenge, Anna bumbles a snowball and throws it at the giant beast. Though it created no damage whatsoever, the lack of respect was enough to incense Marshmallow causing him to chase Anna, Kristoff and Olaf down the North Mountain and most likely eliminate them.

Meanwhile, Hans is on a constant search for Anna after her horse returns to the kingdom without her. Shortly after the sisters arrive, Hans orders that no one is allowed to hurt Elsa. While everyone agrees, the Duke's felons disagree, agreeing to hold the Duke's orders to kill her. The moment they come close enough, Marshmallow reveals himself in the form of snowy boulders in case more undesired guests were to arrive, and rushes into battle. Hans, on the other hand, proves to be a brave warrior as he avoids each of Marshmallow's attacks using his sword to cut off the snow monster's leg and cause him to lose balance and begin tumbling over.

Now that Marshmallow is wounded, Hans rapidly heads into Elsa's castle. The Duke's felons however attack Elsa. Demonstrating great strength, courage and determination is Elsa as she fights back, nearly assassinating both men much to her own horror. Just as Elsa was about to kill the two, Hans appears, stops her claiming she would only prove she is the monster they believe she is. Settling down at Hans' words, Elsa stops everything and is then being captured by Hans and the soldiers and head back to a cell in Arendelle Castle.

Freezing and growing colder by the second, Anna returns to Hans, recounts everything that has happened throughout the way, hoping he will kiss her and break the curse. Revealing his true evil self, Hans declares that he had been pretending to love her as part of his demonic plan to seize control of Arendelle's throne. That is, as villain Hans is the youngest of thirteen brother, he will never reach the throne in his own kingdom. Too weak to stop him, Hans prevents Anna from getting any heat and warmth leaving her to freeze to death.

Thereafter, Elsa escapes prison just as the guards were about to come in, heading to the blizzard on the fjord. After several ordeals including Hans' attempt of killing

Elsa by his sword, Anna chooses to save herself or her sister. After one final look at Kristoff, Anna decides to save Elsa throwing herself between Elsa and Hans; she freezes solid just as Hans' sword reaches her instead of Elsa; leading the sword to burst and Hans to be brutally knocked out unconscious in the process. After few moments of unbounded despair, Elsa views her sister as she was getting back to life for she sacrificed herself to save her sister; the thing that constituted an act of true love.

Indeed, an act of true love not between lovers but between sisters is the key to enlightening the darkest wonderings of the past bitter years. In truth, Elsa realizes that love is the true key to controlling her powers; a one that will set truce with nature and melt all the coldest hearts of Arendelle.

### **3.2.2. A Precis of *Frozen 2***

To the greedy, starving spirits fond of *Frozen*, the Disney Company did but greatly delight its spectators by permitting the fun, mystery and enchantment to continue by releasing the must-see *Frozen 2*. Produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios and directed by Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee, *Frozen 2* is a 2019 American film that follows the adventure of Anna, Elsa, Kristoff, his reindeer Sven, and the snowman Olaf as they set off to the enchanted forest to unveil the source of Elsa's magical power.

Utilizing more complex, elevated animation technology than *Frozen*, three years after Elsa's coronation, the castle is enlightened by the celebration of autumn where Elsa, Anna, Olaf, Kristoff and his reindeer Sven are having the best of their time. One night, however, Elsa takes heed of a strange voice calling her. Unintentionally following this mysterious calling, Elsa awakes the elemental spirits forcing people to leave the kingdom. Indeed, one day Elsa and Anna's father King Agnarr of Arendelle informs his daughters that king Runeard, their grandfather, forged a pact with the neighbouring Northuldra tribe by constructing a dike in their homeland, the Enchanted Forest. Yet, a fight occurs causing Runeard's death, and resulting the outrage of the forest's essential elements of earth, fire, water and air.

Recalling all this story, in that particular night the Rock Troll colony arrives and Grand Pabbie announces that Elsa and her troupe has to take on the journey to uncover the truth about the past. Listening wisely to the call, Elsa, Anna, Olaf, Kristoff and Sven embark to the Enchanted Forest. The mist, in fact, goes at Elsa's touch, while the air spirit comes in like a tornado, trapping all the gang in its vortex before Elsa intervenes and stops it by making ice sculptures. At their biggest surprise, the sisters discover that the sculptures are images from their father's past. They, then, encounter the Northuldra and an army of Arendellian soldiers still in conflict with one another.

Moreover, after the fire spirit appears, Elsa discovers an angry magical salamander and calms it. At that time, the sisters manage to set a truce between the soldiers and Northuldra after discovering that their beloved mother, queen Iduna, was a Northuldran who had saved the Arendellian Agnarr. However, the utmost discovery of the journey is the fifth spirit as Elsa and Anna learn that this latter is the one that will unite people with the magic of nature.

Continuing the mysterious journey towards the North, Elsa, Anna and Olaf encounter their parents' wrecked ship and a map with a route to Ahtohallan, a mythical river supposed to unveil the mysteries of the past. Courageous and determined to continue the journey alone, Elsa meets the Nokk; the water spirit who guards the sea to Ahtohallan. Therefore, Elsa discovers that the dam was constructed as a ploy in order not for the Runeard's tribes to connect with magic and eventually incorporate this region with the kingdom. She as well learns that the conflict started when Runeard murdered Northuldran leader in cold blood. Most importantly, Elsa discovers that the voice calling her is the memory of young Iduna call. She discovers that her power are in fact a gift from nature by deed of Iduna's saving of Agnarr. In truth, Elsa is the fifth spirit. To her surprise, she sends all the learnt information to Anna before she freezes when she ventures in the most unsafe part of Ahtohallan.

Once Anna discovers the truth, she deduces that the dam must be destroyed in order to restore peace once again. After awakening the Jotunn, Anna guides them

towards the dam in order to destroy it. The dike was ruined and a big flood was sent down the fjord towards the kingdom. Bravely returning to the Arendelle, Elsa diverts the flood and saves the kingdom. Joining delightfully her sister, Elsa explains that she and Anna are the bridge between people and the magical spirits. Now that peace has been restored, Anna is reigned queen of Arendelle and Elsa becomes the protector of the Enchanted Forest; a truly trusted guardian without whom harmony between humans and nature would have never been restored.

### **2.2.3 Disney's *Moana* Summary**

Three thousand years ago, the most outstanding sailors of the world travelled across the large South Pacific learning out about the numerous islands of Oceania. However, for practically a millennium, these exciting ocean trips took end; a phenomenon all found and explained in the Walt Disney adventurous *Moana*. In the utmost aim of fulfilling her ancestors' unfinished seeking, Moana (known as well as Vaiana or Oceania) recounts the journey of a spirited young lady who traverses the sea to prove herself an excellent, independent princess.

Featuring a beautifully strong and non-white princess, Moana is the strong-willed daughter of a Polynesian chief chosen by the ocean to reunify a precious relic with the goddess Te Fiti. Indeed, on the Polynesian island of Motunui, the locals worship Te Fiti; the goddess of nature who gave life to the ocean using a mystical stone as her heart and as a great source of power. Maui, shaping the once-mighty demigod, steals the heart of Te Fiti to grant humanity the power of creation. Causing Te Fiti to feebly fade, Maui is attacked offshore by the volcanic demon, Te Ka. Maui loses both the heart and his magical fishhook in the sea.

A thousand years ago, Moana is chosen by the ocean to get the heart back to Te Fiti. Attempting to protect their daughter, Moana's parents, Tui and Sina, do their best to keep her away from the ocean and prepare her to become the chief of the island. Sixteens years later, however, a blight hits the island causing grand damages. In that particular afternoon, Tala, Moana's grandmother, unveils a secret cave of ships declaring that their inhabitants were voyagers until Maui stole the goddess' heart.

As the ocean was no longer safe without it and Te Ka's darkness was poisoning the island, Tala states that the land can be cured only if Moana finds Maui and has him restore the heart of Te Fiti. Transmitting this mission to Moana, Tala on her deathbed urges her to set on the journey, find Maui and restore vivacity in the island again.

Setting sail on a camakau along with her pet rooster, heihei, Moana is for certain determinate to put her hands on Maui. Caught in a typhoon and shipwrecked on a deserted island, Moana finally finds Maui. Being a grand booster about his achievements, Moana asks him to return the heart. Refusing the demand, Maui traps Moana in a cave and leave on her camakau. Moana then escapes, confronts the demigod Maui who reluctantly leaves her on the camakau.

After encountering giant fiery creatures and enduring several ordeals together, Moana is convinced that Maui is no longer a hero since he ripped off the heart and cursed the world. After growing closer to each other and gaining reassurance from Moana, Maui reveals that his powers were granted to him by the gods, who took pity on him, and that his first tattoo was earned in the memory of his mortal parents abandoning him. Maui, thereafter, regained control of his powers by his fishhook, teaches Moana the art of sailing and the two sail to the island of Te Fiti.

Once found on Te Fiti's island, Maui and Moana are attacked by the Te Ka. Refusing to turn back, Moana causes Maui's hook to be badly damaged by Te Ka. Unready to lose his magical hook once again, Maui abandons Moana who grieffully and hopelessly asks the ocean to grant the mission of restoring the heart to someone else. However, as Tala's spirit surges on the surface aiming at inspiring Moana to find her true calling, Moana is filled with hope again, retrieves the heart and sails back to confront Te Ka. Greatly corrupted by the without her heart, Moana realizes that Te Ka is Te Fiti. Upon this discovery, the ocean clears a path for Moana, letting her return the heart to Te Fiti.

Now that the heart is restored, Te Fiti heals the ocean and islands from the blight. As life is brought once again to the islands, Maui apologizes to Te Fiti who

fixes his beloved hook and decorates Moana's boat with flowers before falling into a deep sleep. Upon their return back to home, Moana is a true hero in the hearts of the inhabitants; a real saver who proudly takes up her role as an island chief and as a wayfinder. Without Moana, delight and cheerfulness would have not conquered the heart of nature again.

### **3.3. Disney Movies: A Deeper Look into *Frozen* and *Moana***

Endowed with epic characters, filled with extraordinary instances, both of the *Frozen* series and *Moana* offer unforgettable moments in the calling of their spectators. Indeed, as great stories which comprise a large range of interlinked developments between the events help in enlightening the main quest of this research work; the unquestionable relationship between woman and nature. Piercing a deeper look into the Disney movies of *Frozen*, *Frozen 2* and *Moana*; their male and female characters, gender representations and the power position that women hold in these films is, therefore, of preliminary importance.

#### **3.3.1. Let it Go: The Power of Freezing**

Designed with an eclectic range of powers that do not certainly abide logic or seem to pertain any limits, the power of freezing renders Elsa one of the most powerful animated Disney characters yet. Put at the heart of the *Frozen* franchise, the Queen of Arendelle's ice powers are exposed, forcing Elsa to learn to embrace and then understand the nature of her mysterious magical gift. Recognized as a non-stop global phenomenon since the movie's release in 2013, the franchise managed to capture the interest of a whole new generation when *Frozen 2* was released six years later in 2019.

Demonstrating strong magical abilities from a very young age, it is indeed quite obvious that Elsa's control over her powers directly colligate to the tantamount control she has over her emotions. In other words, if Elsa is in a highly intense emotional state, she is able of freezing an entire landscape. Fortunately, Elsa gains skills of how to control her powers and open her heart to love by the end of *Frozen*; while in *Frozen 2* her identity as a magical spirit -simply known as "the fifth spirit"-

alongside fire, water, earth and air is to be at the origin of Elsa's power.

Certainly, unlike other fictional characters who can manipulate the elements, Elsa can freeze, melt and move grand bodies of water and ice; she in fact freezes the environ of Arendelle known as the fjord and, later, a strong torrent released from a broken dam without even becoming visibly drained. Moreover, demonstrating that she can have control both on water as well as ice, in all the times that Elsa freezes the giant mount of water, she as well proves that she is capable of reversing these effects and melting the ice. This, therefore, only confirms the fact that her powers depend neither on ice nor on the moisture content in the air.

Adding to her powers is the extraordinary control over weather and climate. Indeed, Elsa is able of changing the weather by engendering frost, frozen ground, snow, and a chilly breeze. That is, Elsa has the ability to do so over large areas of the land or in micro-climates such as Olaf's snowy and subsequent permafrost. Elsa's powers, henceforth, may permanently and wishfully alter the climate of Arendelle.

Extraordinarily adding to the repertoire of her magical powers and abilities, Elsa's possession of artistic skills is showcased throughout her ice powers. Viewed as an artistry that might be either related to her magical powers or to the otherwise possessed skills regardless of her magical ability, when Elsa is afraid, her ice becomes largely jagged and asymmetrical. However, as long as she is in great control of her sentiments, Elsa has the possibility to sculpt and create staircases, enchanting palaces with chandeliers and marvellous designs made of frozen fractals, dresses, shoes and accessories.

Somehow more confusing than her ability of creating castles and staircases, Elsa is as well known for her power of creating life. Able to endow life and create sentient beings, Olaf, Marshmallow and the miniature snowman army are all conceptions of the magical power of Elsa. Created to add vivacity, liveliness and some sort of a special touch to the movies, Elsa's creations are all in fact self-aware individuals with memory, thought, agency and emotion. Yet, though not showcasing any control over them, these creatures might be considered extensions of Elsa rather than independent



beings as their existence does in truth depend on Elsa.

Furthermore, greatly related to her supernatural powers is her outstanding superhuman reflexes. Indeed, Elsa in *Frozen* is frightfully attacked by guards. The magic appears as she closes her eyes and covers up her face, but instinctively protects and defends herself by creating an ice-barrier to cease the fast movement of an arrow. Similarly, Elsa is widely able of running into the crashing waves of the sea in order to get to Ahtohallan; an act that demonstrates remarkable speed, power and endurance. Superhuman reflexes, agility and endurance are, therefore, great aspects to be reckoned in the long repertoire of Elsa's supernatural capacities.

Tremendously enlightening and displaying the strong relationship between Elsa and nature; a corner much needed in the study, is Elsa's designation as the fifth spirit of the Enchanted Forest. Portraying a bridge between the human and magical worlds, this connection endows Elsa with an ability of awakening the spirits of the forest; an important trigger of *Frozen 2* main plot. This connection is later on also used for subduing, taming and eventually befriending Gale, the Nokk, Bruni and earth giants; the main representers of wind, water, fire and earth.

Perceived an important element of the *Frozen 2*, water memory is a huge aspect added to the *Frozen* universe. Multiply manipulating her superhuman powers, Elsa uses her ice powers to have a look at the memory of any water and penetrate into the past. Showcased like statues of people frozen in time in the Enchanted Forest, memories at the magical glacier in Ahtohallan are, however, presented as manifestations able to walk, talk, and project sounds just as the people they represent. Therefore, such incredible powers essentially enable the Queen of Arendelle to unveil the real events that took place long time ago; a real ability of exposing any foul plot and uncovering any lie by utilizing water to reveal the pure truth.

Consequently, rendered an incredibly powerful being, and represented as a determinate heroine not constrained by the dimensions of size, space or even time, Elsa shows no struggle regarding the limitations to her magical powers; only the loss of control resulted by her own fear – an issue that is largely disregarded by the time

of *Frozen*<sup>2</sup>. Indeed, letting go of her own trapping negative thoughts, beliefs, reverences and worries paved the way to a newly strong heroine in the *Frozen* franchise. Symbol of a total liberation, 'Let It Go' of *Frozen* is far the most popular song from Walt Disney. Having lost all self-control of her powers, resulting in a giant snow storm and an eternal winter which freezes the whole kingdom, Elsa rushes into the mountains and begins singing 'Let it Go' as she constructs a castle of ice. The song starts as follow:

*The snow glows white on the mountain tonight*  
*Not a footprint to be seen*  
*A kingdom of isolation,*  
*And it looks like I am the queen*

Elsa continues by recognizing her inner convulsion and her deceiving failure of controlling her magical powers:

*The wind is howling like this swirling storm inside*  
*Couldn't keep it in, heaven knows I tried*  
*She, then, outspeaks what she had been telling herself the whole time:*  
*Do not let them in, do not let them see*  
*Be the good girl you always have to be*  
*Conceal, do not feel, do not let them know*  
*Well, now they know*

Consequently, changing her inner thoughts and beliefs now is the fact that people do know about her powers. Instead of regaining a total steadiness of mind and soul, Elsa decides to liberate her inner turmoil singing:

Let it go, let it go  
Can not hold it back anymore  
Let it go, let it go  
Turn away and slam the door

I do not care  
What they are going to say  
Let the storm rage on,  
The cold never bothered me anyway

After choosing to revel in her hidden fears, angriness, and antagonism. After choosing, in fact, to neither be controlled by the fear of her powers nor by the fear of what other people might think of her, the Queen of Arendelle decides to take control of her powers, push them to the limit and see what she is really capable of by singing:

*It is funny how some distance  
Makes everything seem small  
And the fears that once controlled me  
Can not get to me at all  
It is time to see what I can do  
To test the limits and break through  
No right, no wrong, no rules for me  
I am free*

Becoming a true example of the rejection of norms, constraints and relativism, finding liberation of the mind, soul, spirit and powers made Elsa shout out:

*Let it go, let it go  
I am one with the wind and sky  
Let it go, let it go  
You will never see me cry  
Here I stand  
And here I will stay  
Let the storm rage on*

Indeed, being one with Mother Nature, or the life force is an extremely important

aspect to Elsa. Sensing a pure liberation from the prejudices, established norms and expected behaviours, Elsa does find her true self only when she is in connectedness with nature; that is, her magical power of freezing. She sings:

*My power flurries through the air into the ground*

*My soul is spiraling in frozen fractals all around*

*And one thought crystallizes like an icy blast*

*I am never going back,*

*The past is in the past*

Deciding to break from the past, Elsa chose not to get back to where she was aiming at making her future better and inner mind freer; a total determination towards self-empowerment:

*Let it go, let it go*

*And I will rise like the break of dawn*

*Let it go, let it go*

*That perfect girl is gone*

*Here I stand*

*In the light of day*

*Let the storm rage on,*

*The cold never bothered me anyway.*

It is here, however, that the song reaches its end. Determinate to no longer conceal her true identity, Elsa is now seeking to embrace her true self, liberate her inner turmoil seeking for self-esteem and acceptance. Throughout the extraordinary journey in the *Frozen* franchise, Elsa's ice powers and their mysterious control have only intensified the relationship between women and nature. Indeed, embracing such strong control of the self, and possessing such desire for making a change portrayed a new heroine to the Disney Company; a one that certainly confronts all the non-traditional.

