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Films reflect struggles over cultural power (Sklar 20–21). The extent to which traditional fairy tales, despite the givenness of their stories, may function as a site for disparate interrogations of the metanarratives of culture is sharply evident in two films released in the second half of the 1990s: The Grimm Brothers’ Snow White (henceforth TGB Snow White) and Ever After. These films deal with key concepts of modernity—in particular, rationality, progress, subjective agency, and emancipation—in entirely opposing ways. Ever After presents a utopian vision which is a humanistic reaffirmation of those concepts, whereas the dystopia of TGB Snow White (also released as Snow White: A Tale of Terror and as Snow White in the Black Forest) presents a nihilistic perspective within which any quest for agency is thwarted at the outset by the subjugation of characters to ideologies circumscribing social class, gender, and corporeality. In her analysis of modern fairy tales, Cristina Bacchilega stresses that “postmodern studies have advocated anti-humanistic conceptualizations of the subject, played with multiplicity and performance in narrative, and struggled with the sexual and gender ramifications of problematizing identities and differences” (18). In depicting its characters as socially produced but fractured and narratively underdetermined, TGB Snow White accords precisely with this description.
The two films address different audiences, in that *Ever After* is a family film and *The Grimm Brothers’ Snow White* implies a teenaged and older audience. This difference no doubt has a significant impact on the genre mix and ideological situatedness of each film, though we doubt that it simply explains the contrast between them. Rather, the films appear to stand on opposite sides of a divide between (neo)humanist and postmodernist conceptions of societies and selves. On the one hand, the characters depicted in *TGB Snow White* evidence a conception of subjectivity which, picking up the familiar postmodernist idea of “the death of the subject,” and particularly its Althusserian strain, finds an opposition between the individual human and the interpellations of culture. Hence the process of subjectification—of being called to an ideological site where subjectivity is enacted—becomes an experience of suffering with no prospect of agency. There is probably no other film version of a traditional fairy tale, especially one so familiar because of its Disney pre-text, which casts the story’s usual euphoric ending in such a bleak light (literally and figuratively).

On the other hand, *Ever After* is characterized by the humanistic discourses which constitute the normal metanarrative for retellings of traditional story (Stephens and McCallum), but portrays these more aggressively through its overt valorization of utopian themes and artistic creativity. This strategy coincides with the theoretical resistances to postmodernism widely posed by means of a strategic deployment of the Bakhtinian concepts of dialogics and intersubjectivity, although the humanism evoked here through the recurrence of Thomas More’s *Utopia* is prior to the so-called humanism demonized within (post)structuralist thought (Lash 63). What Bignell observes about the film version of *The Name of the Rose* also applies to *Ever After*: “[it] necessarily historicizes its setting but also interprets it through modern characters and discourses, so that past and present intersect and become confused” (83). *Ever After* is set in the early sixteenth century, and explicitly within the rise of early modern (specifically, early Tudor) humanism, but as a story about origins and values implicitly bodies forth the resurgence of humanistic thought at the end of the twentieth century. Hence it offers a means to interrogate the assumptions and values that underlie both sixteenth- and twentieth-century conceptions of humankind’s relationship to the social world. In a broad way, the film opposes postmodern ideology through its reaffirmation of the agency of the subject, its thematicization of discourses of “identity,” and its (albeit tongue-in-cheek) historicism. For the principal characters, Danielle (the Cinderella role) and Prince Henry, the experiences depicted are ultimately emancipatory, not because they are freed from any myths of centered, originary subjectivity,
but because each is ultimately constituted as an active social subject strong enough to engage transformatively with social interpellation and hence to actualize agential powers. In contrast, the characters in *TGB Snow White* engage in futile struggles after agency, but instead are confined within solipsistic states by the various social roles which define them: daughter, father, beautiful woman.

The following aspects of narrative are germane to exploring the cultural implications of utopian/dystopian themes and motifs in these films: (1) the textual strategies used to produce alternative societies, whether utopian or dystopian; (2) the textual strategies which establish the link between the contemporary here-and-now and the alternative located in a different space and time; and (3) the positioning of an audience in relation to the main characters, usually outsiders and rebels, with regard to how audience alignment with or alienation from such characters suggests an ideological effect.

