



Damsels in Redress: Women in Contemporary Fairy-Tale Reimaginings

Friday 7th April and Saturday 8th April 2017

Peter Froggatt Centre, Room 02/018, Queen's University Belfast

Abstracts and Bionotes

Keynote Speakers

Professor Diane Purkiss belongs to the Faculty of English at the University of Oxford and is Fellow and Tutor at Keble College. She has written numerous scholarly works on fairies, folklore and witchcraft, including *Troublesome Things: A History of Fairies and Fairy Stories* (Allen Lane/Penguin, 2001) and *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Late Twentieth Century Representations* (Routledge, 1996). She recently co-edited the book *Magical Tales: Myth, Legend and Enchantment in Children's Books* (Bodleian Library, 2013) with Carolyne Larrington. Her research interests include early modern witchcraft; folktales and folklore; women's writing; psychoanalysis; popular culture; and feminism and feminist theory.

Dr Amy Davis lectures in American film and animation studies at the University of Hull. She is the author of *Good Girls & Wicked Witches: Women in Disney's Feature Animation* (2006) and *Handsome Heroes & Vile Villains: Men in Disney's Feature Animation* (2013), both from John Libbey & Company/University of Indiana Press. Her research focuses on American animation history (especially the Disney Studio), representations of gender roles in US animation and popular culture, and various issues connected with both Hollywood cinema and American cultural history.

Panel 1: Female Bodies on the Big Screen

Katherine Whitehurst, University of Liverpool

“The Aged Woman and the Witch in *Snow White and the Huntsman*”

Drawing on Negra's (2009), Whelehan & Gwynne's (2014), and Fairclough-Issacs' (2014) descriptions of age evasion and ideal ageing in contemporary Western society, this presentation considers how the figure of the witch in the filmic adaptation *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2011), perpetuates the paradoxical hyper-visibility and invisibility of the aged woman in post-feminist popular culture. *Snow White and the Huntsman* is a fantasy hybrid that draws on aspects of the action-adventure genre. The film centres around the growing conflict between two females, as Snow White develops into a woman and the queen ages. Investigating the figure of the queen, I will detail how the figuration of her as a witch and ageing woman feeds into and mirrors contemporary stigmas surrounding female ageing. The presentation, detailing how issues of time, temporality and ageing play out in the film, will argue that the film's story, editing, dialogue, subject positioning and use of CGI/digital ageing, collectively disconnects female ageing from a measured, time-bound process. In so doing, I will illustrate how the aged woman is alternatively cast as a spectral figure, who

haunts the female characters' present lives and futures. Centrally, my presentation will illustrate that by entrenching the aged woman in narratives of invisibility and death, her haunting highlights a generational tension that reinforces a post-feminist idealisation of youth.

Having recently completed her PhD at the University of Stirling under the supervision of Professor Karen Boyle and Dr. Katharina Linder, Dr. Katherine Whitehurst now teaches at the University of Liverpool in the Department of Communication and Media. Her research explores representations of female growth and ageing in Western contemporary filmic, televisual and comic adaptations of "Snow White."

Emeline Morin, University of Southampton

“Appearances and Performances: The Aesthetics of the Female Body in Matteo Garrone’s Adaptation of *The Tale of Tales* (2015)”

In 2015, acclaimed Italian director Matteo Garrone released *The Tale of Tales*, an adaptation of three tales from Giambattista Basile’s collection *Lo Cunto de li Cunti* (1634-1636). Basile’s tales are often considered as crucial precursors to fairy tales as we now know them, presenting bawdy early versions of ‘Rapunzel’, ‘The Sleeping Beauty’, and ‘Cinderella’. This paper examines how Garrone questions and renews the representation of female characters in Basile’s work but also in subsequent canonical and mainstream fairy tales.