### 3.3.2. Disney's *Frozen* and Gender Representation

"A word or an image is symbolic when it implies something more than its obvious and immediate meaning. It has a wider 'unconscious' aspect that is never precisely defined or fully explained" (Jung, 1990, p. 18). Indeed, becoming the central force of social control in the various societies of the world, the mass consumption of Disney movies displays a huge influence on audience's ideas and perceptions of everyday life. Displayed to answer the fundamental agony of human beings to understand the workings of the world and of the psyche, symbols and myths delivered by Disney do as well play a key role in the psychosomatic maturity of the individual. Taking attitudes already present in society, such representations do have a long-term impact and influence on the audience. "Hence, the implication for Disney," states Ward (2002), "is that it needs to take extra care in what it does, its tools are powerful and it is working with a vulnerable audience" (p. 5).

As a matter of fact, Disney's animated feature movies have continuously adopted a purely classic 'princess movie formula' which is as such: meet the princess, meet the prince, conflict, resolution, wedding and they lived happily ever after. In the greatest attempt of eliminating this hegemonic portrayal of female subordination and domesticity, a new trend emerged for Disney and Pixar of creating the 'anti-classic princess', engendering new ideas about social expectations of women in their movies.

Sarah Wilde (2014) claims, "As liberation movements in the twentieth century progressed, a redefinition of sexual and social roles appeared in which women challenged fairy tale ideals and their lack of desirable female behaviour" (p. 134). Furthermore, Peter Kramer highlights a crucial shift in direction during mid-1990s Hollywood claiming, "After years of making action and adventure films for boys of all ages studio executives are concluding that a new audience has emerged that is changing all the rules. Women" (Kramer, 1999).

Desiring to make way for the 'third-wave princess', the *Frozen* franchise is endowed with new ideas about gender expectations with a more female positive direction. In other words, Disney's *Frozen* and *Frozen 2* sells a new myth that

manages to recount the journey of maturity from the normalized, heterosexual writings of the princess saving the prince to the narrative of a princess that saves another princess with the aid of a commoner: a tale of sisterly support and female familial love.

Viewed as a highly feminist-friendly movie due to the female producers and directors that made sure that the female protagonists were being represented as contemporary women, Anna and Elsa certainly called for the liberation of women, women empowerment and autonomy and freedom of oppression. The professor of Film Studies, Yvonne Tasker, denotes that, "...it is concerned above all to celebrate female empowerment and strength. Post feminism emphasizes women's achievements- physical, educational, professional- and places particular emphasis on individual choices" (Tasker, 2011).

Pertaining to the 2012 launched complain of "I Am A Princess"; a campaign that addresses all the critiques Disney had received regarding the negative representation of women and in their movies and to prove to the audience that they are evolving by focusing on the autonomy of the woman, the Frozen franchise did certainly focus on a postfeminist romance- romance that encompasses postfeminist heroines having more self-agency, autonomy and valuing their capacity of making their own individual choices. With stories that no longer revolve around romance as a key to make way for the goals and dreams they are seeking, Anna and Elsa are twenty-first century princesses who focus on finding their own identities in the face of social expectations.

Possessing relatable characteristics, the *Frozen* franchise demonstrates that Disney has totally reversed and subverted classic Disney princess patterns. Garabedian (2014) argues:

The modern Disney princess is independent, brave, and heroic, and contemporary audiences need to see strong female leads who can stand alongside their male counterparts. By doing so, Disney encourages the idea of equality between genders and helps build a universal acceptance

of the concept of defining oneself not by how one is born, but by his or her own actions (p. 25).

Princess Anna, on the one hand, is a great example of the way Disney movies have progressed in reflecting more contemporary ideals of femininity. Wilde (2014) claims, "Anna is not portrayed as an object based on desirability and physicality, such as Sleeping Beauty" (p. 144). Unrepresented in extremely fancy gowns, Anna is certainly not glamorous or eloquent. That is, her hair is in a total mess, she snores and she humbugs such as a real human being. She, in fact, portrays a balance between feminine and masculine attributes. Then, using intelligence to save Kristoff from the wolves and showing fearlessness when facing the snow monster, Anna is a true symbol of the transformed princess personality; a portrayal of "girl power".

Inserted in the Oxford English Dictionary in 2001, the term "girl power" is defined as "Power exercised girls; spec. a self-reliant attitude among girls and young women manifested in ambition, assertiveness, and individualism" (OED Online, 2014). Often associated to third-wave feminism, in *Frozen* series this aspect is mainly shown throughout Anna's journey to find her sister; a heroine that plays a leading role with determined purposes and clear approaches to it.

Moreover, traditionally shown by the hero in classic Disney films, it is Anna in *Frozen* who is endowed with masculine attributes as in segments such as "Fight with wolves" and "Save Elsa", Anna is heroic as she acts as a pure rescuer. In this way, *Frozen* seems incongruent with the prediction that male role will be more masculine while female role will be more feminine in Disney princess movie (England et al., 2011). It is, therefore, quite evident that Disney is disregarding the concept of a 'perfect princess'.

Similarly, Queen Elsa portrays the positive progress Disney made in the representation of their female characters. Perceived as an atypical Disney 'princess', Elsa is the only Disney princess with magical powers and the only one to be coronated queen. Elsa is a dynamic model of femininity who oversteps the neurosis – represented as uncontrolled ice powers – caused by the closeted identity and

repression through the unwavering love bond between herself and her sister Anna. In point of fact, initially thinking that repressing her powers is the only way to reach maturity, Elsa's ice powers and her constant struggle to accept her identity represents women who perceive their strengths as weaknesses.

Furthermore, stubborn, cold and proud, Elsa do possess a great amount of responsibility as a ruler, and many people like Prince Hans and the Duke of Weselton feel threatened by her authority, especially that she is a fearless female with a lot of power. Aware of her dangerous power, Elsa chooses to isolate herself and challenges the traditional Disney "good girl complex" and the faced pressure to be perfect. Changing her conservative clothes and tight up-do to a provocative dress accompanied by her hair down, Elsa reaches her full feminist identity when she no longer denies her powers. Deciding to live the way she pleases and singing to let go of the pressure she was being confined in, Elsa is determinate to embrace her capacities, challenging the limits of what a woman can attain.

Challenging the concept of true love and revolving around the familial bond between two sisters, true love or 'love at first sight' is no longer a common trope in Disney movies. Indeed, after Anna strikes Anna with her power, the whole audience is led to think that Hans is the solution to break the curse as an act of true love is needed. However, as the audience discover that Hans, the Prince Charming figure, is the villain of the movie, the blue-collared ice harvester Kristoff is certainly thought to be the act of true love. Yet, "In the end, Anna's act of true love saves her rather than her love for a male lead, making her the enlightened hero that Disney has been progressing toward for nearly 80 years" (Garabedian, 2014, p. 24).

Traditionally, the female character is very powerful until the final moments of the movie when the prince acts heroically and saves the day. *Frozen* franchise, thus, opposes the "traditional ideology of the princess who waits to be saved from danger" (Wilde, 2014, p. 145). By abandoning the "princess-needs-prince" formula, Disney demonstrates that their movies can be extremely progressive in equating gender roles. Princess Elsa is just one example of how, overtime, Disney movies have progressed to reflect more modern ideals. Women are now seen as in control of their destiny and



rarely define themselves as in need of a partner for survival (Garabedian, 2014, p. 25).

As a conclusion, in an era of female empowerment and audacity, it is quite obvious that the Disney Company is trying to remodel the modern Disney princess to amalgamate with the post-feminist conventions. Indeed, the female protagonists of the *Frozen* series, Anna and Elsa, have marked the “progression period” for Disney, giving them the opportunity to continue to put aside past traditional gender roles for women. In other words, in generating a more positive construction of gender, the heroines abandon the convention princess formula where a wedding is the soul path to reach a “happy ending”. Instead, the main priority is to build strong female relationships and to escape the traditional constraints; aiming to equate gender roles and create positive female role models.

### **3.3.3. Masculinity and Femininity in Disney's *Moana***

Joining *Frozen* and *Frozen 2* in their breaking with the promotion of conservative, patriarchal and sexist values, *Moana* is regarded by many as a movie which puts forward an alternative princess; a real feminine role model capable of making her own decisions and valuing her peculiar self. Indeed, *Moana* (2016) displays alternative gender representations both for female and male audiences. Denoted as a film that overcomes former patriarchal and sexist values seen in other Disney princess films, *Moana* has been considered by researchers as a “modern princess” (Hine et al., 2018, p. 3) and, therefore, she has been associated to princesses such as Rapunzel from *Tangled* (2010) and Merida from *Brave* (2012).

Avoiding to be a role model which constitutes an “exposure to gender stereotypes” that have “a negative effect on girls’ and young women’s mental health” (Jacoby & Golden, 2018, p. 300). Certainly, since the very beginning, *Moana* developed an obsession with a banned element of her community: the sea. Greatly attracted to an ancestral said to be dangerous, *Moana* ultimate aim of going to the sea and sail becomes her fixed goal. This, therefore, makes of *Moana* a rebellious breaking with traditions and stereotyped values.

Moreover, Moana's physical and psychological attributes do enormously vary from the elements that characterise the traditional princesses of former Disney movies. First of all, although she is not the first non-white female personage to play in a Disney animated movie, she is the first main character that represents the Polynesian and Pacific cultures. In a total non-traditional mindset, Moana is determinate and strongly willing to revive the islands by finishing what her ancestors started; bringing back the heart of Te Fiti. Secondly, Moana's physical appearance provides the audience with more realistic and routinely traits. As Coyne (2016) declares, traditionally, Disney princesses are designed as "attractive with large eyes, small nose and chin, moderately large breasts, prominent cheekbones, lustrous hair and good muscle tone and skin complexion" and as being "unrealistically thin" (Coyne, 2016, p. 1911). Radically not replicating and resembling that model, Moana has a darker skin, her nose is bigger, and her body does certainly not fit into the perfect thinness and fitness displayed by classic princesses. Instead, her body is athletically stronger and wider and, in that way, it mirrors her personality, attitude and vocations.

Quite essential for the plot, and from a psychological perspective, Moana's realistic character; with her generosity, her independence and autonomy, her wisdom, her braveness and her physical and mental strength and acceptance of all her weaknesses and flaws, displays healthier values as she is not endowed with perfection. Characterised by empathy, Moana's capacity for partnership and compassion are vital for Maui's development as a character and, hence, for the resolution of the narrative. Additionally, being a confident girl with fixed goals, Moana allows herself to challenge a demigod such Maui and to make him know who she is and what she is going to do. She fearlessly claimed that she is "Moana of Motului" and she "will sail across the sea and restore the heart of Te Fiti" (Musker & Clements, 2016). All of these features, therefore, render her capable of embarking on her own journey, breaking the rules and her people as well as her island.

As a matter of fact, Benjamin Hine, Katarina Ivanovic and Dawn England carried out a study to experiment the way young children perceive the differences

between traditional Disney princesses and the new, alternative ones. Utilizing the characters of Aurora and Moana, an analysis of the differences in behaviour and physical appearance was established. The study demonstrated that children “were aware of the differences in the gendered behaviour” of both female characters and that they tended to perceive Aurora as more feminine while “they noticed that Moana displayed relatively equal feminine and masculine characteristics” (Hine et al., 2018, p. 6).

This study positively demonstrated that Moana is “more androgynous” but that, at the same time, “becoming more masculine” does not mean sacrificing “traditionally feminine attributes”. What children are really doing is “demonstrating true context-dependent androgyny” (ibid). To put it another way, Moana represents a positive female character with not only positive feminine traits but as well a combination of both masculine and feminine values; an accurate presenter of equality between genders.

Encompassing a completely different narrative arc from *Cinderella* (1950), *The Sleeping Beauty* (1958) or *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *Moana's* role in the plot is not reduced to the patriarchal tradition and to being rescued by a male character, who tends to be a prince whom they marry at the end of the movie. That is, *Moana* does certainly not pertain to stories based on a kind of love in which women depend on men like in the case of Aurora, only by being kissed by the prince, she wakes from her curse.

Likewise, it is by marrying the prince that Cinderella is pulled out from the abusive domestic household. Ariel's story and actions, on the other hand, are based on an ultimate aim involving the prince: marrying him. Displaying no progress in their attitudes, the plots of these movies are based on a love story and their narrative patterns follow “a pervasive patriarchal system” (Morrison, 2014, p. 7) rendering the female characters passive victims of social injustices.

Moana, on the complete opposite, is filled with fixed aims and goals. She demonstrates passionate evolution in her story, acts and weaknesses. In several

occasions indeed, Moana plays the role of a true heroine as she saves when she is locked up in the cave by Maui, she saves her pet Hei Hei several times, and most importantly, she is the one who renders life to the island and nature by returning Te Fiti's heart. After returning home, Moana becomes the chieftain of her island; the thing that only confirms that as opposed to the chauvinistic values shown in Disney princess' films, Moana does not need to marry or to have a male partner by her side to gain that power.

Consequently, Yvonne Tasker (1998) denotes in her book that "female action heroes are constructed in narrative terms as macho/masculine, as mothers or as Others" (p. 96). In contrast, Moana's heroine is a teenager with, as it has been mentioned, her own flaws and human-like characteristics. In addition, Hine emphasises how "princesses [are] also rarely responsible for 'climatic' rescue scenes" and how the "most significant scene of the movie" usually requires "a central, often male character to save another from a dangerous situation and provide significant plot resolution" (Hine et al., 2018, p. 5). Yet, Moana is a heroine; the female protagonist that saves Maui, her island and nature from vanishing. She rebels against the banned things of her community and is determined to go sailing; to go embarking on a dangerous journey by her own self.

In this perspective, *Moana's* plot does not revolve around a love story between a man and a woman; it is rather the heroine's great affection for her island, for her people, for the ocean and for nature ultimately. Thanks to her humanity, her strength, determination and commitment that life was brought once again in the island.

Consequently, endorsing both masculine and feminine attributes, Moana as a heroine restored gender equality. She is as beautiful as the other characters, but "[her] character strengths lie mainly in [her] wit, spunk and passionate ideals" (Stover, 2013, p. 7). Breaking various barriers that prevented other female and male characters from purely beneficially represent both genders, Moana possesses not only prosperous feminine values but also an androgyny, an identifiable and realistic physical appearance and a vulnerability mixed with self-confidence.

It is, therefore, quite important that Disney movies keep exposing movies that celebrate gender equality, humanity and contemporary societies without forgetting for certain wilderness and the way these women fight for securing the place of nature; a compulsory entity to be fully developed in the upcoming part.

### **3.4. Wild Sentiment: The Theme of Nature in *Frozen* Franchise**

Nature, or the universal law deemed the essence of all things on earth, is at the heart of numerous Disney animation movies. Indeed, for several decades, the Disney Company have catered their films with scenes, characters and events that draw their liveliness from nature. Carrying a deeply significant understanding of environmental issues, the movies released have resulted into a powerful environmental conservation across the globe. Disney films, such as *The Jungle Book*, *Snow White*, *Cinderella*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Bambi*, *The Lion King* and *Finding Nemo* promote nature awareness among people of all ages.

At times inspired from the ecofeminist movement; an interdisciplinary movement which represents the synthesis of the radical movement in feminism and ecology calling for a new way of perceiving nature, women, politics and spirituality, do target the audience to conserve and protect the natural environment and wildlife. Projecting the way people relate to the environment, the emotional appeal of these movies dominate the connectedness with the natural world. Projecting a character purely born out of cold and winter air describing ice as a natural phenomenon is Elsa. Indeed, *Frozen's* female protagonist possesses ice powers and is, therefore, associated with nature.

An embodied mutual sympathy and a profoundly recognized relationship, it is in point of fact in *Frozen* that Disney re-writes and transcends the belief that women are closer to nature than men. Endowed with a natural power, Elsa's supernatural force reveal the interrelation between women and nature and the way women emotionally relate to the natural elements of the environment and count on nature to express their feelings and let go off their angriness and misfortune.