The conjunction of these aspects of narrative and cultural ideology is most evident in the framing of the two films and their different ways of hybridizing genres. *Ever After* begins and ends with an interview to which the Brothers Grimm have been summoned by the Queen of France. Her purpose is to “set the record straight” regarding the story of “The Little Cinder Girl,” and her narrative is authenticated by family tradition (Danielle was her great-great-grandmother) and by the material evidence of the slipper and a portrait of Danielle painted by Leonardo da Vinci. This frame has several effects. It asserts that the story is told by a woman and therefore presents a female point of view, and that this point of view is reliable. As Marina Warner suggests about other female narrated folktales, it authenticates the tale’s misogynistic attitudes, specifically towards the wrongdoings of Rodmilla and Marguerite and their apt punishment (209). The link with the here-and-now lies in the interview’s affirmation of intellectual concepts generally deemed to be rejected within postmodernism: deep memory, knowable origins, and teleology in narrative and culture. Visually, the film opens and closes with the Grimms’ carriage caught from a high and distant camera angle, an effect which perhaps suggests that they are actually very small in the larger scheme of things. The interview then focuses more specifically on their retelling of unstable material, as one brother suggests that Perrault’s version is too far-fetched, and the other raises the old chestnut about the slipper’s composition—glass or fur. The Queen’s assertion that there is a “real” story behind the “once upon a time” she ostentatiously begins with foreshadows the overt teleology underpinning the union of two people who are one another’s “match in every way,” and who overcome legal, customary, and familial barriers to effect this union.
Finally, a teleological perspective is inferred from the paralleling of the final words of the embedded story and those of the frame. The story of Danielle and Henry concludes with this dialogue:

Danielle: “You, sir, are supposed to be charming.”
Henry: “And we, Princess, are supposed to live happily ever after.”
Danielle: “Says who?”
Henry: “You know, I don’t know.”

The not-knowing here points directly to the utopian romance metanarrative that sustains Cinderella stories: its origin is unknowable because it is endemic in the culture. The final word in the film thus belongs to the narrator/Queen, who confirms that the couple did live happily ever after and concludes, “the point, gentlemen, is that they lived.” Now anyone with minimal knowledge of either history or fairy tale would recognize that this is a complete fiction, but that recognition might only reinforce the power of a metanarrative to impose teleology on culture. Be that as it may, the effect of the relationship of story to frame is to reassert those values rejected within postmodernist ideology.

In contrast to the strong teleology emphasized in the frame of *Ever After*, *TBG Snow White* is framed as an apocalyptic narrative about which the most positive comment possible is that some of the main characters more or less survive. It begins with a cliché, a horse-drawn carriage careering through a forest while watched by ravens and pursued by wolves, and when the carriage (inevitably) overturns, a husband must perform a caesarian section on his dying wife to save their unborn baby. Thus Lili’s life begins not only in violence and death, but at a moment when the uncanny, in the shape of sentient ravens and wolves with glowing eyes, irrupts into the world. There thus appears to be some inherently evil force in the forest which causes the accident that mortally injures the older Liliana, and this in turn points towards the conflict between the privileged civilized world and what lies beyond. Claudia in her own way embodies this split between the civilized (her exquisite singing, as of the Middle English poem “Lullay, Lullay”) and the dark otherworld of magic and evil witchcraft. Not being susceptible to logical explanation, the uncanny confronts represented characters and audience with the limits of human understanding, and as the film unfolds the audience must take on board some unanswerable questions, such as: is Claudia evil or insane? what is the relation between Claudia’s mirror and her mother? is Claudia’s stillborn child capable of living?