The striking and, at times, grotesque depiction of the characters in the film offers a reflection on the unrealistic expectations put on the body and the female characters’ desire for, quest for, and requirement of beauty and youth, regardless of their status or origin. Not only are all types of women represented (queens, princesses, servants, spinsters, peasants, etc.) the female body itself is portrayed in varied, interwoven states: young and old, sexual and virginal, thin and fat, repulsive and attractive. In fact, the film becomes a performance of changeable, liminal bodies where flesh shifts through internal and external factors, magically impregnated or rejuvenated, violated or willingly flayed. Garrone uses the visceral as a narrative force where flesh, skin, and bodily fluids are given texture which modifies both the expected gender roles and the meaning of the tales.

Through a detailed study and comparison of text, film, and aesthetic choices, this paper argues that Garrone presents an aesthetic of the female body rather than an aestheticisation of it, one which pushes to a questioning of women’s place and status both in fairy tale and contemporary world.

Emeline Morin holds a PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of Glasgow. Her work examines rewritings of fairy tales in contemporary Anglophone and Francophone literature and film. She is especially interested in reader-response, storytelling and narratology, postmodernism, and representations of gender and the body in literature and popular culture. She currently teaches at the University of Southampton.

Miriam Walsh, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick

“‘Let us tell an old story anew’: The Voice of Evil in *Maleficent*”

Maleficent is a 2014 film which follows the contemporary fairy tale trend of giving a voice to ‘the Other’ of its traditional counterpart. Of all the Disney wicked characters, *Maleficent* was the most silent and often considered the most evil. This paper, utilising Derrida, Cixous and

other literary theory critics, will demonstrate how the film reassesses the traditional binary oppositions of fairy tale female figures and explore how such a representation impacts on the portrayal of the evil female figure in contemporary society.

This paper will utilise deconstruction to assess the reversal of binary oppositions in allowing the voice of the Other to speak. Maleficent can be seen to be a response to ‘something’ that was ‘out of view’ in the Disney tale, namely that of the evil character’s motivations. It exposes not only the fallacy in the polarized representations of the female that is perpetuated by traditional fairy tales, but also the social and cultural structures in place which limit and reinforce such representations.

This paper will address the controversial symbolic rape scene which caused much furore upon the film’s opening. The accurate and painful portrayal of the wing stealing scene mirrors how Hélène Cixous advocates that women ‘must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies’ (Cixous 1976, p.875). The paper’s analysis of the symbolic rape scene will expose how one can attribute the ‘evil’ nature of Maleficent to the victimisation she endured. Most uniquely this chapter will open up the theory of how Maleficent creates, in Derrida’s terms, ‘a khôra’ - or third space, rather than represent the female being divided into good and evil or hero and villain, a space is created beneath/below/outside of the two. Subsequently, this chapter will demonstrate how Maleficent is the khôra, that which ‘suppress[es] nothing, releasing the innumerable, the unforeseeable, the “invention of the other”’ (Derrida 1997, p.105). Maleficent changes from a symbol of otherness and danger to a much needed representation that accepts difference and offers agency.

Dr. Miriam Walsh graduated from the PhD program in Mary Immaculate College in 2015. Her main areas of research include but are not limited to, fairy tales, literary theory and gender studies. The title of her doctoral dissertation is “Once Upon an Ideology: exploring the ideologies and identities of female figures through a selection of classic and contemporary fairy tales.”

Panel 2: Witches on the Edge

Brian McManus, Trinity College Dublin

“The Crying, the Witch and the Wardrobe: How the Banshee Became Notorious Through Her Association with Kavanagh and Disney”

This paper will discuss the popular image of the banshee, the supernatural death messenger from Irish folk tradition whose nocturnal keening foreshadows the deaths of members of ancient Irish families. It will examine how the banshee, who is an essentially benevolent figure in the Irish folk tradition from which she emanates, evolved throughout the twentieth century to become the hideous, malevolent witch-like creature epitomised in JK Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (1999) when the boggart in the wardrobe takes the form of the banshee to terrify Harry's Irish classmate Seamus Finnegan. It will consider how her mournful weeping became a piercing cry, how her youthful beauty was replaced by ancient ugliness and how this harbinger of death who sought to warn and comfort the living was reconstituted as the agent of death who sought to hunt and kill the living.