Certainly, female protagonists do as well pay great attention to the phenomenon

of natural destruction. Perceived as a commonly extraordinary issue that occur all over the world, in Walt Disney's *Frozen 2* in particular, women's role represents women's actions in repairing and protecting the existing natural destruction caused by the four spiritual spirits. Consequently, the first environmental issue in *Frozen 2* takes place in the opening section of the movie.

Located in the Northern region of the Arendelle Kingdom, and inhabited by a mysterious Northuldra tribe, this first environmental issue in the Enchanted Forest projects in the scene the natural destruction and ecosystem damage around the forest. Possessing a guardian known as the four supernatural spirits, consisting of water, earth, fire and air spirits, the Enchanted Forest was indeed "protected by the most powerful spirits of all. Those are air, fire, water, and earth" (Buck & Lee, 2019).

This Enchanted Forest, therefore, possessed beautiful scenery and healthy ecosystem. It was ornamented with loads of big trees, blooming flowers, and plenty of different animals live side by side with the Northuldra tribe. The most astonishing thing is that all the inhabitants survive from the things that come from the four supernatural spirits. In other words, from the fire spirit, the inhabitants easily light the stove to provide food. From the water spirit, people can easily cross rivers without even depending on boats or other vehicles. From the earth spirit, on the other hand, the inhabitants are able to cross from hill to hill or from cliff to cliff without climbing them. From the air spirit, finally, they can transport heavy items without having to lift them up.

However, as a result of the huge dispute that occurred with the humans, the Enchanted Forest was violated and moved into a grand natural destruction. This once "incessant combinations of earth water, air, and fire—all tied, mixed, and finally untied by the opposed and concurring passions of love and strife" (Serenella Lovino in Schliephake, 2017) has now vanished; the four spirits are severely furious and the magical force that usually aids the Northuldra tribe turns against them destroying the entire environment throughout the Enchanted Forest. Eventually, from an enchanted forest to a gloomy place to be, the trees fall apart and the fire spirit rapidly burns the entire forest making lots of rocks prop up from all directions. The environment is

surely destroyed.

The elements of air, fire, water and earth lead, therefore, to the understanding of a universe based on both interconnectedness and ambivalence, a “disharmonious simultaneity of desire and discord” (Schliephake, 2017). Consequently, this incident causes the four supernatural spirits to disappear, letting a spirit of darkness and downheartedness overwhelm the Enchanted Forest with a thick fog cruelly locking everyone inside. This is the way the opening scene ends, “But the forest could wake again, and we must be prepared for whatever danger it may bring” (Buck & Lee, 2019) as King Agnarr prevents.

Moreover, the second environmental issue depicted in *Frozen 2* is the scene of the grand environmental damage occurring around the Arendelle Kingdom as a result of Elsa awakening the four supernatural spirits. In point of fact, the Arendelle Kingdom is a place of beauty and pleasant climate. It is a place where summer as the time setting of the movie displays sunny weather with blooming flowers, inspiring waterfalls, and fresh fruits that render the locals quite delighted.

However, one day in the middle of the night, Elsa listens to a mysterious voice coming from the Ahtohallan River. In an uncontrolled voice and emotion, Elsa rushes to the place of past secrets singing the song "Into the Unknown". All of a sudden, when Elsa finishes the song, the atmosphere surrounding the kingdom became extremely tense. In a kingdom where all sources of light disappear, where waterfalls became dry and barren, and where land and roads around the Kingdom became damaged and impassable, the situation becomes out of control in Arendelle.

In the total aim of discovering the meaning and the purpose of the mysterious voice that could only be heard by her, Elsa awakens and challenges the four supernatural spirits. Throughout the outspoken words by Elsa: “Can you feel me? Can you show me? How do I follow you? Into the unknown?” (Buck & Lee, 2019), a whole new dimension is given to the movie.

This is, therefore, the place that nature occupied in the *Frozen* franchise, raising a challenging role for female protagonists to occupy and for the male characters to

display; a one that will be fully detailed after investigating the way wildlife was embodied in *Moana*.

### **3.5. Wilderness in *Moana***

Another Disney monumental movie carrying wilderness at the heart of its scenes is *Moana*. *Moana*, *Vaiana* or *Oceania*, primarily a gender-neutral name originating from Polynesia and meaning a vast body of water, feature casts a strong female character who relates very well to her delightful forest animals and birds, and who has as well contained an everlasting love for the ocean. Carrying a heavy name whose personification is solely a true portrayal of the omnipresence of nature and its connectedness with the female protagonist, Moana and all the member's lives of her tribe are based on their relationship with the island and, therefore, nature itself.

Motunui, Moana's home island, is the place to which she is in the line to be chief. An island dear to Moana and to all the inhabitants, Motunui never betrayed its locals as it has always provided them with great food, excellent weather and a secured shelter. In it, all the people worship the goddess of nature, Te Fiti. Depending on a pounamu stone as her heart, as a source of power and as a germ that brought life to the ocean long ago, the island fell into peril after Maui the demigod of the wind and sea stole the heart of Te Fiti to provide humanity the power of creation. Rendered dark and lifeless, the island that once delighted its people is now empty of goods, empty of things to give as the fish in the sea have all disappeared and the coconuts have all dried up. In spite of this desperate devastation, however, Moana and the islanders never lost hope or faith.

In point of fact, Moana's connection to Motunui only grows stronger as she now perceives herself as the one destined to save the island and her inhabitants. Dripping with strength, independence, finding your own way in the world and deep love and connectedness to the ocean, the lyrics of "How Far I will Go" from *Moana* are impeccable and totally inspirational. Displaying that the lead character is all ready to make some drastic changes, and providing a real insight into Moana's perspectives, thoughts and emotions, and the internal dilemma she is facing, Moana shouts out



throughout "How Far I will Go" that she cannot pretend to be someone she is not though she has great responsibilities as a daughter of the chief:

*I've been standing at the edge of the water  
Long as I can remember, never really knowing why  
I wish I could be the perfect daughter  
But I come back to the water, no matter how hard I try*

Indeed, the place that Moana is hardly drawn to and cannot let go no matter how hard she tries is too significant and substantial as it is forbidden. Not being able to explain the connection to the sea, Moana continues saying:

*Every turn I take, every trail I track  
Every path I make, every road leads back  
To the place I know, where I can not go  
Though I long to be  
See the line where the sky meets the sea?  
It calls me And no one knows, how far it goes  
If the wind in my sail on the sea stays behind me  
One day I will know, if I go there is just no telling  
How far I will go*

Blurred by the mystery of the situation and overwhelmed by an inexplicable love to the forbidden water, Moana continues declaring that there is a great sense of discordance between her and the people in her hometown. In other words, Moana claims that all the inhabitants seem delighted and occupy a peculiar role except her. Thus, with her big potential, Moana feels that is able is doing so much only if she could get away:

*I know, everybody on this island seems so happy on this island  
Everything is by design  
I know, everybody on this island has a role on this island*

*So maybe I can roll with mine  
I can lead with pride,  
I can make us strong  
I will be satisfied if I play along  
But the voice inside sings a different song  
What is wrong with me?*

Having the great feeling that a bigger power is calling Moana for a particular duty, Moana strongly believes that she is destined to achieve something of tremendous importance. As something is calling her out of reach, she is ready to make the first step, follow her dreams and live the life that is meant for her. She runs passionately singing:

*See the light as it shines on the sea?  
It is blinding but no one knows how deep it goes  
And it seems like it is calling out to me, so come find me  
And let me know, what is beyond that line  
Will I cross that line? See the line where the sky meets the sea?  
It calls me and no one knows how far it goes  
If the wind in my sail on the sea stays behind me  
One day I will know how far I will go*

Consequently, determined to create her own journey, resolute to risk her life in order to save the island and her people, Moana's central focus is to restore the heart Te Fiti. Indeed, initiating Moana's journey from the first place, Te Fiti in Disney's Moana preoccupy a central place and a fundamental role to the story. As an island Goddess and a creator of life, it is for certain Te Fiti's impending demise which engenders Motunui into the upheaval. As a matter of fact, nature is often attributed enliven attributes in Polynesian religions. That is, perceived as female, nature is given feminine qualities and usually embodied as a woman due to her ability of providing life.

Moreover, as nature typically maintains a highly spiritual significance, island and elemental gods and goddesses are quite common, and Te Fiti certainly makes no exception. Representing the perfect embodiment of an island goddess, Te Fiti is the highest advert of any dogma or higher being in Moana. She is an almighty being who brings life into existence, and in her interpolate persona, destroys creation. Strengthening the fact that life revolves around nature, Te Fiti, as an island goddess is, therefore, the highest being in *Moana*.

However, from delight to gloominess, from enthrallment to devastation, Te Fiti lost her true spirit of benignity and nurture, and became an evil embodied monster ready to make the first step and destroy the island. No longer a gentle Te Fiti, Te Ka is now the alter persona of Te Fiti. Designed as a grievous island monster of earth and fire, Te Ka becomes the movie's principal antagonist by endeavouring at destructing what the islanders most cherish and hold sacred, nature. After being left without its precious pounamu stone heart, Te Ka made the decision of destroying nature; she chose to act as a true monster towards human beings just the way they did to her.

Granting an enormous chance of discovering the relationship established between men and the environment, between nature and the woman in particular, Moana has certainly made of the natural environment as the main agenda to be explored in the movie. Throughout Te Fiti, nature is unveiled with all its deeds, and inner sentiments and thoughts. Indeed, in exotic scenes that portray Te Ka's anger towards humanity and Moana's willingness of repairing and restoring the over lefts of male chauvinism; the fundamental source of this destruction is surely of male's doings.

Consequently, just like in the Frozen franchise, the devastation of nature in Moana is the outcome of a totally brutal patriarchal system; a one worth scrutinizing on its own in this following part.

### **3.6. Patriarchy: A System Leading to Natural Destruction in the Selected Works**

Regarded as the most ubiquitous form of violence around the world, patriarchy has for so long been conceptualized as a system which produces and reproduces gendered inequalities, engendering men's power and women's subordination. As a system of social, political, and economic structures and practices revolving around gender oppression, men govern, oppress, and exploit women.

Patriarchy, as defined by Gillian Howie (2007) encompasses the "general system, where social practices, institutions (church, family, state), and cultural images organize the power that men exert over women" (p. 240). Within chauvinistic relations, women are totally excluded from full participation in political and economic sphere. Attributes conceived as feminine or as relating to women are, therefore, disrespected and undervalued.

Certainly, not failing to display the way patriarchy lead to an immense natural destruction, the Disney movies under investigation assert that all forms of subjugation are interrelated and that structures of oppression must be targeted in their totality. In particular, the domination of the woman and the oppression of nature by patriarchal power must be addressed together.

Agreeing that there exists a relationship between the domination of women and the exploitation of nature, ecofeminism, as the theoretical framework upon which women and nature relations are scrutinized, unveils the existence of environmental problems as a result of the dominant patriarchy system. Indeed, as Hallen (2000) explains:

In uncovering the social and ecological manifestations of the logic of domination, ecofeminists make explicit how the structures which keep women oppressed are the same structures which reduce fertile wetlands to toxic wastelands. And it is argued that the failure to identify and work on the twin exploitations of women and nature will result in the further deterioration of both (p. 159).

These power constructions are, thus, omnipresent in gendered locations which usually perceive culture as masculine, and nature and women as feminine. As Simeon de Beauvoir (2010) claims: "Humanity is male, and male defines a woman, not in herself, but in relation to himself; she is not considered an autonomous being, she is the other". These social beliefs attribute power and privilege to masculinity, and the private sphere of domesticity and family to femininity; constructed binaries that "construct, control, discipline, confine, exclude, and suppress gender and sexual difference, preserving traditional patriarchal and heterosexist power structures" (Duncan, 1996).

Using male centred dominations, the Disney movie *Frozen* embodies a great patriarchal control through their father, the King. Revolving around the lives of the two sisters, Anna and Elsa, the eldest young girl Elsa possesses the magical powers of using ice and snow. To contend to her father's demand, Elsa is isolated into a room for years to keep her powers hidden. In other words, obeying such masculine influences had a tremendous impact on the sisters bond as it led to Elsa's confinement and Anna's isolation.

A long time ago, Elsa's magical capacities filled her heart and sister's with joy and delight. As a childhood incident accidentally harms Anna, their father immediately accuses Elsa with peril and decides to isolate her so that she can learn to control her power; an act that encouraged self-isolation and self-demeaning. After showcasing the danger of a 'frozen heart' quite obvious, Anna's souvenirs of Elsa's capabilities were erased with her father's consent. Never getting told why Elsa's door remains literally and figuratively unopened to her, Anna desperately pleads through the song 'Do You Want to Build a Snowman' to get back into the life of her sister.

Frightened by her potential, and fearful from her authority, Elsa's father ultimate aim is to control her mind and body. Kneeling in front of her, the King puts gloves on Elsa's hands to hide the source of her magical power, preventing its release. An act quite humiliating and confining to Elsa, her father kept repeating that she now has to "conceal rather than feel" (Buck & Lee, 2019). Afraid as well to lose his royal position, the King felt ashamed and insecure with his daughter's power, thinking that

the people of his kingdom would never accept such supernatural abilities and, thus, would imperatively sustain their highly ranked position.

This emphasis as well on placing control over her body by supervising her mind and emotions would permit Elsa to maintain her authoritative position as heiress to the throne within the public sphere. Isolating her, hiding her true self and not allowing her to express herself was the sole solution to maintain authority over the Kingdom. Her father's manipulation corresponds, therefore, what Duncan (1996) refers to as: "Women who have managed to be admitted to active participation in the public sphere have usually done so according to implicitly male rules, [which] has to do with the mind/body dualism" (p. 3).

Years later, the death of Elsa and Anna's parents did change nothing as it certainly did not erase the gap of isolation caused by the concealment of Elsa's power and the chauvinistic authority of her father. Even in death, it is quite clear that the father still possessed the control of the private and public sphere of Arendelle as; an evident in the continuous closure of the city's gate.

Another patriarchal figure desiring to squelch the beauty and material richness of Arendelle is the Duke of Weselton. While rubbing his hands together such a typically stereotypical villain, the Duke conjures Arendelle to "open those gates so I may unlock your secrets and exploit your riches" (Buck & Lee, 2019). Desiring also to exploit and conquer Elsa he, therefore, quick classified her ice power (nature) as a form of 'sorcery' and provokes further violence and aggression by identifying her as a "monster" who "has cursed this land" (Buck & Lee, 2019).

Consequently, by oppressing the females in the movie, the Duke and Elsa and Anna's father not only denotes a pure exploitation of the female characters in Frozen but as well a total and direct threat to nature. In other words, throughout confining, controlling and suffocating Elsa, nature was too. As a pure embodiment of nature, Elsa was brought down in fear, control and torment.

Continuing the projection of images and ideals of masculinity that mean "strong, willful, controlling, determined and competent" (Myers & Collier, 2010),

Frozen 2 assured the germination of the Frozen franchise by further strengthening the idea that it is in truth the patriarchal system that lead to natural destruction. Indeed, the environmental devastation in the Arendelle Kingdom and the Enchanted Forest takes place because of King Runeard's authoritative chauvinistic leadership system. Deeply confident that he is the only one apt to preside over the region, King Runeard believes that the highest position of a leader in the world is the King. No one can, therefore, disobey his orders or contend his strength and dominant authority of ruling.

As earlier mentioned in the synopsis of *frozen 2*, considering his incomparable toughness, and experience in battle, it was revealed that King Runeard was the one who declared the conflict with the leader of the Northuldra tribe. Desiring a total takeover of Northuldra, King Runeard's evil act, stemming from a constructed social patriarchal culture, causes the anger of the four supernatural spirits of fire, water, air and earth; an asserted destruction of nature.

Revealing the truth about the past, it is for certain Elsa who discovers that her grandfather, King Runeard, oppressed the Northuldra tribe. At that time, King Runeard wanted to establish a fellowship with the leader of the Northuldra tribe so that he can extend his territory apart from the Arendelle Kingdom. Not believing in nature and feeling displeased when learning that the people of Northuldra harness and coexist from the four supernatural spirits, King Runeard orders one of his soldiers to build a dam; a one that would for certain complicate life of the Northuldra tribe. A huge fight took place, resulting in Runeard's death and the engendering of the forest's essential elements of earth, fire, air and water. Since then, the Enchanted Forest is drained into grand misery and gloominess, hoping that one day this destruction caused by patriarchy will be restored.

Joining the *Frozen* franchise in their portrayal of nature, the woman, their connectedness and the system that leads to a devastating environmental destruction is *Moana*. The first oppressive figure performing in the movie is Moana's father. Imposing his orders for years, Moana's father forbids her to go and discover the ocean. Dreaming of a journey into the unknown, Moana, in fact, never had the possibility to sail in the sea, discover its secrets and purchase its grander.

Although sensing an inexplicable relation to the sea; some sort of an inscrutable driving force which inculcates a great endeavour and heavy curiousness to unveil the mysterious enigma, Moana's father prohibited her from finding out her true self and unveiling the secret calling and mission coming out from the sea.

As Moana was, therefore, chosen by the ocean to return the heart of Te Fiti and restore the damage, Motunui's islands kept trapped for years in darkness and impoverishment just because her father never let her reveal her true potential and true identity.