The film’s title, imposed upon a flowing wave of blood, terminates the scene in which Frederick cuts the baby from his dying wife, and the following scene shows Lili as a small child hiding behind her mother’s monu-
ment. This in turn unfolds into a story told to Lili by her nurse—the familiar opening of the Grimms’ “Snow White.” There is a revealing analogy with Disney’s Snow White here. Snow White’s first song in Disney (“Wishing for the One I Love”) culminates in a kind of Romeo and Juliet balcony scene between Snow White and the prince and hence suggests a strong destinal force underpinning the narrative. When the dwarfs later ask Snow White to tell them a story, and Bashful asks if it is a story about herself, she tells the only story that can be told, about a princess who fell in love: but there is no story, only a reprise performance of “Someday My Prince Will Come.” In other words, Snow White can have no story that does not involve her relation to the prince. It is not surprising, then, that Disney varies the poisoned apple motif by foreshadowing the antidote (printed in the Queen’s spell book): the victim can be revived “only by love’s first kiss.” This moment of intense cultural fashioning, of interpellation into strict gender roles, can be compared with the story of “Snow White” told to Lili by her nurse. Now the fairy tale’s formula of black-white-red as markers of the child’s beauty and desirability, and the site of the retelling (the nurse exclaims that she has told Lili this story many times), go beyond identifying the “Snow White” pre-text to fix Lili in the role of highly-desired daughter, a role she fiercely clings to in the face of her father’s remarriage. While the formula does clearly identify the pre-text, the grave site further invokes the central function of the mother’s grave and the hazel tree planted on it in the Grimms’ “Cinderella” as the locus of Cinderella’s resistance against the oppressive regime imposed by her stepfamily. A crucial link here is the mother’s dresses that enable Cinderella’s true self to be revealed. In TGB Snow White Lili makes strategic use of her mother’s dress in a calculated attempt to upstage her stepmother. In a further reminiscence of “Cinderella,” and alluding more generally to the fairy-tale ball as signifying the movement from courtship into marriage, Lili, wearing her mother’s dress, makes a dramatic entrance to a festivity while Claudia is entertaining the crowd with her singing, and snatches attention away from her. Indeed, the effect on her father, seeing the image of his dead wife in his daughter, is best described in the words of “Cinderella”: “the prince [. . .] took her by the hand, and danced with her. Indeed, he would not dance with anyone else and would not let go of her hand” (Zipes 89). Just as in the final revelation scene, when “the stepmother and two sisters were horrified and turned pale with rage,” so in this story the shock of what happens sends the pregnant Claudia into labor, with the concomitant stillbirth and her lapse into insanity.

Generally preserving the shape of the Grimms’ story, with constant variation of motif and nuance, the film ends with the death of the “evil” stepmother, and hence the purging, for now, of the uncanny, and with the
formation of a new family tableau consisting of Lili, her father, and the outlaw, Will. The fairy-tale formula of black-white-red which is part of the film’s framing returns at its end as the camera dwells on Lili’s face: black hair, fair skin, red lips, and the red gash along her cheek which Claudia had inflicted to mar her beauty (but which now echoes Will’s scars). The closing words—Will says, “It’s snowing”—would be oddly irrelevant if it were not for the reference. Despite a mutual exchange of reassurances and smiles, this is not a “happily ever after” ending, however, as all three characters are scarred physically, mentally, or emotionally. In a largely black-and-white twilight landscape, almost drained of color other than the red highlights of lips and blood, they seem to have survived into a postapocalypse world, where they must now get on with their lives as best they can. That this survival may be temporary or even illusory is hinted by the final visual, as the film is closed by the closing of the carved doors which concealed Claudia’s mirror. An apocalyptic propensity to evil in the world is thus an endless process which the end of the film does not close off, in that the (visual) return of the black-white-red conjunction of the film’s beginning is too allusive to function as closure. The film is thus more akin to horror genres in which evil has been pushed back (as presumably occurred in the previous generation with Claudia’s mother), but not eradicated.