This examination of the banshee's evolution will focus on the children's literature and film and on two American texts in particular which appear to have been hugely influential in perceptions and subsequent representations of the banshee. They are "The Banshee's Comb", a literary fairy tale by Irish-American author Herminie Templeton

Kavanagh from her 1903 collection *Darby O'Gill and the Good People* and the 1959 film adaptation of Kavanagh's work by Walt Disney Productions, *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*. It will explore how Kavanagh's feminist re-imagining of the banshee as an autonomous, empowered figure with control over matters of life and death nevertheless presented her in an antagonistic light which formed the basis of Disney's later positioning of her as the absolute villain of the piece in the company's continuing denunciation of active, older women operating in society.

Brian McManus is an Irish Research Council postgraduate research scholar at the School of English in Trinity College Dublin in the fourth year of his doctoral research project on constructions of Irish identity in Irish-American children's literature and film, focusing on the character of Darby O'Gill in his literary and cinematic iterations. His research interests include fairy tales, children's literature, Irish folklore and mythology, Irish-American literature and film and gender studies.

Elizabeth Byrne, Queen's University Belfast

“Witches Abroad: Esme Weatherwax and the Restoration of Feminine Power Through Story in Discworld”

I propose to explore how Discworld creator Terry Pratchett subverted the elemental tropes of the fairy-tale in his portrayal of the Lancre Witches, in particular the memorable, complex and powerful character, Esmerelda Weatherwax. By critically examining and comparing three Discworld novels – *Wyrd Sisters*, *Witches Abroad* and *Carpe Jugulum* – I hope to demonstrate how Pratchett was not simply redrawing the witch from a modern, feminist perspective, but going right back to “the bones” of the origins of witches to restore their true power and meaning, which classical children’s literature including Grimm and Perrault suppressed.

Pratchett’s use of imagery and characters from fairy-tale, mythology, nursery rhymes, theatre, cinema and classical literature in the Discworld novels demonstrates deep understanding of the raw materials of story, and a wry perspective on how stories are shaped by the culture and society which surrounds them, and how stories can be manipulated as a tool to shape culture.

Pratchett’s witches are powerful. With ‘Granny’ Weatherwax he created a formidable female character who is able to stand back from the story that she herself is part of and to see “the bones”; the edge between Light and Dark, and to make choices from that perspective. Granny is aware of the dangers of power and the darkness within herself, and uses rigid self-control to choose from within the story principally by having a deeper knowledge of meaning and endings. I hope to illuminate how Pratchett breaks apart and then restores the power of fairy-tales to redeem his witches.

Elizabeth Byrne is a writer and producer, now undertaking a PhD in Creative Writing at Queen's entitled 'Familiar Landscapes Disappear'. Her short stories have been published in the 'RE-Sisters' anthology of new women writers (2016), the Seamus Heaney Centre 'Blackbird' anthology (2016) and an upcoming Liberties Press anthology on Irish migration.

Panel 3: Genre and the Gothic

Bill Hughes, Open Graves, Open Minds Project

“Beauty and Beastliness: Intertextuality, Genre Mutation, and Utopian Possibilities in Paranormal Romance”

The newly emerged genre of paranormal romance has at its heart the narrative structure of the fairy tale ‘Beauty and the Beast’. The genre is characterised centrally by erotic encounters of humans with demonic lovers—vampires originally, but now werewolves, fairies, and a host of other kinds. The genre itself is an unholy encounter between Gothic horror and romantic fiction (though other genres are in the mix).

The genre has mutated further, taking up the reworking of particular fairy tales more overtly, including transformations of ‘Beauty and the Beast’ itself. This encounter with female beauty and monstrous masculinity is an obvious arena for exploring the interplay between the sexes and offers a spectrum of relations from feminine passivity to utopian ideas of mutuality. Angela Carter’s imaginative beast fables are in some ways a model for these later texts, opening up rich combinatorial possibilities of plot; they serve as a prelude to my analysis.

I will look at reworkings of the Beauty and Beast plot by Robin McKinley, Holly Black, and Rosamund Hodge. I choose Young Adult fictions because of their intervention in a crucial stage of development (adolescence) and the obvious presence of sexual ideologies in this area (see the debates over *Twilight*), but also because I have found them to be in general less formulaic and more adventurous both ideologically and stylistically than many of their adult counterparts. I will show how these texts embrace a surprising range of perspectives on feminist concerns, enabled through their play with genre, and often with much sophistication.