A second patriarchal figure, a one that led the brightness and delight of Motunui into total despair and concern is Maui. Striving for an ultimate unattainably godly strength, authority and control, Maui steals the heart of Te Fiti. Perceived as abrasive and unpleasant, as Te Fiti's heart was made of a precious stone and was known for possessing a great power, Maui steals it. After having her heart stolen, Te Fiti – the representation of nature or the mother goddess of creation- becomes a lava-spewing outrage monster.

Now Te Fiti's alter persona, Te Ka, is determined to destroy the islands, make of the lives of human beings just as bad and grievous as they made her. Corrupted without her heart, Te Fiti is for certain unable to overcome her anger and hatred until she has her heart restored and warm apologies from the demigod Maui.

Therefore, filled with mania, passion and strength, *Moana*, *Frozen* and *Frozen 2* are contemporary Walt Disney movies filled with new ideologies and beliefs. Created to portray the relationship between the woman and nature, when these movies are investigated from an ecofeminist point of view, a particular focus is made upon environmental issues. Unveiling the roots of such a destruction, the three movies did certainly not fail in demonstrating that the dominant patriarchal system is at the heart of the demolition of the Arendelle Kingdom, the Enchanted Forest and the region of Motunui; consequently, nature.

Oppressing nature and marginalizing women, it is revealed throughout these movies that the highest position of a leader in the world pertains to the King; to a man



in fact, and all the people must obey him and worship his authority and existence. Demonstrating at first that nothing can compete with the power of a ruling king in the world, the masculinity values inculcated in the three movies lead to severe environmental issues. In the *Frozen* franchise, this patriarchal system led to an everlasting cold winter and to the devastation of the environment due to the anger of the four supernatural spirits. In *Moana*, on the other hand, all of the islands fell into despair and poorness as the heart of Te Fiti was stolen just to prove authority, power and the grand ability of creation.

As a conclusion, men's domination in these movies does not have a delightful ending both for nature and human life; it does surely not add excitement and happiness but rather engender humanity into an unbalanced and demented circle of life. As nature is the basic of all life on earth; it is the absolute source of creation, life, living and everyday transformation, just as the woman is, it must be protected, preserved, and put away from any exploitation and domination exerted by men's chauvinistic system and patriarchal way of perceiving things and valuing them.

### **3.7. Conclusion**

Envisioning a new course on women and environmental issues, displaying an unprecedented connectedness between patriarchy and nature, the contemporary Walt Disney films have certainly not failed to delight all the curious spirits looking for the source of the destruction of nature occurring in the world.

Indeed, *Frozen*; which recounts the tale of the newly crowned Queen Elsa who accidentally uses her ice power to trap her home in infinite winter and her sister Anna who teams up with Kristoff, a mountain man, his reindeer and the snowman to find Elsa and change the weather condition, *Frozen 2*; a story set three years after the coronation, follows the journey of Elsa, Anna, Kristoff, Olaf, and Sven beyond their kingdom of Arendelle in order to unveil the origin of Elsa's magical ice powers after a mysterious voice shouts out to Elsa and save the kingdom, and *Moana*; the adventurous and brave teenager who sails out on a quite audacious journey to save the island, her people and restore what have been once stolen from the nature

embodied Te Fiti, are all movies which carry nature at the heart of their stories.

Filled with characters who celebrate femininity, power and determination and reject patriarchy and males' over controlling ideologies, *Frozen*, *Frozen 2* and *Moana* portray wildlife and embody the environmental issues that surround the Arendelle Kingdom, the Enchanted Forest and Motunui. Such environmental issues are, in point of fact, the result of a total chauvinistic system. The outcome of a long followed patriarchal culture indeed, these Disney movies represent the struggle of nature to maintain harmony and balance.

Certainly, projecting a deep picture of the hatred, sorrow and struggle of the natural world due to all the decisions the man has made to carelessly destroy the environment, the movies under investigation have laid down the necessary evidences to prove that patriarchy; this system of unequal social organization, is the basis of the natural catastrophes in the world.

Urging for change, the role of the female protagonists in the three Disney movies have brought about new perspectives about the relationship between the woman, nature and the way they possess a powerful connectedness that can never be destroyed by the wrong decisions male figures have made throughout the journey. After devoting a peculiar focus on the destruction nature, its restoration is worth unveiling.

The next chapter will, therefore, examine the role of female characters in repairing the environmental damage. Throughout great possession and use of feminine values, the female protagonists display their major role in restoring the existing natural destruction and maintaining the balance by reconciling nature with humanity.

# Chapter Four

## *Women and Wilderness: Healing the Rift*

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“We often forget that we are nature. Nature is not something separate from us. So when we say that we have lost our connection to nature, we have lost our connection to ourselves.”

Andy Goldsworthy

#### 4.1. Introduction

In the heat of a historical instance filled with reverence when an interwoven nature of imperialism, ecological debasement, exploitation of workers, and women’s oppression are quite obvious and afflictive to many, ecofeminism surged to the surface and started gaining in popularity. As denoted in Karen Warren’s book *Ecofeminist Philosophy*, a key insight of ecological feminism is summarized by the expression “it is all connected” (Warren, 2000). Forged out of a real state of inquiry, ecofeminism as Noel Sturgeon (1997) claims:

Early formation of an ‘ecofeminist’ position takes place in a historical context of real fear of ecological disaster disagreement among feminists about what feminism is, a gathering together of women from various movement locations--including movement of mixed gender--who wish to work together as women, and the use of a common rhetoric that depicts ‘male violence’ as a threat to women and the world (p. 63).

In more precise terms, Sturgeon is highlighting that ecofeminism was born out of a deep fear of ecological destruction and the grand desire for women to be able to construct a movement which projects their particular attempt of restoring the devastation caused by male’s exploitation. Therefore, around the 1970s, western women began to feel that the environmentalist movement would benefit from feminist analysis (Holloway et al., 2014, p. 142).

Consequently, joining her colleagues in their fight and struggle, Francoise d’Eaubonne coined the term ‘ecofeminism’ in 1974 to raise awareness about women’s domination and nature’s oppression in the great attempt at freeing women

and nature from exploitation. Since then, ecofeminism has drawn the attention of scholars and activists from different fields and positions to evaluate the relationship between the women and the non-human nature through gender reconsideration. In essence, ecofeminism stresses the depth to which human realities are embedded in ecological realities, and the fact that we are all composed of physical and conceptual connections and relationships (Cuomo, 2002, p. 1).

Indeed, very much influential in the development of ecofeminism, Kate Warren's 1987 essay entitled *Feminism and Ecology: Making Connections* argues for a basic ecofeminist position that "feminist ought to pay attention to environmental issues and ecological interdependencies, and that environmentalists ought to attend to the connections among ecological degradation, sexism, and other forms of social oppression" (ibid). Worried about the natural world's degradation and interrogating the freedom and well-being of nature, feminists proved to have a great interest and a profound relationship with nature. As a matter of fact, a large wealth of ecofeminist poetry, fiction and political writing had been published around the seventies and the beginning of the eighties centuries. Nature writing was, hence, established as a literary tradition in the nineteenth century.

Nominated as the biggest movie production at the moment and established for over eighty years, Walt Disney's *Frozen*, *Frozen 2* and *Moana* are nature written and project female protagonists with powerful ecofeminist visions. Throughout supernatural ice powers, or throughout deep connectedness to the ocean as a chosen young lady by the sea itself, Elsa, Anna and Moana exhibit the relationship and the connectedness that exists between the woman and nature. Moreover, these female characters represent the grand attempt and desire that women have deep inside to liberate the natural world.

Not only a place dedicated for non-human species, in *Frozen*, *Frozen 2* and *Moana* the natural world is depicted as a place where there exists "a feminine capacity to connect with the deep mysteries of the universe through such natural things as the stars, the sea, wind, rain and mountains" (Gebara, 2004, p. 404). They further mirror the belief that as Gebara (2004) says:

We are a part of the natural world and that, when we are able to remember this, that we are able to understand ourselves and nature coexisting. Living and nonliving members of the natural world cease to be something beyond ourselves and becomes instead part of a larger picture of which we are also a part. We can exist in communion with all forms of life and cosmic energies (ibid).

Based on Gebara's uttered words, Anna, Elsa and Moana represent a mystical understanding as well as relationship with the natural world; a one which unveils both the human's capacity to connect with nature on a deeper level and the roots of exploitation of both women and nature. Throughout these Disney animated movies, the role of women is thoroughly explored in the following chapter.

#### **4.2. Female Growth: Self-Awakening under Patriarchy**

Imprisoned in a belief and practice which subjugates women at the different levels of politics, economy, society and culture, poisoned by a social and ideological construct which renders men superior to women, patriarchy has for so long imposed humiliating masculinity and femininity stereotypical characters which further strengthens the iniquitous power relation between men and women. Quite aware of the patriarchal control, exploitation and oppression at the material and ideological levels of women's labour in the family, at the work place and in the society in general, feminism is a conscious action taken by women to overstep the belief and practice of patriarchy. Rendered as a source of empowerment, the patriarchal system has become a fuel for women to achieve a peculiar state of social autonomy, psychological self-sufficiency and a general well-being of the mind and spirit.

Tracing the journey of depowered female characters who gradually transform the oppressive situation into a motivational condition to achieve empowerment are for certain Anna and Elsa of the *Frozen* franchise and Moana of the 2013 *Moana*. Indeed, these female figures display the motivation and courageousness patriarchy inserts deep in them to attain self-growth. In other words, self-awakening under the patriarchal system portrayed in these movies denotes the path female characters

undertake to achieve what is known as eve empowerment and psychological empowerment.

Indeed, empowerment of women throughout Disney female characters has been an area of interest for quite some time in the past. Representations of strong and active female characters, such as Anna, Elsa and Moana have focused on projecting factors of autonomy, women's land rights, bargaining power and gender equality. They, in fact, embody the depowerment of women and the efforts made throughout the journey to create empowerment. Termed as eve empowerment, Anna, Elsa and Moana all inculcate in them the belief and practice of overcoming patriarchy. Consequently, while eve empowerment is contextual in nature, psychological empowerment, as a motivational construct, occurs if conditions favouring eve empowerment allow women to undergo authorization. By countering patriarchy, therefore, women go greatly through eve empowerment and psychological empowerment.

The word 'to empower'; a term meaning to authorize, to delegate power or to give authority to someone, is the feminists' ultimate achievement in this world of male chauvinism. Laying down the foundation of eve empowerment, the feminists' movements brought about a peculiar feminine conscientisation against patriarchal oppression; a one that certainly resulted in the elevation of women in general and the emancipation of female characters in particular. As a result, various studies were carried out to unveil and scrutinize women's empowerment.

At the macro level, empowerment critical inspections revolved around social inclusion. In other words, the growth of the civil society and participatory development methods at macro levels were proposed as mechanisms by which social inclusion and therefore, empowerment could take place (Friedmann, 1992). Desiring a total control over their lives in relation to family and society, and based on all the inquiries conducted regarding women empowerment, eve empowerment is defined as the "gradual emancipation of women from the patriarchal mindset, belief system, and behaviour in the six dimensions of patriarchy identified by Walby (1999). The six structures are: (a) the household (b) paid employment (c) the state (d) male-on-female violence (e) sexuality and (f) cultural sphere" (Rawat, 2014, p. 45).



Consequently, possessing the notion of power embedded in it, greatly sceptered women- notably female characters like Anna, Elsa and Moana- have the strong believe that they are able to cope with events, circumstances and/or the people she encounters. Power in this motivational sense refers to an intrinsic need for self-determination (Deci, 1975) or a belief in personal self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). Based on this conceptualization, power is extraordinarily related to an actor's motivational condition. In other words, any scheme or technique which reinforces this self-determination belief or self-effectiveness need will automatically render women more powerful. Reversely, any method that undermines the belief of self-determination and self-efficacy will result in a bitter feeling of powerlessness and worthlessness. Therefore, this experience of empowerment is termed as psychological empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995).

Defined as a complex unit, psychological empowerment is composed of the four variables of meaning, competence, self-determination and impact (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). First of all, meaning refers to the needed connectedness between the requirements of one's role and one's values and behaviours. Secondly, competence or self-effectiveness is the belief that one is able to perform work activities with notable attainment. Then, self-determination is a sense of and ability in initiating and regulating actions. Last but not least, impact is the degree to which one can impose his strong influence on the others. According to Spreitzer, (1995), "together, these four cognitions reflect an active, rather than a passive orientation to a work role. Active orientation means one in which an individual feels able to and has choice to shape his or her role or context."

However, it is of primary importance to know that there is a great difference between creating favourable conditions leading to empowerment and actually experiencing empowerment. As early mentioned, the suitable circumstances created for empowerment are to be present in the environment and are to be external to the woman (termed as *eve* empowerment). If conditions favouring *eve* empowerment make a woman experience empowerment, then it is termed as psychological empowerment (*ibid*).

Embodying, accordingly, even empowerment as a giant leap towards overstepping patriarchal beliefs and practices, the two sisters in the *Frozen* franchise and *Moana* display the efforts female heroines in contemporary Disney adaptations made to apply even empowerment and achieve a sense of psychological liberation and authority by experiencing the components of meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. It is quite safe to highlight that even empowerment leads automatically to a greater experience of psychological empowerment. In this context, Spreitzer (1995) clearly denotes that:

There are some assumptions about the definition of psychological empowerment. First, empowerment is not an enduring personality trait generalizable across all situations, but rather, a set of cognitions shaped by work environment. Second, empowerment is a continuous variable; people can be viewed as more or less empowered, rather than empowered or not empowered. Third, empowerment is not a global construct generalizable across different life situations and roles but specific to work/activities (Spreitzer, 1995).

Indeed, even empowerment increment the experience of psychological empowerment; i.e., by countering patriarchal system of beliefs and practices, a whole newly increased experience of psychological empowerment is laid down. As the dimensions of even empowerment gather factors such as economic, social and cultural empowerment, a suitable context is created to experience psychological empowerment. In the cases of the two sisters and *Moana*, it is their father and Maui which intrigued in them the desire for showcasing their hidden talents and abilities; a thing which undeniably leads to self-satisfaction and a general mental well-being.

Developed by H. J Dupuy in 1970, the concept of General Well-Being evaluates “self-representations of subjective well-being and distress” (Rawat, 2014, p. 47). Asserting that positive mental health is the basis for well-being and functioning effectively for both the individual and the society, the World Health Organization defined the concept of General Well-Being as state which allows individuals to realize their abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and

fruitfully, and make a contribution to their community.<sup>1</sup> Joining the same belief, Ryan and Deci (2001) declare that GWB is:

A complex construct, covering both affect and psychological functioning with two distinct perspectives: the hedonic perspective, which focuses on the subjective experience of happiness and life satisfaction, and the eudaimonic perspective, focusing on psychological functioning and self-realization (p. 155).

Therefore, displaying great motivation and commitment to use, develop and become the best version of one's self, General Well-Being addresses the way people give directions to their lives throughout a pure engagement in eudaimonic attributes, or simply eudaimonia. Inculcating visions of success and ripping accomplishments deep inside the mind and spirit, GWB encompasses concepts and inspirations like endeavouring for success, acting with virtue, and possessing concerns and inequities beyond the immediate moment. Condensing in hedonic pursuits or hedonia, on the other hand, "means seeking personal pleasure, enjoyment, and comfort, whether through physical means or emotional-cognitive means, such as enjoyment of social interaction or art" (Huta, 2012). Thus, eudaimonia and hedonia are the two main ways through which people seek well-being in life (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

In the instances of Anna and Elsa, encountering the patriarchy of their father in *Frozen*; of their grand-father in *Frozen 2*, a General Well-Being was achieved after going through even empowerment and psychological empowerment. In *Moana*, her father as well as Maui with their autonomous orders, chauvinistic attitudes and humiliating perspectives on her provided her with the desire to embark on her own journey to unveil her true self and liberate her real abilities to finally attain self-esteem, autonomy and affectivity.

As a conclusion, the female characters of Disney's *Frozen*, *Frozen 2* and *Moana* exemplify the strike women face under the patriarchal system. Quite exalting and

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization (2014). Promoting mental health: Concepts, emerging evidence and practice. Summary report, Geneva: World Health Organization.

awe-inspiring, this chauvinistic emotional and cognitive impact upon women leads to a remarkably female growth. Experiencing, therefore, a psychological empowerment, the female heroines mirror patriarchy as a fuel for them to reveal themselves as young ladies capable of handling their lives, controlling their paths, embracing strength and autonomy, and achieving self-satisfaction, esteem and value.

Not devoted to themselves only, these female characters showcase as well passion and determination for saving the natural world from the destruction caused by male figures. A great connectedness born out of the same endurances, treatments and perceptions, Anna, Elsa and Moana divulge their ecofeminist spirits and set on for a noteworthy journey; a one that further denotes that empowerment is contextual in nature and a positive environment leads to experiencing a relieving well-being. Intense in its nature and powerful in its implications; this journey might simply be termed as the self-exploration under the call of Mother-Nature.

### **4.3. The Self-Exploration under the Call of Mother Nature**

Representing an appeal to the psychological maturation of the postmodern woman, denouncing the journey of an archetypal path to atonement, renunciation and full realisation of the self, the Disney's *Frozen*, *Frozen 2* and *Moana* revise the popularized myths of the Walt Disney canon and the archetypes addressing female individuation. Breaking the spell of 'they lived happily ever after', these brand new narratives aim at projecting a new myth that attempts to rewrite the journey to maturity from the normalized tale of the prince charming sparing life to the princess to the story of a princess that saves another princess with the aid of a commoner. Dripping with determination and filled with ecofeminist viewpoints, these stories are of sisterly love, female bonding and, most importantly, self-discovery under the thriving call of Mother Nature.