Ever After fuses its “Cinderella” story, and hence its implicit fairy-tale-film genre, with other, related genres: romance, of course, reinforced by a privileging of love over social status and social duty; romantic comedy; a story of female resistance within a dominating patriarchy (another reason, incidentally, for the frame to put the Brothers Grimm in their place); and historical narrative. TGB Snow White, on the other hand, displays more of a penchant for postmodernist pastiche as familiar fairy-tale elements are reshaped as Gothic horror (especially in its use of grotesque paranormal elements) linked to contemporary films dealing with evil and subjectification by means of its affiliation with dystopian apocalyptic narratives. Thus the film includes several themes characteristic of apocalyptic narratives: the political powerlessness of central characters, persecution, serial killing, and subjective alienation. Moreover, audiences may observe a similarity between Sam Neill’s role as the husband and father—an indecisive and ineffectual figure—and the character he played in the SciFi movie Event Horizon. Neither character can resist the lure of unnamed evil, and both are overwhelmed by it. Shapiro argues that the apocalypse does not bring about the end of the world, but is rather a period of intense suffering that cleanses the world of evil and institutes a just society (130). In following the outline of the Grimms’ tale, TGB Snow White seems to accord with this out-
come, but no longer reproduces the metanarrative whereby victimized innocence triumphs over malevolent evil.

*TGB Snow White* is also arguably postmodern in its sketching of the stories of individual characters as fragmented narratives. The Grimms’ “Snow White” is specifically focused on the Queen/Stepmother’s hatred for Snow White. This is not mutual, but a one-way emotion prompted by Snow White’s beauty and the Queen’s stated character: she “was beautiful but proud and haughty, and she could not tolerate anyone else who might rival her beauty” (Zipes 196). Other characters—the King, the huntsman, the dwarfs, the prince—are ancillary to the story focus and have no effective presence apart from their functions within the “Snow White” story. One of the obvious changes in the Disney film was to differentiate amongst the dwarfs, who functioned as a single entity in the Grimms’ version, but there are no implications that their now distinct personalities are significant except as they relate to Snow White.8 In contrast, *TGB Snow White* pivots on the oedipal struggle between Lili and Claudia, a struggle within which Lili is the prime mover. The film has thus depicted Lili as more like the folk-tale heroines characterized by Maria Tatar: “It is one of the lesser-known facts of folkloric life that women are rarely as virtuous as they are beautiful. Cinderella and Snow White may combine good behavior with good looks, but they are exceptional in that respect. Wherever we look in folklore, we can find disagreeable heroines” (98). Lili is, indeed, more often disagreeable than not. An implication for *TGB Snow White* is that the two main characters have been drawn into conflict because their individual life scripts overlap at a point of irreconcilable desire. In other words, each woman has a story which is incompatible with the other’s, and this has the potential to introduce a radical discontinuity into the narrative which is not resolved by one destroying the other.

Further, it is suggested that the ancillary characters have stories of their own which are quite independent of, and prior to, the “Snow White” story. Thus the function of the prince, an anonymous *deus ex machina* in Grimm, is split between two characters, both of whom have their own stories which do not entirely mesh with the central conflict into which they are drawn. While only one is left alive at the end, the doubling of the role and its articulation as part of the plot militates against the romance-as-teleology outcome seen in *Ever After*. First, Lili is courted by Peter Gutenberg, a young doctor still making his way in the world. She is betrothed to him shortly before her forced flight into exile, and while audiences are invited to view this as a rather superficial attachment, it places Lili under implicit legal obligation—once she has been revived from the effects of the poisoned apple, she docilely departs and
returns home with Peter. Her docility will, nevertheless, surprise an audience, especially because there is a narrative gap, a passed-over silence, between her recovery and departure. Her relationship with Peter seems superficial because it deviates from romance formula in that it is not depicted as central to Peter’s being or his story, even though it does effectively bring about his death. Second, Lili becomes deeply attracted to Will, one of the seven outlaws she stumbles upon at the end of her wild flight, who carries the physical and mental scars of mistreatment by the sociopolitical powers which implicitly enable Lili’s affluent life. Why Will, or any of the other outlaws, has been cast out from society is not made clear beyond suggesting they are victims of oppression and abuse. They belong to other stories, which intersect only accidentally with this one, although it does have a major impact on them: their band gradually breaks up, first when one of them is further banished for attempting to rape Lili, then when two of them die as a consequence of Claudia’s attempts on Lili’s life, and finally when Will leaves to follow Lili. As a group inhabiting a Gothic ruin, they can be seen to represent fragmentation, decen-terment, and deformation.