Dr. Bill Hughes has a doctorate in English Literature from the University of Sheffield. His research and publications explore both the eighteenth century and contemporary paranormal romance. He is co-organiser, with Dr Sam George, of the Open Graves, Open Minds: Vampires and the Undead in Modern Culture Project at the University of Hertfordshire.

Donna Mitchell, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick
 “‘From Doll to Demon’: Fairy Tale Ideology and the Gothic Heroine”

This paper will trace the link between fairy tale ideology and the figure of the Gothic heroine. Using the character of Claudia from Anne Rice’s *Interview with the Vampire* (1976), it will explore how Gothic narratives illustrate the consequences of disturbing the natural state of femininity as promoted by fairy tales. A gothic doll motif will be applied to this text to demonstrate how Claudia represents the dangerous threat of female sexuality with regard to male supremacy and so can be psychoanalytically defined as ‘the monstrous feminine,’ which is the ‘feminine excess [that] exorcises fears regarding female sexuality.’¹ This term is a simple reversal of the traditional male monster but, ‘as with all other stereotypes of the feminine ... [the female monster] is defined in terms of her sexuality.’²

The hero’s journey in Rice’s novel leads to the creation of Claudia, a doll-like vampire child who is the Gothic alternative to the fairy tale heroine. Initially, Claudia is a virginal and silent character who is completely dependent on her fathers for survival. Her transition from doll to demon, which only occurs when she rebels against her patriarchal figureheads, will be analysed to reveal the disparate portraits of femininity in Gothic

¹ Sarah Gamble (Ed), *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism* (London: Routledge, 2006), 253.

² Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1993), 3.

narratives. In doing so, it will demonstrate how aspects of fairy tale ideology inspired the formula for the Gothic heroine.

Donna Mitchell received her PhD in 2014 and now works as a Post-Doctoral Teaching Fellow in English in Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick. Her latest research uses the figure of the doll to examine female identity in Gothic narratives. It can be tracked here: www.ondollsanddemons.com.

Panel 4: Cracking the Glass Slipper

Erica Gillingham, University of Roehampton

“Cinderella and the Huntress: A Lesbian Retelling of Cinderella in Malinda Lo’s *Ash*”

This paper will examine Malinda Lo’s 2009 young adult novel *Ash* as a lesbian retelling of Cinderella. My analysis will focus on the feminist portrayal of the central female characters and their burgeoning relationship. Throughout the paper, I will situate *Ash* within a wider history of feminist retellings of Cinderella for younger readers as well as lesbian love stories for a young adult audience. The text offers readers two strong, well-developed female characters, which operate to redress the lack of female agency in the original fairy tale. In particular, Lo’s creation of the Huntress, a female-only role within the fantasy kingdom, draws on and subverts established tropes within the genre. I will refer to Lo’s second novel *Huntress* (2011), which tells the story of the first huntress, to further discuss how she shifts expectations of gender, sexuality, and the role of Cinderella’s lover in *Ash*. The same-sex romance is central to the YA novel and my analysis of the love story will focus on the depiction of desire between the two female characters and Lo’s reimagining of the fairy-tale ending of ‘happily ever after’. Finally, this paper will argue that *Ash* attempts to redress the dearth of same-sex fairy-tale retellings for a young adult audience as well as create new roles for women (who love women) through the depictions of Ash and the Huntress.

Erica Gillingham is a PhD Candidate at the National Centre for Research in Children’s Literature at the University of Roehampton. Her thesis examines lesbian love stories in young adult novels and graphic novels across genres. Her work is available online at www.ericagillingham.com.