Indeed, representing a unique and special connectedness, the woman- nature entity in the aforementioned Disney movies is embodied so as to kindle the unjustified oppression of the woman and the domination of nature. Not only denouncing the patriarchal system women and nature endure, the female characters

of the Disney films have a special bond with the natural environment; a one that enables Elsa, Anna and Moana to manifest their repressed desires and confined powers.

Uncommon in her abilities, Elsa in *Frozen* is a dynamic model of femininity with strong ice capabilities. Portraying a different storyline that consists of new perspectives and ideas, *Frozen* canvasses the great influence nature condemns on Elsa's development as a queen with powerful environment-based abilities. At a distance from the patriarchal oppression of the natural world and the masculine public arena of the kingdom, Elsa liberates her capabilities through the early detailed song of 'Let it Go', and exploits her true self as an ecofeminist.

In truth, Elsa possesses the power to resist the patriarchal craving for dominating nature and herself while embracing the belief of creating her particular feminine space. In other words, denying the idea that only the masculine, patriarchal system owns the authority for political domination, Elsa builds her own castle establishing herself as a matriarch within the landscape. In spite of not having access to political authority when isolated, Elsa does for certain possess what is even bigger; a peculiarly personal ability of utilizing her nature-based ice powers as she engenders Arendelle in an eternal winter. Therefore, with her ability of creating some sort of a matriarchal arena of her own throughout the ice castle, and her potential to control the castle from far demonstrating the potency for both types of power to handle in the same landscape, Elsa represents the ecofeminist belief that both nature and women are ladened, but that the connectedness between women and nature is a way leading to strength and power.

Making the choice to isolate herself and to confine her powers then to unveil her potential to transfer her personal and political authority beyond the matriarchal solitudinarian space to the public arena to impose her reigning on the castle and put an end to the domination of both, Elsa slowly learns to merge the positive and negative sides of her ice powers. In nature, she releases an inner pressure to come to terms with her true, complete self.

Anna, on the other hand, discovers that there is no such thing as ‘love being meant to be’, but that true love is developed throughout friendship, care and precaution. As opposed to the affection she shared with Hans, Anna develops a friendship with Kristoff who helps her to see the beauty of nature and other non-human creatures, such as the rock trolls. Assisting to the birth and development of a great friendship between Anna, the rock trolls, Sven the reindeer and Olaf the snowman, the very essence of ecofeminism is depicted throughout these sequels; true belief in a complementary relationship between humans and non-humans free of the exploitation of nature as both species depend on each other for their survival.

Rebounding in another episode, Elsa and Anna make their comeback in *Frozen 2* to this time embark on a journey to discover the source of Elsa’s supernatural powers. Directed once again by Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee, in the new sequel, the Kingdom of Arendelle is attacked by unknown spirits from a neighbouring forest named the Enchanted Forest; a place which has been locked down for centuries by a magical mist. After evacuating the inhabitants of Arendelle into the mountains, Anna, Elsa, Olaf, Kristoff and Sven go to the Enchanted Forest to find a way to calm the spirits; to settle what Nancy Parent (2019) denotes:

From a magic as old as the glaciers were born the spirits of air, of fire, of water, and of earth. When at peace, we find in them the best of nature. But when enraged, the wind twists with furious gust. Fire burns all options to dust (p. 28).

Meanwhile, Elsa has been driven by a mysterious voice calling her she strongly believes it will reveal the truth about her powers. Moving inside the Forest, the group encounters the people of Northuldra and some remaining soldiers from Arendelle who are still marked by the left overs of a war that broke thirty six years ago; a battle which angered the spirits and caused the mist to descend. Continuing their journey, Anna and Elsa further learn about the shipwreck of their parents as they were attempting to cross the Dark Sea to a glacier called Ahtohallan; the source of all the secrets about Elsa’s powers.

Leaving her friends behind, Elsa crosses the Dark Sea to Ahtohallan to finally learn the answer to a question she has been asking all her life. Throughout the song 'All is Found', Elsa discovers that she is the fifth spirit connecting the other four. A journey of self-discovery indeed, it is certainly quite important to mention that to reach the answer, Elsa got the help of the four angered spirit. Representing the strong relationship between the woman and nature and the patriarchal oppression they endure, Elsa possesses the ability of interacting with each of the spirits as they respond to something innate in her.

Feeling a familiarity among the magic in the Enchanted Forest and Ahtohallan, Elsa manages to calm, tame and befriend each angry spirit she meets in her way to the river of the answers, including the Nokk- the horse-shaped creature representing the element of fire-, Bruni- the blue salamander that represents fire-, Gale- the gust of wind which embodies the element of air-, and Earth Giants as a race of giant mountain creatures as the element of earth.

Intriguing curiosity and inculcating eagerness to unveil is the question about Elsa's powers and the way she became the fifth spirit of the forest. The ice powers were, in point of fact, a gift from the spirits, imparted to her because of the acts of her mother, Queen Iduna, in rescuing her father, King Agnarr, during the fight between the people of Arendelle and Northuldra. Surely, short before the battle was declared, Agnarr heard Iduna singing the same song that Elsa hears later. As the fight was on, Agnarr hit his head on a rock and as Iduna found him, she song the same song as an apparent call to the spirits to help them. Acting in an undeniably heroic manner, Iduna managed to escape the forest with Agnarr before the fall of the mist.

In adulthood, Iduna became queen to his king Agnarr. As a gift to Iduna's unbiased act of valiance, nature granted to her and Agnarr's first born ice powers and appointed her and her sister Anna as the fifth spirit to one day restore the damages caused by Runeard, serving as a bridge between humanity, magic and nature. In other words, in the same manner that the spirits punished both of Northuldra and Arendelle soldiers for declaring a fight that created unbalance between nature and humanity throughout the magical mist, so too they rewarded Iduna and Agnarr's bridging of

the divide by endowing Elsa with the fifth spirit that connects the other four: air, earth, fire and water. However, Iduna did not possess similar powers to Elsa. She for certain was able to perform magic by communicating with the spirits of the Enchanted Forest; just like any other inhabitant of the forest.

Elsa and Anna are, therefore, the perfect embodiment of the established relationship between the woman and nature. Courageously embarking on a journey to reveal the origins of Elsa's powers, Anna and Elsa were surely on path towards self-discovery and maturity mainly.

Another character portraying growth and matureness under the call of Mother Nature is for certain Moana. Deeply exploratory in its nature, *Moana* recounts the story of a strong-willed young lady; a daughter of the chief of a Polynesian village who is chosen by the ocean to restore the heart made of a mystical relic with Te Fiti. Seeking to erase the so long hidden inquiries, attempting to mend the deepest insecurities and overcome the most resentful anxieties, Moana's journey towards maturity and self-exploration is certainly one of a kind.

"No, we are here because the ocean told you that you are special and you believed it. [The ocean] chose wrong" (Musker & Clements, 2016). Indeed, at the heart of the ocean and in the middle of a great confrontation with the truth, Maui throws at Moana these bitter words; acrimonious statements which reach the core of her biggest insecurities. Troubled and disruptive, Moana falls once again into the same insecurity she felt in the beginning. However, regarded as not a personal enough motivation to contend and fight through the hard times, returning the heart of Te Fiti played for sure an important role in her own personal life; a one that gave her strength and desire to keep going. Moreover, in her darkest times, her grand-mother shows up to direct her and speak truth to her.

Just like the ocean, Moana's grandma provides her with the ability and freedom of choice to get back home by liberating her from the burden of needing to carry out her grandma's final wish. Confused about her direction, her grandmother open-



heartedly reminds her of who she truly is y what she loves. Singing “Once you find what you like then there you are” (ibid), Moana confidently responds:

I am a girl who loves my island. I am a girl who loves the sea. It calls me. I am the daughter of the village chief. We are descended from voyagers, and they call me. I have delivered us to where we are, I have journeyed farther, still it calls me. The call is enough, it is inside me. I will carry you in my heart, you remind me that come what may, I know the way. I am Moana” (ibid).

Throughout recalling her family history, throughout remembering the things that she loves, and throughout retrieving the powerful bond that relates her to nature and the greatest call that brings her to the ocean, Moana is reminded of the reason of her journey. Returning to the foundation of who she really is, Moana now takes great courage and determination shouting out: “I am Moana of Montunui. I will board my boat, I will sail across the sea, and restore the heart of Te Fiti” (ibid). Certainly, recalling the powerful love of family, heritage and nature helps Moana in navigating this phase of self-discovery bringing to light the role she is meant to endorse in this journey.

In the end, Moana is capable of listening to herself and following her calling. Discovering her true self as a voyager, Moana claims as well both her identity and her purpose in life. Bravely able to acknowledge that the voice calling was not something from outside of her but outbursting from the deepest parts of her. In doing so indeed, she is able to lose her frustration, anxiety, dissatisfaction and low self-worth. Living in congruence with her purpose, she now becomes the confident female heroine who voyages across the ocean; all ready to reveal her true self in the middle of the ocean.

As a conclusion, the *Frozen* franchise and *Moana* pertain female leads striving to discover their true selves and fulfill the purpose in what they are destined to do. Wide opening her arms to grant Anna, Elsa and Moana an unprecedented journey filled with enriching experiences and enhancing knowledge, Mother Nature in these

Disney films is at the origins of their paths towards maturity and self-discovery. Quite powerful in her calling, nature does enable Elsa, Anna and Moana to unveil their complete selves and liberate their true potentials, abilities, and hidden insecurities. In truth, these female characters find great refuge in nature. In sharing the same experience and going through the same oppressive and depressive patriarchal system, women and nature help each other in attaining power in choice and strength in authority.

In an environment where they are capable of expressing themselves freely and acting deliberately, women find the suitable place to free their characters. Portraying, therefore, sequels filled with passion to reach their true identities, tears to overcome the obstacles and oppression they have endured for years, determination to prove their efficiency, authority and existence in their communities, and laughters dripping with self-esteem, pride and delight to achieve the purpose of their journeys, female heroines in nature explore a great sense of empowerment and maturity; a powerful calling which did lay down a whole new experience towards self-growth, revelation and liberation.

#### **4.4. Just Like a Woman: Nature Breaking the Stereotypes**

In exploring the identification of women with the earth both as sustenance for humanity and as victim of male rage, in suspecting the interdisciplinary critical theory which declares environmental and women's issues as interrelated, the ecofeminist theory reveals an oppressive attitude exerted towards women and nature. Used to control and wield a large pressure on non-male beings and marginalize them, ecofeminists denote that the system creates a male-centred hierarchy and dualities, developing an unbearable inequality in society and providing the superiority to men.

Indeed, in the male-centred society, hierarchal order dualities like male/female, culture/nature, logic/emotion, soul/body and conscious/unconscious provide men with power. In other words, as the man is perceived superior to the woman in this system, all the superior attributes belong to the man only. Therefore, man is superior to woman, culture is superior to nature, and logic is to emotion.

Certainly, in claiming authority by utilizing these superior features, women and nature become subordinate and completely dependent in a male-dominant environment. Associated to inferiority, perceived as inadequate beings, such hierarchies create a division between genders as womanhood and manhood are rendered totally opposite concepts in gender-based communities. In this same context, Huey-li Li (1993) claims that “men and women are polarised in order to enhance men's hegemony, and women's "otherness" in the hierarchy” (p. 288). Thus, existing as ‘others’, women and nature become completely dependent, and indescribable without men.

However, although hierarchies and dualities are implemented to polarise genders, their main purpose is not to create a fight between genders, but rather ensure men’s control and authority. As “superiority is the main objective, and it makes the subcategory to be objectified” (Plumwood, 1993, p. 77), the dualities ensure the authority of the superior category, provide the dependence of the subcategory as the independence of the subcategory engenders the superiority of the male-dominance. In this sense, the non-male creatures representing the inferior category in a male-dominant society exist as commodities. Belonging to the same subcategory, women and nature are ostracised. That is, hierarchies permit the domination of women and nature in order to render men superior, and marginalize women and nature interdicting the possession of any unique features and autonomy.

Consequently, ensuring the continuity of the male-dominant system, the hierarchies and dualities are for certain the building blocks of male-centred communities. However, claiming to be superior and powerful, the male-dominance does have a great dependency on the woman and nature to exist. In other words, as “there cannot be a master without the slave” (Plumwood, 1993, p. 72), the upper category cannot be superior without the inferior category and the subcategory cannot be outclassed without the upper category; i.e., man cannot achieve dominance and a continuity of authority without an opposite concept which is, in this case, the woman and nature.

Thus, there must be a category of subordinate beings, and through them, the dominant group can be identified, and this leads to the constant state of hierarchical order (Plumwood, 1993, p. 73). Not only reinforcing male-dominance, but the non-male creatures secure the existence and survival of the hierarchical system by being a fundamental part of it. In truth, the concepts of contrast occurring between the two complement each other and display an undeniable relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed; a one that ensures the persistence of the patriarchal system but also leads to the determination and desire to gain power, independence and authority by both women and nature.

Having said that, projecting the problematic patriarchal perceptions of the natural world is *Frozen*, *Frozen 2* and *Moana*. Throughout *Te Fiti* who was the representation of a goddess in nature, and Elsa; the snow queen with ice powers who was later on unveiled as the fifth spirit, nature was embodied and portrayed. In empowering female characters, therefore, nature was empowered as well. Mirroring closeness and sympathy towards each other- as detailed in the former titles- this only leads to assert the women's close relationship with nature.

Certainly, in male-dominant societies women and nature possess close positions to each other. First of all, creating a close relationship between the two is the leading property that both women and nature have the ability of reproducing. That is, in gender-based societies, women's most prominent feature is reproducing and giving life, just like nature. As women "are the life-givers of the human species" (Roach, 2003, p. 40), they are perceived as very compassionate and generous being that assure fruitfulness. Likewise, nature is similar to the mother. Called Mother Nature, motherland or mother earth for centuries, nature is also viewed as a mother with infinite resources. In this sense, the male patriarchal belief treats both women and nature as providers as they are both compassionate and generous.

Thus, the fundamental principle of ecofeminism suggests that in feminizing nature, and in naturalizing the woman, men have easily access to the exploitation of both. Moreover, in the proper words of Poranee Natadecha-Sponsel (Sponsel & Natadecha-Sponsel, 2016), ecofeminism claims that "the domination of women by

men reflects and reinforces the domination of the environment by society, and that the two are understood to be linked; patriarchal gender relations in society correspond to androcentric environmental ethics” (p. 1640). That is, the exploitation of women and the domination of nature are linked by virtue of a common root cause. Since both women and nature are inferior according to the patriarchal hierarchies, they have historically been oppressed due to the passive and dependent role that they occupy, and it is these parallels between the treatment of women and the treatment of the natural world which was essential for the construction of an environmental philosophy. Aiming at unveiling the connectedness between environmentalism and feminism, Noël Sturgeon (1997) in *Ecofeminist Natures: Race, Gender, Feminist Theory, and Political Action* declares that:

Somehow the Women’s Pentagon Action had to reflect our feminist principles and process. And we began to talk about what these principles were. We talked about connections between violence against women and the rape of the earth. We talked about racism and American imperialism. We heard from women about the effect of military spending on the human services upon which women depend. We connected the masculine mentality and nuclear bombs... We reflected on the election of Ronald Reagan and what that would mean to us. And we talked about how we might do our action with ritual politics and theatre and images...We were defining feminist resistance (p. 63).

Perceiving that the things threatening the natural world are the same which harm the woman, ecofeminism was, hence, created to face and stop the masculine violence exerted against women and the natural environment. As nature is passive and cannot react the external factors, and women are physically and psychologically oppressed by men and deemed dependent on them, attributing similar attributes to women and nature naturalizes women, while it feminizes nature ensures their subordination; the element meant to be erased by ecofeminists.

In point of fact, as a result of this conceptualization of women and nature, the natural world becomes greatly associated to sexuality in male-centred societies. Just

as Gaard (Gaard, 1993) claims, “nature is represented as an object of desire because it gains a feminine identity through statements such as ‘virgin forest’, ‘untouched land’” (p. 304). Therefore, external factors, like culture modify and exploit nature as the passivity of nature is an element which feminises and objectifies it. Expressions including “virgin”, “untouched” or “unspoiled” typify women’s representation as objects of desire, but nature as well. In this way, in masculine systems, nature, women and oppression do survive as unity in a male chauvinistic culture; i.e., in a male-superior system, the passivity leads women and nature to exist as objects of desire and to establish a close relationship between them.

Nevertheless, besides viewing this women-nature connection as a way leading to the perpetuation of oppression, some ecofeminists would put forward the idea that this relation might be deeper than just a similarity of oppression; this connectedness between women and the earth can be regenerated in a way that is empowering. Indeed, these feminists believe in a connection between women and nature, and that this connection does not necessarily have to be a source of oppression, while others will argue that the connection is entirely socially constructed and that we should resist any suggestion of inherent connection between women and nature (Roach, 2003, p. 57).