Each film’s hybridization of particular genres plays an important part in its cultural discourse. Thus the givenness of the well-known story shapes the trajectory of each film’s utopian/dystopian themes, in that the reflection of a modern tendency to shift the utopian ideal (and its inverse) from the domain of state institutions to the domain of individual subjectivity pervades these aspects of narrative and, in particular, coincides with the euphoric outcome presaged by such pretexts as the Disney *Snow White* and *Cinderella* (see Bignell 28, following Bauman). This is more evident in the utopianism of *Ever After*, as the aspirations of Danielle are implicitly shifted from the vision of a just society inherent in her first interview with Prince Henry, when she draws her arguments from Thomas More’s *Utopia*, to the more private well-being envisaged within the schema of romantic love. The purpose of utopia, according to Karl Mannheim, is “to shatter, either partially or wholly, the order of things prevailing at the time” (192). Thus in the pseudohistorical early sixteenth-century setting (see note 4), Danielle’s free-spirited behavior overturns social hierarchy, codes governing female conduct, and dress regulations. Further, the utopian ideal is bodied forth contrapuntally by the film’s framing “Cinderella” narrative. Danielle’s change in circumstance from the beloved daughter of a well-to-do landowner to being enslaved to her stepmother, Rodmilla, not only embeds dystopian themes in Rodmilla’s financial mismanagement, physical abuse of Danielle, and cavalier exploitation of the servants. It also ties these to personal ambition in Rodmilla’s dream of marrying her daughter Marguerite to Prince Henry and having her own room in the palace with a courtyard view.
That this is envisaged as a dystopian narrative is made clear when Marguerite threatens to burn Danielle’s cherished copy of More’s *Utopia* unless Danielle surrenders up her mother’s ball gown and shoes—and then burns the book anyway.

The configuration of the Prince’s possible marriage partners—Danielle, her stepsister Marguerite, or Princess Gabriella of Spain—serves to blend utopian and romance themes. Danielle is inspired by reciprocal love; Marguerite is selfish and ambitious, and would marry the position, not the person; and the Spanish Princess, a pawn in a political arrangement, has given her love elsewhere. Inspired by the Princess’s grief over being sacrificed to “the obligations of privilege,” Prince Henry decides to follow suit and marry Danielle, who is represented as indubitably, in Leonardo’s words, his “perfect mate.” This is the standard stuff of romance, needless to say, a narrative which progresses steadily toward its inevitable and triumphant outcome (and not despite, but because of, the impediments along the way), and in which all threads are neatly tied off. In itself, this outcome is only utopian in the popular sense, but humanistic utopianism seems to blend seamlessly with romance because it has figured largely in Danielle and Henry’s early encounters.

Insofar as utopian elements have been transferred to the domain of individual subjectivity, *TGB Snow White* presents subjectivity as inherently dystopian except amongst the outlaws, characters who have been utterly abjected by official society and who recuperate their humanity by means of empathy and intersubjective relationships. The positioning of the audience of this film is particularly interesting. In contrast to *Ever After*, which reflects the majority of filmed fairy tales in aligning the audience with the main character’s perspective, *TGB Snow White* operates with a decentered perspective, such that audience alignments are apt to shift. Whereas Disney’s *Snow White*, for example, clearly positions its audience in alignment with the heroine’s perspective, the more recent film depicts Lili as a largely unappealing child and disagreeable young woman. Her oedipal attachment to her father, and her persistent rejection of what seem to be honest overtures from her stepmother, evoke sympathy for Claudia and emphasize her status as an outsider. The watershed episode, which pushes events and emotions into excess, is when Lili, reproducing her mother’s appearance, throws out the challenge of youthful beauty. Lili’s behavior with her father in this scene becomes quite coquettish, and as the scene unfolds, Claudia’s appraising stare suggests that she will strike back. From this point her mirror plays a key role in constructing subjectivity and prompting action from a narcissistic standpoint.