Sally King, De Montfort University, Leicester

“Re-Dressing Cinderella: Fairy-Tale Dolls and Their Plastic Footwear”

Cinderella is immediately recognisable by her shoe and indeed in some manifestations of the tale and character, the shoe takes centre stage, while Cinderella herself is side-lined or entirely absent. The implications of this metonymy are clearly worrying, as the substitution coalesces femaleness with materialism and aesthetics. Over the centuries, the shoe has morphed through an array of materials, including fur (French oral versions, pre-1697), glass (Perrault 1697; Disney 1950, 2015) and gold (Grimm 1812-1857), yet the symbolic representation of dominated, objectified females is rife throughout.

In the field of children’s Cinderella toys, especially dolls, the activity of playing often revolves around ‘re-dressing’ Cinderella, mainly through use of plastic articles. The material, together with the nature of the toy, conspire to deprive children players of a truly active role, which Jack Zipes (2016) argues is essential in permitting freedom of expression. Packaging,

advertising and other paratexts (Genette 1982) also pander to a young female audience and blinker children from an early stage of their life. In this paper, I will draw on Roland Barthes' essays "Toys" and "Plastic" (written 1954-1956), which feature in his collection *Mythologies* (1972), and apply his ideas to a modern, English context. In this light, I will consider how representations of gender in toys and their marketing continue to be plagued by staid ideas. Indeed, sixty years since the essays were penned, these Cinderella toys do exactly as Barthes deplors: reinforce gender stereotypes, legitimate vanity and stifle creativity.

Sally King is a second-year PhD student at De Montfort University, Leicester. Her thesis examines the representation of the slipper in translations and adaptations of Cinderella, and its evolution since the tales of Charles Perrault (1697) and the Brothers Grimm (1812-1857). Sally is particularly interested in dance and games adaptations.

Panel 5: Princesses and Franchises

Robyn Muir, University of Nottingham "Reimagining the Disney Princess"

Ever since the introduction of Snow White in 1937, Disney Princesses have been adorning our screens, shops and hearts. Feminist scholars have identified a number of issues with earlier Disney Princesses such as Snow White, Cinderella and Aurora. These princesses are defined as passive and domestic, with no power or desire to change their situations. The next generation of princesses such as Ariel, Belle and more recently Rapunzel have addressed some of these issues, however, there is still a lack of consistency among these princesses. Despite making some improvements, they have retained mostly traditional gender norms due to their desire for 'freedom' often being replaced or overshadowed by the ever-continuing 'happily ever after' trope.

This paper will argue that exceptions may be made for the stereotypical portrayal of Snow White, Cinderella and Aurora due to the era in which they were created (1937, 1950 and 1959 respectively). However, these exceptions cannot be made for the modern adaptations of some of these Disney films (namely *Cinderella*). This paper will investigate to what extent the live action princess films redress the original portrayals of Disney Princesses.

Firstly this paper will examine the models of gender within *Cinderella* (1950) and *Beauty and the Beast* (1992). Secondly, this paper will compare these models of gender to the live action remakes of *Cinderella* (2015) and the upcoming *Beauty and the Beast* (2017) and assess whether the portrayals of these women have been redressed in modern cinema, for a modern audience.

Robyn Muir is a postgraduate researcher in the School of Politics at the University of Nottingham. Her interests are the representation of gender and gendered marketing within the Disney Princess Franchise. Currently, she is focusing on gender models and the politics of gendered merchandising within the franchise.

Jo Ormond, Lancaster University

" 'The End is just the beginning...': Daughters of the Fairy Tale in Mattel's *Ever After High*"

The *Ever After High* dolls put an interesting new spin on fairy tale retellings, rather than the more conventional narratives of TV, film and print these stories are told through commodities

and transmedia narratives. The range is Mattel's follow up to the popular *Monster High* doll range and has an extensive range of dolls representing the teenage children of fairy tale characters who attend high school together. As well as the dolls there is an interactive website with games, character blogs, short cartoons and personality quizzes and a series of novellas by well-known children's author Shannon Hale. The characters are divided into two types, the Royals and the Rebels. The Royals are prepared to accept their destiny and relive the story of their famous parent, while the Rebels refuse to accept their destiny and long to 'write their own happily ever after'. A particularly interesting character on the Rebel team is Cerise Hood who is the daughter of Red Riding Hood and The Big Bad Wolf; her parentage explicitly recalls Angela Carter's *The Company of Wolves* (1979). Cerise keeps the identity of her father a secret and has to play down her athletic ability and bad temper. Mattel's news page claims 'our characters help convey to girls the importance of having the courage and confidence to make your own decisions and to create your own destiny.' Mattel's statement that girls are empowered by these dolls to 'create their own destiny' seems to conflict with the narrow frame in which the personality quizzes puts young girls by encouraging them to identify with a particular character and pick a team, as it were, between the royals and rebels. In this paper I will examine the dual appeal of the dolls as both objects of play and texts to be read, in order to explore the way femininity is framed and how that differs from more conventional retellings of fairy tales.