Sometimes referred to as “nature feminists”, these ecofeminists suggest that women are inherently more close to nature than their male counterparts, and strongly deny the idea that just because this connectedness between women and nature has traditionally been utilized to justify oppression does not denote that this is necessarily the case. They, instead, truly believe that “women are closer to nature but disagree that the association must be disempowering” (ibid).

A connection regenerated as empowering, indeed, is to be at the core of the Disney movies under investigation. Away from portraying and reinforcing male oppression, the female characters denote that feminizing nature does not necessarily lead to disempowerment. To exemplify the idea, Moana as an indigenous person and Elsa as the fifth spirit of the Enchanted Forest deduct a sense of reverence towards the natural world completely based on an understanding of a divine, feminine nature.

In other words, a deep relationship exists between women and the natural world derived in their ability of bringing life forth.

Certainly, without Elsa—who is nature embodied—restoring the Kingdom of Arendelle from an eternal winter to a beautiful in *Frozen*, and calming down the four spirits in the Enchanted Forest, and without Moana as the one chosen by the ocean to restore Te Fiti who is the source of the richness and the beauty of the island, life would not have been the same in the Arendelle Kingdom, the Enchanted Forest and Motunui. As “the Creator passed on the ability of giving life from Mother Earth to women” (Wilson, 2005, p. 343), ecofeminists outspoke the idea that Mother Nature has a life-giving capability which apparently calls for a sense of reverence towards nature which deeply originates from femininity. While it is quite possible to take great advantage of the natural resources when feminizing nature, it as well seems that in some cultural traditions, such as Elsa’s and Moana’s, it gives rise to the exact opposite effect.

As a conclusion, this existing complex relationship between the woman and nature have created divided opinions. As the way in which people think about the natural world is directly conjoined with the way people perceive the woman, some believe that conceptualizing nature as feminine denotes considering it as inferior and as a subject to exploitation for “we act in the environment as if there were no cost attached to our use of natural resources, as if they existed purely for our use, and as if they would never be depleted” (Roach, 2003, p. 55), while the others claim that viewing nature as the mother of the earth will lead to a more positive ecological behaviour. For Roach, as women are not valued, esteemed and equally treated to males in patriarchal cultures, she asserts that:

Engendering the Earth as female mother, given the meaning and function traditionally assigned to “mother” and “motherhood” in patriarchal culture, will not achieve the desired aim of making our behavior more environmentally sound, but will instead help to maintain the mutually supportive exploitative stance we take toward our mothers and toward our environment (Roach, 2003, p. 52).

It is quite obvious, therefore, that the relationship between the woman and nature has given rise to a multiplicity of opinions among intellectuals and scholars. However, something of preliminary importance to be mentioned is the way media are projecting both of the woman and the natural world in this contemporary era. Taking great part of the media democracy, Walt Disney animation movie of *Frozen*, *Frozen 2* and *Moana* have projected a strongly embodied natural world throughout the women.

Surely, trapping the people of Arendelle in an eternal winter and deciding not to aliment the inhabitants of the Enchanted Forest in the *Frozen* franchise, and engendering the life of people of Motunui from delight and brightness to darkness and sorrowfulness in *Moana* denote the supremacy of nature. Just like a woman, nature broke the stereotypes of motionless and dependent into powerful and controlling all by demonstrating that life without the natural world would turn in to wickedness and impoverishment.

#### **4.5. Power and Wilderness- Female Restructuring in Disney Adaptations**

Powerful and undeniable, incontestable and surely erratic to the precedent humiliating, dehumanizing and devaluing treatment and perception of the male gaze, the connectedness between the woman and nature has opened a brand new purview regarding the place and the role women play in society. Underestimated for centuries, the woman has portrayed a new facade of her in the contemporary Walt Disney productions. No longer placed in a cuisine to fulfil the hanger of men, no longer correlating to the perfect princess with the dreamy beauty standards, the female characters of the *Frozen* franchise and *Moana* in particular embraced a role that is bigger and quite challenging to the traditional gender standards. No more engendered in the role of a young lady waiting to be saved by her prince charming, theses heroines are certainly now the savers of not only humanity but of a whole planet.

Indeed, the ecofeminist attitude inculcated in Elsa, Anna and Moana have been central to the conflict resolution in the stories. Manipulated for years by their fathers to hide their true selves; to conceal their inner love for the natural world, for challenges, for showcasing strength and determination by unveiling their powers, the



women characters display eagerness and endeavour to mark their presence, importance and mainly efficiency in an environment striving for change and empowerment. Carrying a peculiar affection for the natural world, and a particular attention for the devastation nature was enduring, the female protagonists of the aforementioned Disney movies play a great role in repairing the existing natural destruction. They, in fact, restore the natural environment that has been demolished by man and his patriarchal beliefs and orders.

Trapped for years in the bitter belief of being a danger for everyone dear to her, overshadowed for so long by the horrifying idea that she had hurt Anna with her magical ice power, Elsa spent most her life hidden from the world. Continuing to grow and to manifest themselves at a rapid rate, Elsa's only mantra was the words her father, Agnarr, thought her: "Conceal it, don't feel it. Don't let it show" (Buck & Lee, 2019). After the incident that occurred at the coronation ceremony with Anna, Elsa found herself at the top of the Nourth Mountain, mourning about her painful loneliness and her failure to control her magic abilities.

Embracing an aspect of her being that she did her best to keep hidden, Elsa freely experimented with her abilities under the musical composition of 'Let it Go'. Hoping to live her days in her new palace, Elsa decided never to get back to Arendelle. Throwing away her crown, Elsa let her hair down into a braid and changed her coronation dress into a new ice dress. Representing a true renunciation of her past, Elsa unveiled in her a newfound freedom under the light of dawn.

In spite of her strong will to live alone, Anna still managed to find Elsa. At that moment, Elsa was astonished to see her sister. Instead of being delighted and reviving the lost connectedness between her and her sister, Elsa insisted on Anna to return home to Arendelle, but Anna claimed that it was where Elsa belonged too. Refusing to surrender and acknowledging her self-imposed exile as an important act to protect all people of the palace, Elsa affirmed that her place was far away from the kingdom, liberated from any judgements and free to be whom she is without harming anyone.

However, after being told that she had engendered the kingdom in an eternal winter and brought about harm to its people, Elsa's unconfidence and fear resurged. Indeed, with Anna's revelation that Arendelle was plagued by eternal winter, Elsa claimed that she did not know how to reverse the effects of her ice power. Beginning to form a swirl of snow around herself out of panic, and founding herself to consider her powers to be a curse once again, Elsa continued to panic to eventually gather the swirl of snow into herself and release it as a blare of ice magic; an act that unwittingly stroke Anna in the heart.

After fervently insisting that they could make everything right, Anna has left the kingdom leaving Elsa all by herself just as she desired. Taking into account what Anna has declared about the winter, Elsa walked back and forth throughout the top floor of her palace all by returning to the mantra her father once taught her. Proving to be inutile, Elsa's emotional state incepted the growing of ice spikes out of the walls transforming the once a place of freedom into yet another prison. The very next morning at sunrise, Hans reached the palace with a group of royal guards and the Duke of Weselton to take Elsa to Arendelle and imprison her. Believing herself to be a danger to the inhabitants of Arendelle, Elsa pleaded with Hans to be liberated.

With her emotional state declining and her need to part from Arendelle overwhelmed her, Elsa looked horrified as the storm outside began to intensify and the land started to ice all over. Embodying the natural world throughout her anger, Elsa ran into the fjord, venturing blindly into her own storm. Then devastated by Han's purported lie of Anna's death, Elsa broke down in tears, halting the storm in the process. Socked indeed, Elsa had her worst fear confirmed when Hans claimed that Anna yielded to the curse, turned to ice and deceased. Dismayed at the heart of this painful revelation, Elsa fell to her knees; she was emotionally distraught making the swirling storm suddenly cease and the snow was made inoperative in mid-air by Elsa's sorrow.

Back turned on her knees, Hans began to advance slowly to the queen in order to strike her. Before the blade made contact, Anna threw herself between Elsa and Hans, and with a final scream of rebelliousness, she froze to solid ice. Immobile and

frozen, the sword hit Anna's iced hand and broke down, creating a force that pushed Hans to the ground. Alarmed at the sound of her sister, desolate upon perceiving her sister's frozen form, Elsa touches Anna's face and hugged her with great pain and sorrow overwhelming her. Surrounded by Kristoff, Sven and Olaf, they all mourned along in silent acknowledgement of Anna's sacrifice.

After all seemed lost and gone, Anna's form suddenly began to melt. Sensing movement, Anna emerged once again alive and well. With a great mix of astonishment, delight and relief, Elsa looked at her sister's face and embraced her. Enormously touched by her sister's self-sacrifice and her simply uttered words 'I love you', Elsa realized upon Olaf's statement that it is this act of true love that has thawed her heart. Indeed, in regaining the so long lost confidence, Elsa looked at Anna, wide-opened her arms and raised them high making the ice and snow lift up in the air.

Joining together all the mass of snow into a giant snowflake, Elsa spread her hands and scattered it across the sky, leaving a warm summer sky, showcasing her newfound control over her powers. Under an emerging peaceful and delightful atmosphere emerging in the Kingdom of Arendelle, Elsa realized that true love is the key to controlling her magic powers. Therefore, after the lost years spent confined and hidden from the world, after days completely passed in great fear, self-underestimation and loss of confidence, the great revelation gave birth to a newly powerful and surefooted queen perfectly capable of repairing the exciting natural destruction occurring because of improper patriarchal orders. Upon gaining control over her powers due to the help of Anna and her act of true love, Elsa finally restored summer to Arendelle; she finally restructured the distortion of the wild world into peace and harmony.

Three years later, proceeding her duties as a queen and hosting royal gatherings at the kingdom, the journey of Elsa and Anna continues in *Frozen 2*. Content with her palace, greatly accompanied and surrounded by Anna, Kristoff, Olaf and Sven, highly loved and praised by her subjects, Elsa still felt that something was missing her. Faced by many questions about her true identity, about the origins of her magic

ice powers and wondered if her purpose is really meant to be ruling the Kingdom of Arendelle, Elsa questioned who and what she really is.

Determined to set off on a journey of self-discovery and revelation, Elsa heard a strange voice that kept calling to her; a one that lead her and her sister, Olaf and Sven and Kristoff into the Enchanted Forest under the rhyme of ‘Into the Unknown’. As the group approached the Forest, Elsa started hearing the voice once again. Upon perceiving a cliff, Elsa run up to meet it. After promising to Anna that they would go through the journey together, Elsa reached and touched the mist which parted for her. Starting to enter, the group suddenly saw the mist closing up behind them. Now that they are trapped in the Forest, Olaf explained that the Enchanted Forest was a true place of transformation. Turning around, Elsa in particular marvelled at the beauty of the Forest and appreciated its grander and stunner in spite of trapping them in, with a grand sentiment of eagerness to explore it as she felt it embraces the answers to all of her questions.

After separating from the group, Elsa continued her journey alone. After making the great discovery of the four spirits, befriending with them and feeling a peculiar connection to Bruni, Gale, Earth Giants and the Nokk, Elsa reached Ahtohallan; an ancient frozen magical river that takes the form of a glacier and that is said to know everything about the past. This ability is, in truth, based on one of the rules of the *Frozen* universe: water has memory. Turning around, Elsa was encountered with the memory of her mother singing to her the lullaby from her childhood. Overwhelmed with emotion, Elsa then had a white dress conferred upon her with the elemental symbols infused into it. Indeed, in a flashback sequence that opens the movie, Anna and Elsa’s mother sing a lullaby her mother used to sing to her when she was very little, about the special river of Ahtohallan that was said to hold all the answers about the past and what they are a part of. Voiced by Evan Rachel Wood, Elsa and Iduna shout out:

*Where the North wind meets the sea*

*There is a river full of memory*

*Sleep, my darling, safe and sound  
For in this river, all is found  
In her waters, deep and true  
Lie the answers and a path for you  
Dive down deep into her sound  
But not too far or you'll be drowned  
Yes, she will sing to those who'll hear  
And in her song, all magic flows  
But can you brave what you most fear?  
Can you face what the river knows?  
Where the North wind meets the sea  
There's a mother full of memory  
Come, my darling, homeward bound  
When all is lost, then all is found*

Elsa, therefore, discovers her true calling in life; she finds out that she is a Snow Queen- meaning a human being with powers of ice and snow. She, as a matter of fact, is the Fifth Spirit of the Enchanted Forest. Expanding on the lore and on the inhabitants of Arendelle, *Frozen 2* does certainly delve into the franchise's elemental magic to reveal Elsa as the Fifth Spirit with powers stemming from nature. Defined as the 'human spirit', the Fifth Spirit is a compelling concept in the *Frozen* franchise. Born into existence when Elsa was, the Fifth spirit is a bridge between the human and the magical world. Mentioned only a handful of times in *Frozen 2*, the entire legend of the Fifth Spirit is explained in one line by Honeymaren: "There is a fifth spirit. It is said to be a bridge between us and the magic of nature" (Buck & Lee, 2019).

In point of fact, the curse on the Enchanted Forest was placed because of the dam that Arendelle built; a truth revealed when Elsa became the Fifth Spirit. Certainly, Elsa quickly unveiled the truth alluded to by the lullaby: that the dam was

in reality a curse, and not a gift intended to weaken the Northuldra's lands, and the gathering as a way to make the Northuldra leave their guard and for Runeard to be able to assess their numbers. Accepting her role as the Fifth Spirit, and using her magic powers to reveal the truth about King Runeard and his dam, Elsa declares that this position is as well shared with Anna. In other words, as the bridge encompasses two sides, it is portrayed that the two sisters represent the two sides of the bridge and, consequently, the two Kingdoms of Northuldra and Arendelle. As the Fifth spirit is a bridge between humanity and magic, this bridge is quite compulsory to restore balance and harmony, and raise the curse bestowed on the Enchanted Forest.

Consequently, Anna succeed in saving the chaos made by King Runeard by discovering that the dam must be destroyed, and Arendelle sacrificed. Confirming that Elsa and Anna are both the Fifth Spirit, as in that their bond is what united the Enchanted Forest and Arendelle, both Anna and Elsa were needed to raise the curse: Elsa by taming three of the spirits and discovering the cause of the curse in Ahtohallan, and Anna by destroying the dam and reconstructing their grandfather's damage.

However, since Elsa is more closely related to her mother's side of the family and the Enchanted Forest, she discovers that she truly belongs to Northuldra and is meant to live in harmony with the other four spirits and maintain peace between magic and humans. Elsa, thus, abdicates the throne of Arendelle. Anna, on the other hand, symbolizing the other half of the bridge and their father's family, becomes the new Queen of Arendelle; a newfound signifying peace between Arendelle and Northuldra.

Accordingly, impermanent for balancing humanity with nature, the Fifth Spirit undertakes a large place in the *Frozen* franchise. Embodied throughout Elsa and Anna, the Fifth Spirit is for certain the key towards peace and harmony between nature and humanity. As a powerful representation of the connectedness between nature and the women, and as a real symbol of the power of feminine values in restoring the damages of male chauvinism, Elsa and Anna are female heroines which have definitely succeeded in rebalancing the lost harmony between the two worlds.

Another story revolving around a powerful young woman who embarks on a journey to restore balance to the world and bring back harmony is that of *Moana*. Not only is this tale of a vibrant, courageous female protagonist who sets the course of her own destiny, but it is as well the story of a young woman of colour who breaks all of the stereotypes; particularly as there is no love interest in sight. Certainly, representing the beliefs, perspectives and norms of patriarchy, Maui is at the heart of the unbalance that has hit the islands of Motunui. Embodied as strong, arrogant, all-knowing and unbeatable- the true demigod of the island-, Maui has engendered darkness and destruction when he has stolen the heart of Te Fiti, the Goddess of nature.

Pivotal and captivating as a sequel in the movie, Moana discovers that Te Ka, the evil volcano monster, is only the goddess Te Fiti who became corrupted when her heart was taken away by Maui. Sharing a great connectedness with nature, carrying a heavy affection for the ocean and displaying a profound desire to discover her true, complete self, Moana realizes that she was chosen by the sea to fulfil the mission of bringing back the heart of Te Fiti. Believing that he knows best about the way to handle and take care of this situation, Maui dismisses Moana's purpose outright. With a patriarchal attitude, he deems her to be unworthy, and incapable of such a grand challenge, and going so far as to claim that the ocean chose wrong in designing her when he declares: "Women cannot preach, so you must be mistaken about that calling", "Why don't you lead a bible study for women's groups?", or even "Deborah was a special case in the Bible because there were no men to rise up at that time" (Musker & Clements, 2016).

However, determined to overcome the masculine traits and energy, strongly willing to place once again the heart of compassion, empathy and agape love in Te Fiti, Maui's words did not discourage Moana but rather endowed her with an unprecedented determination and power to attain her objective. Faced with tremendous obstacles, Moana did surmount the numerous ordeals she faced, and finally healed what was destroyed; she did restore the divine feminine in her world. That is, Disney's *Moana* and the restoring of the sacred feminine affirmed the vital place and role female characters endorsed in contemporary Disney movies.