A key strategy for displacing the expected audience alignment in a
retelling of “Snow White” is to contextualize the stepmother’s motivation, and this has been achieved very effectively in TGB Snow White. In a sequence located in female domestic space and connoting unreality by its hazy focus and restricted range of colors (brown, yellow, dull red), the audience is shown Claudia in her moment of greatest anguish, just after her baby has been stillborn. Suddenly, the doors which enclose her mirror open of their own accord, thus inviting her to inspect herself. What she sees is herself as old and haggard, and desperately begins lathering moisturizer on her face, and then onto the image in the mirror: “Why is this happening to me?” she asks her image in the mirror. As she stares at it, the image reforms into youthful beauty, and the mirror utters blandishments certain to satisfy a narcissist: “You are beautiful. Your face is perfect. [...] There is still much to envy. They have always envied you.” At this point Claudia becomes the embodiment of a reflected self. Whereas the audience can see the disjunction between the actual Claudia and the image, she does not perceive her reflection through her own eyes, but only through what the mirror shows and says to her. As she becomes possessed by the mirror, unable to use it as a self-reflective tool, the scene marks her descent into insanity and her recourse to the black arts to gain her ends. Its significance is illuminated by Janet Strayer’s informative discussion of the fairy tale, which highlights several interrelated issues pertinent to the film: “culturally received images of women, beauty, aging, and power; the central role of the mirror and outworn applications of the ‘looking-glass’ self in the face of continuing needs for ‘mirroring’; and the psychosocial challenges of mid-life development” (157). The significance of beauty changes as women age, so that as Lili matures into nubile womanhood, Claudia is faced with the onset of decline. Strayer argues that because women’s beauty and power are culturally aligned, beauty becomes an arena for female competitiveness, but is also invariably identified with youthfulness. Further, “looking good means being seen, a recognition of being worth attention, at the very least” (159), and this is the crux of Lili’s staged contest, as the effect of her late entrance is to snatch the collective gaze away from Claudia to focus on herself.

Both women at this point are performing femininity, striving to capture and hold a public gaze (but especially male, and especially Frederick’s). Again commenting on the Grimms’ tale, Strayer observes that “both Snow White and the Queen are linked in traps involving beauty, perfection, hierarchical power, and societal expectations. Both are metaphorically fixed in glass as objects (me-self) to be looked upon (the Queen’s mirror; Snow White’s glass coffin), a juxtaposition of symbols that signifies the hazards of ‘the image’ (death/stasis in life)” (170). The film foregrounds the “stasis in life” theme in two ways. First, it was precisely “stasis in life” that Claudia had
intended for Lili through the poisoned apple, which rendered her immobile but fully sentient. This intervention interrupts a process of development that Lili was experiencing, exemplified by the changed significance of the epithet “Little Princess,” which the outlaws applied to her, first as an expression of hostility and derision, and subsequently as a mark of affection. Second, the culmination of the unequal physical struggle between Lili and Claudia towards the end of the film comes when Lili impulsively stabs Claudia’s image in the mirror. Since Claudia has become indistinguishable from the image which now independently inhabits the mirror, its rupture causes her both to age rapidly and to see this happening. Her horrified question, “What have you done to me?” evokes her earlier question, “Why is this happening to me?” which immediately preceded her subjugation to the image.