Jo Ormond is a research student in the Department of English and Creative Writing at Lancaster University. She is interested in representations of femininity in contemporary retellings of fairy tales and combines feminist readings of the texts with current debates about the relation between young women and society as represented in the media and popular culture.

Panel 6: Feminist Voices, New Perspectives

Rebecca McEwen, Loughborough University

“Rewriting, Retelling, Reclaiming: Female Articulation in Jeanette Winterson’s *Sexing the Cherry* and Emma Donoghue’s *Kissing the Witch*”

Fairy tales have been used throughout history as a tool to manipulate young girls into a perception of exactly how they should behave in order to find their ‘happy ending’: be pretty and proper, follow the rules, and *never* trust other women – especially if they’re old and ugly. Winterson’s rewriting of the Brothers Grimm story ‘The Twelve Dancing Princesses’ and Donoghue’s plethora of ‘old tales in new skins’ in *Kissing the Witch* work to dismantle the ways in which women’s stories have been appropriated and restore their articulation to the characters themselves. Their retellings focus not on the perfect princes of the traditional tales, but on relationships between women as lovers, as guides, and as friends. Winterson’s princesses directly reject their story of heterosexual love, narrating that they all found their own happy endings, ‘just not with our husbands,’ thus filling in the blank space where a ‘happily after after’ would normally reside. Donoghue’s heroines also flout compulsory heterosexuality and coercive femininity, and the unique layout of her tales -with each one flowing into the next as the previous protagonist asks ‘and what is your story?’ – enables every character, even the usually maligned wicked stepmothers and witches to reclaim their own histories, those histories which would otherwise have been suppressed.

Rebecca McEwen is a Durham University alumnus and current PhD researcher at Loughborough University in the School of the Arts, English, and Drama, studying the narration of women's lives in Kate Atkinson's fiction. She is particularly interested in female storytelling, magic realism, and contemporary women's literature.

Dearbhla McGrath, Researchers in Schools / King's College London

“Old Wives’ Tales: Using Fairy Tales to Question Gender Stereotypes in the Classroom”

Throughout the history of folklore and fairytale there has been a longstanding contradiction in the depiction of female characters. On the one hand, females, such as witches, are associated with evil. This came about as a result of superstitions (which were often religious) connected to the notion of the speaking woman being a dangerous entity. Indeed, the *Malleus Maleficarum* includes an entire section devoted to the question of why women, particularly, were chiefly addicted to “evil superstitions.” The opposite, of course, is the dutiful heroine who is always beautiful and innocent. This leaves only two stereotypical options for a female fairy-tale character, there is no compromise. These types of depictions have led to the cementing in our mutual consciousness of the concept of the female fairy-tale character as either too outspoken and, therefore, dangerous or completely powerless. However, many authors, such as Angela Carter and Emma Donoghue have questioned this unfair representation of women. This paper examines this notion in relation to exploring gender stereotypes in the classroom. The personal responses of a small sample of Year 9 and 10 students who took part in an intensive course on fairy tales as part of The Brilliant Club Scholar’s Programme will be examined as a case study. Students studied two traditional and two contemporary versions of “Little Red Riding Hood” and “Beauty and the Beast” respectively. The particular issues that were explored in the texts pertained to gender stereotypes, the representation of women and relationships between women.

Dearbhla completed her PhD in Comparative Literature in 2013 (Dublin City University). Her research focused on fairy tales, women's writing and gender and sexuality studies. She is currently a participant in this years cohort of the Researchers in Schools programme, which places post-doctoral researchers in non-selective state schools to promote subject expertise and university access.