As a conclusion, Disney's *Frozen* franchise and *Moana* mirror a completely new vision about women and the peculiar role they undertake in society. No longer attached to a love story, or to a prince charming to save the day, Elsa, Anna and Moana are the embodiment of female empowerment in Disney Princess films. More specifically, throughout their feminine values of caring and nurturing, these female heroines have showcased a particular affection towards the natural world, the people of their communities and the special need for providing a peaceful and harmonious environment to live in. That is, this ecofeminist attitude not only intensified and affirmed the great connectedness that exists between the woman and nature, but glorified as well the immense role female characters play in restoring harmony between nature and humanity. Born out of a destruction caused by the masculine patriarchal order, the unbalance and damage nature portrays inform greatly about the chauvinistic perception men hold about women. In triumphing, therefore, Elsa, Anna and Moana, new directions are taken regarding male and female representations in postmodern Disney films. In healing the rift caused by patriarchy; in reconstructing the darkness of the natural world into delight and harmony, and in embracing a powerful relationship with nature who is said to be feminine, weak and deserving exploitation, female characters provide new definitions regarding gender construction in Walt Disney animated projections.

#### **4.6. Gender Restructuring- New Directions**

Outshouting the unspeakable, unravelling the unthinkable, the twenty-first century Walt Disney princesses kindle the muted silences related to power imbalance, marginalization, crisis of identities and challenges pertaining to gender inequities. In portraying female heroines with a powerful psychological attitude, the desperate, the dehumanized, the anomic and estranged, and the devalued is endowed with a specific instance of hope and desire to create new meanings to the previously constructed gender roles. Indeed, Anna, Elsa and Moana have restructured the collective expectations established to define women's femininity and men's masculinity. In denying the traditional specific division of traits each sex exhibits, and performing a



mixture of masculine and feminine characteristics, gender roles and gender stereotypes take new directions.

Certainly, once upon a time, Walt Disney characters were written so as to conform and follow the conventional route of a dependent white princess in desperate love and need of her handsome Prince Charming. A long time ago, Disney princesses were often correlated with the words ‘beauty’ and ‘weakness’; two unavoidable attributes where female goodness is constantly associated with female beauty. Likewise, in *Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture*, author Elizabeth Bell further sustains the claim of a narrative full of passive princesses, highlighting that the female characters of *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), *Cinderella* (1950), and *The Little Mermaid* (1989) are kindred to Snow White as they are all represented as “helpless ornaments in need of protection” which is “omitted when it comes to the action the film” (Bell, 1995, p. 37).

Depicted as passive creatures “unable to fight against their oppressors” and could do nothing but “wait for their princes to come along and rescue them” (Davis, 2016, p. 75). Rewarded for their passivity, Disney female heroines both reflected and helped in strengthening the assumptions and attitudes shaped by popular stereotypes in their representations of femininity.

Leaving a long-lasting impact upon the upcoming generations, Snow White performs a song entitled ‘*Someday My Prince Will Come*’. Not only convinced that her only path towards happiness and liberation is throughout the aid of a near stranger, but she as well believes that they will ride away to his kingdom and will ‘live happily ever after’. Further prevailing the polished ideas of perfect soul-mates and infinite happy endings, though Snow White portrays admirable strength in her kindness, genteelness and benignity, she completely fails to affirm any sort of agency in her own movie.

Due to her passivity, therefore, male characters are obliged to come and rescue her. Moreover, in exchange for the help of her step-mother and the seven dwarfs, Snow White plays the role of the dutiful; of the domesticated young lady who cleans,

cooks and organizes everything the house. In her article *From Snow to Ice: A Study of the Progression of Disney Princesses from 1937 to 2014*, Maegan Davis reports how delighted Snow White seems to be with her manner of living “as she waits for her prince to take her to his castle”(Davis, 2015, p. 48).

Safe from danger until the seven dwarfs leave her alone, Snow White lies cold, dead and helpless when she eats the apple the Queen gives to her. Indeed, when numerous female characters used to be presented in a Disney movie, they were either arranged “in competition with each other or, even worse, presented as bitter enemies with one woman out to destroy the other” (Davis, 2016). Positioning women against each other, these women are “in competition for male approval ([represented through] the mirror) over something as trivial as beauty” (Bell, 1995, p. 36). Such themes of unbeatable, male saviours, evil women and happy weddings glorify men to a higher standard and represent female heroines as either submissive or wicked.

Consequently, another author dissecting the passive role female characters have undertaken and their peculiar interest in in marriage is Alexander Bruce. In noticing how prominently the role of marriage is featured in Disney movies, Bruce claims that the films “set up false expectations of womanhood, as each female protagonist takes little action and relies upon her own beauty...in pursuing her primary objective of finding and marrying her ‘Prince Charming’”(Bruce, 2007, p. 2). In Classic Disney films, the princesses do not have an active goal to fulfil than “finding the right man to marry as the socioeconomic luxuries of marriage, combined with the romanticized conceptions of true love, are presented as all the fulfilment they need to be happy” (ibid, p. 3). He continues claiming that even for princesses “in an unpleasant situation, the desire of marrying their perfect prince is presented as stronger motivation than simply fleeing the unpleasant situation itself for their own betterment” (ibid, p. 3). To sum up, Bruce writes that by “depicting the marital success of subservient, passive females, Disney is subconsciously teaching its audience that young girls are meant to fulfill that passive role in society, not acting but instead waiting for a man to give them the perfect life” (ibid, p. 3).

However, it was in the late twentieth century that Walt Disney started to adapt its femininity narratives to fit the societal changes occurring in society as a result of feminist critiques. Sarah Wilde claims, “As liberation movements in the twentieth century progressed, a redefinition of sexual and social roles appeared in which women challenged fairy tale ideals and their lack of desirable female behaviour” (Wilde, 2014, p. 134).

Embarking, therefore, on the twenty-first Revival Era of Walt Disney, scrutinizing an ideology developed with great depth and large care, Disney’s contemporary female characters portray themes filled with power politics and identity politics. Becoming a well-established symbol for feminism and empowerment, the release of *Frozen* (2013), *Frozen 2* (2019) and *Moana* (2016) have changed the portrayal of female protagonists. Abolishing female gender stereotypes, feminist messages grew even bigger as these movies comprise leading female roles- in the context of the *Frozen* franchise even two leading female roles for the first time in history-.

Created as ground-breaking movies for femininity, Anna, Elsa and Moana are fully realized female characters who think and act independently, or even rebelliously. Instead of waiting passively and expecting inactively for the fates to trace their destinies, the new-designed heroines drip with strength, intelligence, independence, individualism and female ambition. Choosing to rise and shine, Elsa, Anna and Moana opt for elevating themselves, liberating their choices, showcasing their abilities, challenging the established inequities and no longer be an object of desire for men. In this sense, these female heroines reject “To decline to be the Other, to refuse to be a party to the deal — this would be for women to renounce all the advantages conferred upon them by their alliance with the superior caste” (De Beauvoir, 1949, p.6).

Paving the way to empowerment and no longer glorifying the man, these new female characters are strong and courageous. They, in truth, embody what Betty Friedan wrote in her book *Life so Far: A Memoir*, declaring that:

What used to be the feminist agenda is now an everyday reality. The way women look at themselves, the way other people look at women, is completely different, completely different than it was thirty years ago... Our daughters grow up with the same possibilities as our sons (Friedan, 2006, p. 375).

Indeed, by imposing their personalities and behaviours, Anna, Elsa and Moana gain agency and out voice the idea that women are just as capable and powerful as men; a gentle reminder for women to write their personal stories, make their voices heard and their ideas exerted, all by refusing to remain silent. The *Frozen* franchise, and *Moana* have certainly carried that torch by featuring female heroines who strike out and work extremely hard to put their own change in the world around them. With Elsa as the embodiment of a young lady with supernatural powers refusing and demonstrating no need to conform to society's expectations, Anna as a strong woman -far from the typical dainty princess- who does not wait for the man to do the 'saving'; she herself takes the leap and saves her sister, and Moana as a princess from a different background who dares to stand up for herself showing no love interest of any kind, Walt Disney have succeeded in restructuring gender roles.

In defying all the gender expectations of their communities, and in rejecting the traits of beauty and perfection, the female characters of the *Frozen* series and *Moana* denote that women can be in control of their own destinies. Likewise, these movies were able to spread the meaning of feminism, independence and the love of family instead of the prince. Portraying self-growth of the main characters, Disney's *Frozen* movies and *Moana* trace the path of their female characters as they discover their true, complete selves, reconcile with their abilities, find their refugees in nature mainly, heading towards self-emancipation and empowerment.

As a true journey of self-discovery, Anna, Elsa and Moana are infused with their own beliefs, characteristics and flaws that lay down the psychological development and concrete growth and change achieved in their own worlds. Normalizing the idea of female chiefs and female warriors, the two sisters and Moana display relatable characters capable of breaking the norms and conventions of a patriarchal society. Princess Anna, Queen Elsa and Moana the Chief are just an example of the way

Disney movies have progressed in reflecting and representing more modern ideals. Women are now seen as in control of their destiny and do rarely define themselves as in need of a partner for growth and survival.

Because of its work with the *Frozen* franchise and *Moana*, Disney has moved towards the Progression period; a valuable opportunity to push and destroy past traditional gender roles for women. By letting go the ‘princess-needs-prince’ formula, the modern Disney princess is heroic, brave, powerful and independent; a strong female lead that encourages the idea of equality between genders and help establish a universal acceptance of the concept of defining oneself not by the environment, beliefs and ideals one was born in, but rather by his or her own actions and vision of things.

Confident and determined, Anna, Elsa and Moana not only restored gender roles in Disney movies, but reconstructed as well the natural environment. In other words, with an ecofeminist attitude, these female characters healed the impairment caused by the stubborn system of patriarchy. Possessing a strong relationship to nature and perceiving the occurring environmental damage as a feminist issue as Warren argues: “something is a feminist issue if an understanding of it helps one understand the oppression, subordination, or domination of women” (Warren, 2000, p. 1), these female heroines displayed that women and nature are equally exploited by men; i.e., in confining Elsa’s powers and in not allowing Moana to venture in the ocean, Elsa and Moana’s fathers created an unbalance in nature. That is, portraying that natural destruction is a product of masculinist assumptions and practices, the heart of Elsa, Anna and Moana’s ecofeminism is to eradicate all forms of exploitation exerted on both women and nature. In Warren’s (2000) own words:

The boundary conditions specify that an ecofeminist ethic must be anti-sexist, anti-racist, anti-classist, anti-naturist, and opposed to any ‘ism’ that presupposes or advances a logic of domination; (p. 99)

and

The basic starting point of ecofeminist philosophy is that the dominations of women, other human Others, and nonhuman nature are interconnected, are wrong, and ought to be eliminated (p. 155).

Revolving mainly about domination and exploitation, these Disney movies show that in liberating the woman, so is nature. That is, as these female characters denote that:

Women and nature are connected in morally significant ways because both are identified with femininity (or traits labeled “feminine”). This femininity, associated with characteristics ranging from fecundity to vulnerability to wildness, was seen as a source of ecological and social flourishing that is violently degraded in patriarchal cultures. Ecofeminists therefore took women and nature to be connected because, as providers of life, sustenance, and creativity, they are similarly important and valuable, and their strengths are similarly controlled or violated by men (or “patriarchy”). In addition, common metaphors, practices, and institutions encourage and justify their abuse (Cuomo, 2002, p. 7).

Elsa, Anna and Moana advocate, therefore, turning towards the natural world and reclaim the connection to profoundly protect the interests of nature. In an attempt to re-establish this connection, the female characters embark on a journey of maturity and self-discovery away from the dominating patriarchal patterns of their communities. Consequently, in letting go of their fears, insecurities, and inner inquiries, Anna, Elsa and Moana succeed in saving their worlds; leading to the empowerment of both the woman and the natural world.

Furthermore, in providing a central place for values fundamentally devalued, unnoticed and misrepresented in traditional ethics- values such as care, love, friendship, and appropriate trust- female protagonists glorify women spiritually and physically. To say it differently, as women are always associated and paralleled to feelings and emotions, the female heroines of the *Frozen* franchise and *Moana* demonstrate that it is throughout the use of their feminine values of nurture and caring that they recreate balance in the wild world. In declining the immense pressure of

male validation through the patriarchal norms and patterns and in unravelling the origins of destruction, these female characters find the once lost voices of both women and nature.

Accordingly, it is of high importance to highlight the role women have played in restoring and reconstructing the damage caused by patriarchy in the natural world. As a source of peace in the world, women characters are vital for the survival of the world. In this sense, they have radically changed the way society displays gender roles.

#### **4.7. Conclusion**

Perceived as an interdisciplinary critical theory, ecofeminism declares that the natural world's inquiries and women's issue are interrelated due to the exerted oppression on women and nature in a male-dominant society. Forming male-centred hierarchies and dualities, the system thus creates inequities in society and provides superiority to men and inferiority to the woman and nature. That is, the hierarchies and dualities in the form of male/female, culture/nature, logic/emotion, soul/body and consciousness/unconsciousness allow the male to exert a superiority over the female, culture over nature, logic over emotion, soul over body and conscious over unconscious. In this sense, while man symbolises culture, spirit, consciousness and logic, the woman is the portrayal of nature, unconsciousness, body and emotion. In this particular way, women and nature become extremely close to each other in a male-dominant community and are conceptualized in the very same way.

Under this patriarchal system; under this system of large manifestations and institutionalization of male dominance over the woman and nature, the Walt Disney Company have learned to draw more active and progressive female characters. In the contemporary Disney animated movies of *Frozen*, *Frozen 2* and *Moana*, Disney has undergone numerous fundamental changes when it comes to feminism depiction in their movies. In particular, a subtle ecofeminism influence has been inculcated in the female leads: Elsa, Anna and Moana. This, therefore, portrays the way these female

characters have created an effect on gender roles, producing a large impact on society's female roles and stereotypes.

As a matter of fact, it has been demonstrated in these movies that with its all dehumanizing and devaluing beliefs and practices, patriarchy proved to be a fuel for female characters to attain liberty and prosperity. Contextual in nature, even empowerment which is defined as the practice of overcoming patriarchy has led the female heroines to a psychological empowerment. It, indeed, led them towards a motivational construct linked to a general well-being and to a state that permits them to unveil their abilities, realize their dreams, attain their purposes, cope with the difficulties and make contributions to their communities and finally work productively and fruitfully.

Embarking, therefore, on a journey of self-discovery, empowerment and self-growth due to the confining patriarchal system they used to live in are Anna, Elsa and Moana. On the one hand, in the 2013 and 2019 *Frozen* franchise, the female characters have demonstrated growth and maturity. In *Frozen*, which revolves around the story of two fearless princesses named Elsa as nature embodied with magical ice powers and Anna who set on a journey to find her isolated sister who accidentally trapped the Kingdom of Arendelle in eternal winter did their best to free both nature and themselves from the patriarchal order.

In *Frozen 2*, the journey of the two sisters continues as this time they attempt at unveiling the origins of Elsa's supernatural powers. As a consequence, they discover that their grandfather's chauvinistic act of constructing a dam in the Enchanted Forest has led to the four spirits of nature to be angry. Upon trying to restore the damage, Elsa finds out that she is the Fifth Spirit meant to restore her grandfather's deeds and establish harmony between humanity and the natural world. As for Anna, she helps in reconstructing nature by destroying the damage. As the two represent the two sides of the bridge, Anna becomes the Queen of Arendelle and Elsa the Queen of the Enchanted Forest due to her inner relatedness with nature.



In *Moana*, on the other hand, the road towards glory and freedom was quite impressive. Recounting the story of a strong young woman who is sea-loving, strong-willed, headstrong and determined, Moana as a rebellious teenage daughter of the chief of Motunui overcomes her father's defying rules of approaching the ocean to finally set on the journey of restoring the stolen heart of Te Feti. Her father and Maui have certainly fuelled in her the desire to restore what has been damaged; to reconstruct the lost harmony and the destroyed beauty of the natural world.

Likewise, Elsa, Anna and Moana have displayed a strong relationship between the woman and nature. Under the call of the ill Mother Nature, these female characters have projected a journey of not only empowerment in the face of patriarchy, but of also self-discovery, esteem, affirmation and mainly maturity. In overstepping the obstacles established by patriarchy, these contemporary female heroine succeed in restoring the natural world.

In the light of what has been said previously, the overall aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that the patriarchal system order is devaluing in nature, but quite empowering in structure. In other words, due to patriarchal beliefs and practices the female leads of Anna, Elsa and Moana have endured, they were endowed with high desire and determination to liberate their powers and abilities, and unravel their true, complete selves. In doing so, they have managed to set off on their own journeys, and liberate what has been imprisoned for years. They have, in fact, healed the rift of nature and reconstructed harmony, balance and delight to the world. In this sense, what was years ago perceived as strong and controlling is now rejected and denied. The man who used to abuse both of the woman and nature is underpowered as the female protagonists have become active, stronger and determined to lay down new definitions to female roles and gender constructions.

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To curious minds in a constant search for the truth, to wondering spirits in a ceaseless speculation of the woman, and the role and status she occupies in a postmodern era, the Walt Disney Company projects intense and captivating female characters. Rendered a fundamental part of its cinematic production, the Walt Disney fairy tale movie genre dispatched a large impact on the perception of women throughout the decades. Indeed, the immense influence Walt Disney's female characters have created is extraordinary. Existing for about eighty years, female heroines gathered in the Disney Princess Franchise have progressed to become a true repair of empowerment and feminism.