There are also some possibilities of transformation and growth for Lili within the film’s ambiguous ending. Lili is herself left with an opportunity to break the image trap because her perfection has been irremediably marred by the knife-slash along her cheek and because she is positioned to bond with the outlaw Will. This might enable audiences to interpret the film’s final visual—the closing of the mirror doors—in a more positive way, as an escape from servitude to the image. But that must remain a questionable reading of a narrative which more pervasively seems suspicious of closure and of the kind of metanarrative which sustains Ever After. How the two films end is symptomatic of how they are positioned on opposite sides of an argument about the nature of human subjectivity and reflect opposing views about the role of fictions in relationship to culture. Ever After self-consciously affirms the exemplary function of narrative, whereas The Grimm Brothers’ Snow White, in asserting that “The fairy tale is over,” suggests that fairy tales offer utopian outcomes in a dystopian world.

Notes
1. Lash encapsulates humanistic values as follows: “Humanism looks back to Classical Greece in which the view of human agency was not abstract but foundational. Moral agency here was not abstract, but rooted in the foundations of a social Sittlichkeit. Moral, aesthetic and cognitive action were not conceived in abstraction, the one from the others, but as integrally intertwined. Rational agency was not conceived in the same kind of abstraction from the body. The nature/culture diremption was not so radically stated” (63).
2. We are drawing here in part on Hartmut Hirsch (58).
3. Wendy Loggia’s novelization of the screenplay as Ever After: A Cinderella Story omits the framing interview, substituting a paragraph that identifies the genre as “fairy-tale romance” (1), thus erasing the effects pointed to here.
4. The film is set in 1516, but is scrambled history in that its particular conjunction of events and people is impossible: King Francis I succeeded to the French throne in 1515 (aged twenty-one); the visit to France by Leonardo da Vinci
takes place because “Michelangelo was busy with a ceiling in Rome” (Michelangelo painted the Sistine Chapel in 1509–12), but Leonardo traveled to France in 1516 to enter the service of King Francis, remaining there until his death in 1519. (As the film depicts, Leonardo always carried the *Mona Lisa* with him on his travels.) Danielle at this time is twenty, and had been presented with her copy of More’s *Utopia* by her father when she was eight; *Utopia* first appeared in 1516. Hence the chronology of the film requires *Utopia* to have been published no later that 1504. Prince Henry (later King Henry II, 1547–59) was not born until 1519, three years after the events of the film. It was Francis I, not Henry, who created the Royal library and the academic posts which were the basis of the Collège de France. And so on.

The Cinderella story is much older than the sixteenth century, with the earliest known analogue, a Chinese version, dating from 850–60 ce. See, for instance, Warner (202); and Hu.

5. For a recent survey of the image of the wolf in (mainly) children’s fiction, see Hollindale.

6. Of course, Disney’s *Snow White* sets a precedent by depicting the heroine with many of Cinderellal’s attributes. In particular, she is dressed in rags and reduced to a scullery maid.

7. Likewise, the Disney *Snow White* opens with the image of a book, rubricated to suggest a “medieval” manuscript, which immediately labels the Queen as “vain and wicked” even before the story proper begins.

8. Disney’s dwarfs derive from the eccentric old-timers of the Western genre—especially notable in Grumpy’s screen dialect and misogyny. The rough-hewn organ which Grumpy later plays during the hoedown held after dinner has pipes carved as totem poles. The motif returns when the Queen makes her attack on Snow White and the animals run to fetch them back, when they ride on the backs of deer in a race reminiscent of a cavalry charge to the rescue. All this evokes the American utopia—the Western dedicated to holding back the chaos and dystopias threatened by outlaws and “Indians.”

9. Danielle says to the Prince: “If you suffer your people to be ill educated and their manners corrupted from infancy, and then punish them for those crimes to which their first education disposed them, what else is to be concluded, sire, but that you first make thieves and then punish them?” Danielle’s words recall those of Thomas More in *Utopia*: “You allow these people to be brought up in the worst possible way, and systematically corrupted from their earliest years. Finally, when they grow up and commit the crimes that they were obviously destined to commit, ever since they were children, you start punishing them. In other words, you create thieves, and then punish them for stealing!”(49).

10. Both Claudia and Lili exhibit in this scene Judith Butler’s now classic definition of gender as performative discourse, which pivots on “the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly regulatory frame that congeal in time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being” (33).

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UTOPIA AND DYSTOPIA


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