Panel 7: Other Mothers and Uncanny Sisters

Sarah Armstrong, Open University

“The Fairytale World of *Orphan Black*: How to Be a Narcissist in a World of Clones”

This paper will examine how *Orphan Black* subverts fairytale ideas of family and celebrates the female. The Netflix TV series *Orphan Black* uses the ideas of cloning to explain the different constructions and challenges associated with being female in the C21st. Using five main female clones, it also uses fairytale symbols and ideas to explore ideas of the family, fertility and otherness. By using the same actor in multiple parts, *Orphan Black* destabilises the idea of an archetypal femininity, and reinforces the idea that being female is a learned behaviour. There is not one ideal way to be a woman, and this is celebrated.

Through exploring ideas such as eugenics and narcissism, the heart of *Orphan Black* remains in the fairytale - we can choose to be the good daughter, the evil queen, or the bad mother. The traditional family is deconstructed, and created by the individual through IVF,

adoption or friendship. However fertility, or the absence of it, is also something which is strongly desired and in some ways seems to be the non-negotiable ‘point’ of being female.

I will look at Orphan Black with reference to Grimm’s ‘Twelve Dancing Princesses’, and this idea of sisters as supposedly identical and interchangeable, comparing the many stories of multiple brothers (‘Seven Ravens’, ‘Six Swans’, etc.). Using Seifert (2015) on ‘Queer(ing) Fairy Tales’, I will also look at Marcus (2012) on clones and doubles.

Dr Sarah Armstrong has published two novels with Sandstone Press, The Insect Rosary and The Devil in the Snow. Her short stories have been published in print and online, most recently in the fairytale anthology, The Forgotten and the Fantastical 3. She teaches undergraduate and postgraduate creative writing for the Open University.

Daisy Butcher, University of Hertfordshire

“Coraline and the Terrible Mother: The Psychoanalytical Exploration of a Feminine Archetype”

Erich Neumann, student to Carl Jung, wrote extensively on representations and symbols of The Great Mother as a prevalent feminine archetype seen in mythology and culture. Just as the Great Mother signifies fertility, nurturing and comfort, the Terrible Mother is the subject of primordial masculine fear, she is the devourer, the castrator and the sexual and feeds on the children that she is meant to feed and care for. This essentialist approach to the female nature implies that woman is either an immaculate womb and vessel for life or a death-dealing witch/whore. In Neil Gaiman’s *Coraline*, the antagonist of the story is indeed an evil mother figure, ‘The Other Mother’. Her final form is that of a skeletal spider and it is implied that she has murdered ‘Other Father’ highlighting her role as a black widow who consumes men and treats them as disposable. I will explore the themes of warped maternity using Neumann’s theory outlining the Terrible Mother as a *vagina dentata* and a danger to men and children alike. The age old archetype of Terrible Mother can be seen in ancient myth such as Gaia, the Earth Mother and first castrator, the Hindu Goddess Kali, Medusa and Cleopatra etc as well as fairytales such as Sleeping Beauty and Red Riding Hood. I will highlight how the portal in *Coraline* symbolises entry into the unknown, the gate to hell, the underworld as a metaphor for fear of entering the female and castration anxiety. Using psychoanalysis as my main theoretical approach I will argue how evil is gendered and how *Coraline* continues this tradition as well as subverting it.

Daisy Butcher is a postgraduate student at the University of Hertfordshire, currently developing a dissertation project on the myth of vagina dentata exploring how femininity and evil are manifested in folklore and literature. She has presented papers at the University of Stavanger, Sheffield University—where she won a conference award—University of South Wales, Kingston University, and University of Surrey, all in 2016.

Panel 8: Nature and Wilderness

Laura Becherer, University of Glasgow

“Women Who Run Free: Female Liberation in Eowyn Ivey’s *The Snow Child*”

Women’s connection to nature has long been explored, both in positive and negative lights. Women as base and earthy has been historically used against us as a way to discredit our

capabilities of reason and logic and to subjugate us in many realms, from the political floor to our doctor's exam rooms. Women writers for decades now have begun to reclaim this label and to celebrate the connections of women and nature, which dovetails with third wave feminism's stance that femininity should be celebrated instead of rejected or dismissed.