Fascinating though, the Walt Disney industry made sure to design female characters that embody strong ideological values. Pertaining mainly to the first and second generations of the Walt Disney Company, female characters were created so as to represent societal conventions and harsh, realistic patriarchal beliefs. Portraying passivity and subordination, Walt Disney Princess movies played an active role in strengthening harmful stereotypes. With beautiful princesses possessing perfect bodies, Disney reinforced the idea that women's sole role in the society is to be beautiful, to act as a perfect household and to submit to all the demands, needs and desires of their male counterparts.

With the great changes occurring throughout the world, with the particular emergence of the feminist movement, an urgent need for improving the situation of the woman was displayed. Embracing a feminist identity, therefore, Disney's princess characters have undergone a massive change. Defined by a history full of misrepresentation, passive Disney female characters were altered by newly empowered personages. In other words, over time Disney Studios have written their female heroines as more active, courageous, determinate and independent characters. In recent years, they have produced innovative movies among which *Frozen* (2013), *Frozen 2* (2019) and *Moana* (2016) are part of. Being the centre focus of this thesis, these Princess movies depict powerful female protagonists which portray internal reflection, personal outgrowth and a deserved self-esteem and emancipation.

Rendering their female characters even more complex and powerful in their

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attitudes, the selected Walt Disney Princess movies carry at the heart of their scenarios the theme of nature. That is, the female leads of Elsa, Anna and Moana possess a strong ecofeminist mind and spirit which provide another dimension to the movies. Indeed, these female heroines are identified as ecofeminists and are endowed with a profound belief in a feminine capability to connect with the deep mysteries and natural things of the universe like the sea, wind, mountains and snow.

Either by giving feminine qualities and drawing nature as a woman for her ability of producing life in *Moana*, or creating Elsa as a female personage, which embodies the natural world, Walt Disney grants an enormous chance to its spectators to exploit the relationship that exists between the woman and nature and between men and the environment, and the way this woman/nature dichotomy functions in a male-dominated society.

Certainly, mirroring a unique connectedness and representing a special interest in the natural world, the woman-nature entity inculcated in the *Frozen* franchise and *Moana* enables Elsa, Anna and Moana to manifest their repressed desires, to reveal their confined powers and to unravel their hidden, complete selves. They, for certain, claim that an urgent social transformation is necessary for ecological survival, and that oppressive conceptual patterns must be altered to better reflect non-dualistic and nonhierarchical systems of relations between humans, and between humans and non-human nature. In more precise terms, born out of a profound fear of ecological exploitation and destruction, this woman/nature relationship portrays the grand attempt and eager desire women have in restoring a completely muffled, subverted mother earth.

Outvoicing the motionless and glorifying the undervalued, the feminist ecological philosophy in these postmodern movies reflect women as an intelligently imposing force determined to fight for what is neglected, dehumanized and dominated for decades. Used as the theoretical framework underpinning the inquiries of this research work, the ecofeminist movement exposes the worth value in extending feminist analyses to the simultaneous interrogation of the exploitation of both nature and women. In other words, it showcases the critical interconnectedness

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existing between the exploitation and oppression of women and the degradation and subordination of the natural world.

Examined within the gender and ecological contexts, this woman/nature entity places a great focus on female empowerment, nature environmental destruction and the fundamental role female heroines play in reconstructing the damages caused by patriarchy. As a matter of fact, the ecofeminist attitude Anna, Elsa and Moana possess unwraps the wide range of perceptions regarding the causal role of dualistic thinking, patriarchal structures of power and the oppression of women and the natural world. Projecting environmental and women's issues as interconnected, Elsa, Anna and Moana demonstrate the way a system forming male-centred hierarchies and dualities could be extremely harmful to women and nature.

That is, used to dominate and exert pressure on non-male beings and marginalize them, in the male-dominant patriarchal order, dualities including male/female, culture/nature, consciousness/unconsciousness, logic/emotion and soul/body make of the man superior and the woman inferior. Since man is considered superior to the woman, all the superior attributes are credited to the male and the inferior attributes to the woman. Likewise, while man symbolizes culture, consciousness, logic and soul, the woman embodies nature, unconsciousness, emotion and body. In this sense, the woman and nature become extremely close to each other and similarly conceptualized in a male-dominant society.

Suffocating and dehumanizing, patriarchy has indeed been viewed as a system which never ceased to subvert pressure, oppression, and inequalities between genders. Occupying a great place in the *Frozen* franchise and *Moana*, patriarchy is perceived in these movies as a destructive system leading to the devastation of the natural world. To put it differently, because of certain firm decisions male leaders have made in these movies, the natural environment was engendered. Losing vivacity and life, becoming at times the enemies of themselves because of the hatred and outrage they carry for this demolishing masculine power, nature is portrayed as completely shuttered and destroyed. In this way, women are oppressed as well.

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As marginalized creatures, female characters show that they are obliged to follow the norms, obey the decisions, hide their true selves, flee their thoughts and repressions, hide their supernatural powers in some cases and live a life they are not contended with.

However, in the face of an immense depowering and degrading system, Elsa, Anna and Moana do not remain speechless, i.e., they do not remain spectators in the hand of a deceptive and misleading structure. On the complete opposite, they express a strong will for regaining control over their lives and a motivational attitude to let go of the fears, inquiries and uncertainties that have submerged their entire lives. Ecofeminism as a belief inculcated in the female characters; as a true awareness of the patriarchal control, exploitation and oppression, fuels Anna, Elsa and Moana to embark on their own journeys and write their own experiences.

In other terms, by countering a total male-dominated system, female characters experience a great belief of overcoming the patterns and practices of patriarchy; a one that is known as eve empowerment. If conditions favouring eve empowerment lead female characters to experience empowerment, then this is known as psychological empowerment.

As a motivational construct, psychological empowerment makes of the female characters quite powerful and strong-willed women capable of adequately coping with events, circumstances, and people they confront. It triggers the needed motivation to unveil their true selves, abilities and finally achieve autonomy, affectivity and a general state of well-being. Not devoted to themselves only, Anna, Elsa and Moana take true conscience of their real capabilities enhancing their willingness to work productively and make fruitful contributions to their communities. With passion and determination, Anna, Elsa and Moana respond to the great call of Mother Nature; they respond to the painful experience the natural world is undergoing and attempt to restore what has been damaged. An unbreakable bond born out of the same endurances, visions, and repressions, female heroines of the selected movies unravel their ecofeminist spirits and set off on a long journey to reconstruct and empower the damaged environmental world.

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Indeed, projecting an appeal to the psychological maturation of the postmodern woman, representing a unique link with the natural world, Elsa, Anna and Moana are true models of femininity and real examples of a female bonding in the heart of an oppressive patriarchal system. Regarded as a liberating refugee where they could reveal their true, complete selves, the female characters of the *Frozen* series and *Moana* undergo a powerful learning experience.

In decisively embarking to the world of wilderness, the female characters write a pure journey of self-discovery, self-affirmation, female empowerment and complete maturity. In their long road of saving the earth, they let go of their fears and become independent women capable of resuming their own decisions, imposing their ultimate conclusions. No longer hiding, they are now unafraid of unravelling their powers and confronting their doubtfulness. They are what the patriarchal system is not expecting to be.

Consequently, this interconnectedness between the woman and nature establish a brand new vision regarding the role women play in society. Perceived as a totally feminist issue, the destruction of the natural world was certainly an enigma women needed to resolve. Indeed, in these selected postmodern Disney Princess movies, the female characters play a fundamental role in overcoming the occurring natural destruction. In using their feminine values of caring and nurturing, in utilizing their intelligence, determination, strength and power of the mind and body, Anna, Elsa and Moana reconstruct the environmental damage caused by patriarchy. Bringing back to life a vivacity lost for a long time, erasing a darkness which invaded their lands and communities for too many years and instituting a lost balance and harmony made of the female characters real heroines of their stories. Showing not only power and strong-will, but Anna, Elsa and Moana assert that throughout hard work, determination, self-esteem, motivation and great care for the world that we live in, the natural world can find a way to be in concordance with humanity.

Accordingly, in revealing themselves as powerful leaders able of restoring what men have damaged, they reverse the roles and rewrite a new chapter regarding gender construction and gender roles. In voicing the unmoving and outshouting the

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unspeakable, the twenty-first century Walt Disney female heroines create new definitions to the previously constructed gender roles. In reconstructing the natural world indeed, Anna, Elsa and Moana reconstruct the collective expectations settled to define women's femininity and men's masculinity. Defying the man in his so called terrain, these female heroines portray fully realized women who think and act on their own. Paving the way for glory and further empowerment, these newly projected female characters are strong and brave, and embody young ladies far from the typical dainty princess who expects her prince charming to come and save her.

Normalizing what used to be an unattainable dream for so long, Anna, Elsa and Moana project an unprecedented psychological empowerment, a general well-being and a concrete growth and maturity achieved in their own worlds. They now possess a complete control of their lives and certainly not define themselves in great need for a partner to live and survive. Heading towards a Progressive era, these characters found the perfect opportunity to push and burry past traditional gender roles.

In a long journey for reclaiming a profound connection with nature and attempting to protect and restore the whole part of it, Elsa, Anna and Moana have experienced self-esteem and maturity leading to the empowerment of both the woman and the natural environment. It absolutely cannot be denied that in declining the pressure of male validation via the chauvinistic patterns, and in unveiling the roots and origins of destruction, these female characters find and revive the once muffled voices of the woman and the natural world.

Consequently, once upon a time, the Walt Disney Company has written story-lines which meet female gender expectations. It has created female characters that conform to the traditional patriarchal beliefs and orders. The selected movies of *Frozen* (2013), *Frozen 2* (2019) and *Moana* (2016) portray that female heroines in Disney's animated Princess Movies have become more complex and active characters over time. They have become the real definition of feminism in general, and ecofeminism in particular. Under a harmed and inflicted call of Mother Nature, the female characters have projected a long journey full of new discoveries.



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As a path towards learning, they have learnt to be powerful in the face of patriarchy; they have learnt to empower themselves and the environmental world, but most importantly, they have learnt to value themselves as strong women deserving self-esteem, emancipation, glorification, love and acceptance. In liberating their powers and abilities, they liberated nature as well and brought about the lost delight. Playing the role of the protector and intermediate between humanity and the environmental universe, the female characters mirror women as a crucial element for restoring and maintaining balance and harmony between humans and non-human creatures.

Happily ever after, it is here that this humble research work reaches its end. It is here indeed that it is worth mentioning, inciting and inviting researchers to establish future inquiries and further extended aspects, beliefs and angles related to this complex but quite inspirational woman/nature entity. It is here as well that women should acknowledge that it is highly significant that they continue discovering their true selves and never cease writing their own stories as they have proved to be a fundamental piece for maintaining peace, harmony and balance between humanity and the environmental world.

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## Abstract

Born out of a challenging attempt to unravel the nature of the relationship and connectedness between the woman and nature, hatched from years of research regarding the exploitation of the woman and the degradation of the natural world, the present research work addresses the interrelation between the woman and nature in the selected Walt Disney Princess movies of Frozen (2013), Frozen 2 (2019) and Moana (2016). Pertaining a peculiar focus to the functioning of the woman/nature dichotomy, this study aims at revealing the way the woman and the environment are perceived and treated in a completely patriarchal-dominated society. Analyzing female characters endowed with an ecofeminist spirit and attitude, this study uses the feminist ecological philosophy as the theoretical framework upon which women and nature relations are examined, the environmental issues are divulged and the destroying patriarchal beliefs and patterns are exposed. As an entity examined within the gender and ecological contexts, the work claims that there are environmental issues as a result of the dominating patriarchal system. Indeed, the Frozen franchise and Moana highlight an occurring natural destruction due to male domination; a one which confines and subverts both of the woman and nature. Accordingly, the study demonstrates that the female characters of the selected movies sustain a fundamental role in repairing the existing natural devastation. Throughout feminine values of care and nurturing, the environmental universe is restored. Admittedly, the study reveals the female characters as powerful and determined women fuelled by an oppressive system to bring about change to a long muffled and oppressed world. In a long way towards nature empowerment, the study shows that the female heroines represent an appeal to maturity, and experience an unprecedented journey of self-discovery, affirmation and emancipation. Therefore, the result of the study projects the female characters as empowering leaders capable of restoring the natural world and establishing balance and harmony between humanity and the environment. Certainly, these female leads highlight triumphs of unconditional, female familial love without a male presence, glorifies female bonding and redefines values attributed to female's femininity and males' masculinity.

## ملخص

ولدت من محاولة صعبة لكشف طبيعة العلاقة والترابط بين المرأة والطبيعة، مستمدة من سنوات من البحث فيما يتعلق باستغلال المرأة وتدهور العالم الطبيعي، يتناول العمل البحثي الحالي العلاقة المتبادلة بين المرأة والطبيعة في أفلام والت ديزني برينسيس المختارة لـ فروزن (2013) و فروزن (2019) و موانا (2016). فيما يتعلق بالتركيز الخاص على عمل الانقسام بين المرأة والطبيعة، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى الكشف عن الطريقة التي يُنظر بها إلى المرأة والبيئة ومعاملتها في مجتمع يهيمن عليه النظام الأبوي تمامًا. من خلال تحليل الشخصيات النسائية التي تتمتع بروح وموقف نسوي بيئي، تستخدم هذه الدراسة الفلسفة البيئية النسوية كإطار نظري يتم على أساسه فحص العلاقات بين المرأة والطبيعة، والكشف عن القضايا البيئية، وكشف المعتقدات والأنماط الأبوية المدمرة. يدعي العمل، بصفته كيانًا تم فحصه في السياق الجنساني والإيكولوجي، أن هناك قضايا بيئية نتيجة للنظام الأبوي المهيمن. في الواقع، يسלט امت فروزن و موانا الضوء على الدمار الطبيعي الذي يحدث بسبب سيطرة الذكور؛ الذي يحصر ويخرب المرأة والطبيعة على حد سواء. وفقًا لذلك، توضح الدراسة أن الشخصيات النسائية في الأفلام المختارة تحافظ على دور أساسي في إصلاح الدمار الطبيعي الحالي. في جميع القيم الأنثوية للرعاية والرعاية، يتم استعادة الكون البيئي. من المسلم به أن الدراسة تكشف عن الشخصيات النسائية كنساء قويات وحازمات يغذيها نظام قمعي لإحداث تغيير في عالم طويل مكتوم ومضطهد. في طريق طويل نحو تمكين الطبيعة، تظهر الدراسة أن البطلات يمثلن جاذبية للنضج، ويختبرن رحلة غير مسبوقه من اكتشاف الذات والتأكيد والتحرر. لذلك، فإن نتيجة الدراسة تشير إلى الشخصيات النسائية كقادة تمكين قادرين على استعادة العالم الطبيعي وتحقيق التوازن والوثام بين البشرية والبيئة. بالتأكيد، تسلط هذه الخيوط الأنثوية الضوء على انتصارات الحب الأسري الأنثوي غير المشروط دون وجود ذكر، وتمجد الترابط الأنثوي وتعيد تعريف القيم المنسوبة إلى أنوثة الإناث والذكورة الذكورية.

## Abstrait

Né d'une tentative difficile de démêler la nature de la relation et de la connectivité entre la femme et la nature, issue d'années de recherche concernant l'exploitation de la femme et la dégradation du monde naturel, Le présent travail de recherche aborde l'interrelation entre la femme et la nature dans les films sélectionnés de Walt Disney Princess de Frozen (2013), Frozen 2 (2019) et Moana (2016). Portant une attention particulière au fonctionnement de la dichotomie femme/nature, cette étude vise à révéler la façon dont la femme et l'environnement sont perçus et traités dans une société complètement patriarcale. Analysant des personnages féminins dotés d'un esprit et d'une attitude écoféministes, cette étude utilise la philosophie écologique féministe comme cadre théorique sur lequel les femmes et les relations avec la nature sont examinées, les questions environnementales sont divulguées et les croyances et les schémas patriarcaux destructeurs sont exposés. En tant qu'entité examinée dans les contextes de genre et d'écologie, l'œuvre affirme qu'il existe des

problèmes environnementaux en raison du système patriarcal dominant. En effet, la franchise Frozen et Moana mettent en évidence une destruction naturelle due à la domination masculine, une destruction qui confine et subvertit à la fois la femme et la nature. Par conséquent, l'étude démontre que les personnages féminins des films sélectionnés jouent un rôle fondamental dans la réparation de la dévastation naturelle existante. Tout au long des valeurs féminines de soins et de soins, l'univers environnemental est restauré. Certes, l'étude révèle les personnages féminins comme des femmes puissantes et déterminées alimentées par un système oppressif pour apporter des changements à un monde longtemps étouffé et opprimé. Dans une longue voie vers l'autonomisation de la nature, l'étude montre que les héroïnes représentent un appel à la maturité et font l'expérience d'un voyage sans précédent de découverte de soi, d'affirmation et d'émancipation. Par conséquent, le résultat de l'étude projette les personnages féminins comme des leaders capables de restaurer le monde naturel et d'établir un équilibre et une harmonie entre l'humanité et l'environnement. Certes, ces leads féminins mettent en évidence les triomphes de l'amour familial féminin inconditionnel sans présence masculine, glorifient les liens féminins et redéfinissent les valeurs attribuées à la féminité féminine et à la masculinité masculine.