Eowyn Ivey's novel *The Snow Child* explores these themes in depth with her character Faina. The little girl from the forest with the fox companion flits in and out of the narrative—she is unpredictable, changeable, and linked directly to nature itself. Faina is unable to be captured, as the ending ultimately displays; she cannot be boxed into a societal role. Faina is ambiguous in the narrative; the reader must decide if we admire or condemn her inconsistency. I argue, however, that Ivey's novel celebrates Faina's nature and her escape. In a theoretical framework that positions society against nature, Faina shows that the two can never be fully married.

Using secondary sources beginning with Jack Zipes' *The Irresistible Fairy Tale*, Sara Maitland's *Gossip from the Forest*, Susan Griffin's *Woman and Nature*, and Clarissa Pinkola Estes' *Women Who Run With the Wolves*, my essay will position Ivey's novel in critical conversation with the feminist reclamation of the woman as nature trope.

Laura R. Becherer is a creative writing doctoral student at the University of Glasgow. She writes fiction and poetry that explore women's experiences and fairy tales and has been published in several magazines, including Gutter. Laura's first book, co-written with a colleague, A Drink of One's Own: Cocktails for Literary Ladies, was published by Freight in Autumn 2016.

Rebecca Hurst, University of Manchester

“Through the Stone Mirror: Domesticity and Wilderness in Soviet Fairy Tales”

Grounding his folkloric fairy tales in the local legends he heard in childhood, Pavel Bazhov used mining and mountain lore to create a paradoxical literature of descent. This paper will explore stories from his 1939 collection *The Malachite Casket*, with a particular focus on Bazhov's female characters, and the juxtaposition of domesticity and wilderness within the tales. Written at the height of the Stalinist Purges in the late-1930s, whilst himself in hiding and 'underground', Bazhov created characters and narratives that negotiate what is aboveground and what is below. They are tales of descent from domesticity into wild and enchanted subterranean realms. It has been claimed that the heroines of traditional Russian wonder tales function 'primarily as the object of the hero's quest' (Haney, 2001, xxxviii). However, I argue that Bazhov's self-actualising female heroines are not only the socialist realist and utopian sisters of Soviet female tractor drivers and partisan fighters, but are also closely affiliated to the martial and proactive heroines of traditional Russian wonder tales. In exploring these themes I employ socio-historic and close textual analysis, modelled on the work of Marina Warner and Jack Zipes. I also refer to Gilbert and Gubar's seminal reading of Snow White in first chapter of *The Mad Woman in the Attic*. This approach enables a historicising and feminist reading of Bazhov's unique, culturally significant, and (outside Russia) little known tales, shadowing his heroines as they step through the stone mirror and embark on a journey of magical descent and adventure.

Rebecca Hurst is a doctoral student at the University of Manchester where she writes poetry and researches Soviet fairy tales. Her writing has appeared in various magazines and her chamber opera, Isabella, premiered in London in 2015. Forthcoming work includes a new opera written in collaboration with composer Helgi Ingvarsson.

Organisers

Christina Collins is a PhD candidate in creative writing (fiction) at Queen's University Belfast. She holds an MFA in creative writing and a BA in English and gender studies. Her debut novel, *Zero*, is forthcoming from Sourcebooks Jabberwocky. Her doctoral thesis consists of a children's novel and a critical component on female mutism in children's fiction.

Amy Finlay is a PhD candidate in Irish literature at Queen's University Belfast. She has an MA in Irish writing and an undergraduate degree in English and Theology. Her doctoral thesis is an exploration of Irish lesbian writing in the twentieth and twenty-first century.

Lisa Kennedy is a PhD candidate in creative writing (prose) at Queen's University Belfast. She has an MA in Creative Writing and an undergraduate degree in English and Creative Writing. Her thesis consists of a historical novel on an Irish witch trial that took place in her home town, and a critical thesis on witches in Ulster folklore.