

TRACES OF MODERN ENVIRONMENTALISM:

A Representation of Ecocriticism
in *Snow White and the Huntsman*
(2012) and *Maleficent* (2014)



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Abstract

From the beginning of human time, nature has been a crucial entity to humans. However, humans have begun to exploit and alter nature more excessively and dominantly than ever before; this has resulted in the Earth entering a new geological epoch called the Anthropocene. The brutal treatment of nature in the Anthropocene has resulted in an environmental crisis; this crisis is visible in numerous artworks that reflect the dangers of the crisis. This master's thesis will use the theory of ecocriticism in order to emphasise how modern films have come to implement and reflect issues from the environmental crisis and the Anthropocene. The master's thesis will thus analyse the fairy tale remakes *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012) and *Maleficent* (2014) to portray how modern environmental issues are reflected in motion pictures through new environmental alterations to the plots. The new environmental alterations reflect anthropocentric problems through the human villains of the films, who all have a damaging effect on the environment due to selfishness, greed and vanity. In correspondence with the films portraying the human villains as greedy and exploitive, the films additionally portray the human heroes to have intrinsic values in nature and act as stewards of nature. The films thereby stress what it means to be a good human being in the age of the Anthropocene. In that way, the films point at anthropocentric issues and increase the importance as well as the self-recognition of humans' responsibility as stewards of the Earth. The environment plays a crucial new role in both films, which adds numerous new alterations and thus changes to the plots of the fairy tales; these result in the films becoming appropriations. Consequently, the two films manage to emphasise two examples of modern films that feature numerous environmental threats as a frightening reality. Through a cognitive ecocritical perspective, films featuring modern environmentalism have the ability to dominantly affect an audience. When seeing a film, the viewer experiences a 'transportation' into the imaginary storyworld of the film, which psychologists, climatologists, sociologists and cultural studies have argued to be an effective way for a viewer to perceive the danger of the environmental crisis as a *present* problem. Environmental films can thereby affect an audience as well as being an informative method to create awareness about the environmental crisis.

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1.0 Introduction

Since the beginning of human time, there has always existed a close relationship between nature and humans. Though nature has never required humans as valuable assets, humans are, on the other hand, dependent on the natural world as a vital and life necessary resource for food, shelter and organisation; thus, there has always existed a bond between humans and nature. This can already be seen through early cavemen paintings, portraits, literature, etc.. However, for the past recent centuries, humans have organised themselves and exploited the non-human world in such an excessive manner that the specie has become a rebel towards nature. This excessive and dominant behaviour of humans have eventually and inevitably caused scientists to declare the Earth to have left the geological era of the Holocene, an era which the Earth has existed in for 12.000 years, in order to enter the Anthropocene, the Age of Humans. The Anthropocene means that humans dominate the Earth at a higher and more dominant rate than ever before; this is seen through e.g. toxic waste, global warming, oil spill, deforestation and other similar human inflicted changes. These alterations and exploitations of the planet have caused an environmental crisis that threatens the planet and its living creatures' existence. Within the recent years, people have become more aware of the crisis they are in due to a more open and direct discourse about the problems of the crisis. This can especially be seen through a change of representation of the environment in the humanities through the arts; especially in motion pictures. The past fifteen years have produced a steadily rising number of films that attempt to engage with humans and thereby evoke the potential future consequences of the environmental crisis and, thus, the geological era of the Anthropocene. (Weik von Mossner 141). The great amount of environmentalist films has caused for the emergence of the critical theory of ecocriticism. Ecocriticism enables us to perceive how this environmental crisis as well as the problematics of the Anthropocene have affected the world of motion pictures; correspondingly, films can affect the viewers through implementing the environmental concerns of the 21st century in their narratives. For that reason, the project will analyse two films based on the ecocritical theory. Though there are different approaches to the course of ecocriticism, this project seeks to take a more modern and interdisciplinary take on the critical theory, meaning that the project will focus on the theory's embracement of the concept the 'Anthropocene', which has contributed ecocriticism to include more social criticism. The project's use of ecocriticism will, therefore, seek to evaluate the chosen films in terms of their coherence and representations of the environmental crisis and, thus, the Anthropocene.

The project will firstly define the concept of ecocriticism and thereby also emphasise the chosen approach to the critical theory; the chosen modern approach to the theory will subsequently cause the project to include an outlined paragraph of the Anthropocene. The project will then outline the chosen method of film analysis, where sound and cinematography will be the essential cinematic tools of focus, which will subsequently lead the project forth to the analysis section. The project will analyse two fairy tales, however, the genre of the films will not be the main focus of the analysis; it will, however, be regarded when interpreting the ecocritical messages of the films, but the ecocritical aspects will be the main focus throughout the analyses and not the respective genres of the films. The chosen films for this ecocritical project are the two modern remakes *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012) and *Maleficent* (2014). The project will keep in mind that these films are remakes and thus already based on well-known fairy tales; this fact enables the project to focus on the new ecocritical alterations to the plots. Though both films have gained popularity amongst their audiences and thus both managed to produce a sequel, most film critics tend to focus on performance, budget and special effects in favour of the new and obvious environmental aspects of the films; therefore, the project has merely selected those reviews that are of relevance to the ecocritical aspects of the films, as this is the project's main focus. The analyses will, therefore, include and utilise selective reviews from film critics as well as relevant academic reviews of the films in accordance with the nature perception in the plots. The analysis section will be followed by a comparative paragraph of the two films that emphasise similarities and the noticeable alterations that stress modern environmentalism, which will lead the project on to discuss how environmental films can manage to affect an audience through human cognition; here, the project will draw on the findings and environmental examples from the analyses. Lastly, the project will reach its conclusion, where essential analytical findings will be summed up and inevitably answer to the thesis statement, which goes as the following:

The Master's thesis will analyse and examine the representation of ecocriticism in Snow White and the Huntsman (2012) and Maleficent (2014) by using cinematic tools of cinematography and sound, with the intention of determining the presentation of nature as well as how humanity's interaction with nature is represented in the plots; lastly, the project will discuss how environmental films can affect an audience as well as being an informative method to create awareness about the environmental crisis.

2.0 Theory Section

2.1 The Narrative of the Environmental Crisis

The environmental crisis is a cruel reality which planet Earth faces today and has done so for many years. The crisis is a reality due to toxic waste, global warming, oil spills, deforestation and other similar human inflicted changes. According to Kerridge, the real environmental crisis is simultaneously a cultural crisis, as it is a crisis of representation, “The inability for political cultures to address environmentalism is in part a failure of narrative” (Kerridge 4). However, these environmental concerns will not be kept out of narrative, which can especially be seen towards the end of the twentieth century. In the late twentieth century, one could find the newspaper headlines to present titles regarding toxic waste contamination, oil spills, extinction of species at an unprecedented rate as well as protests over nuclear waste dumps, predictions of global warming, destruction of the tropical rain forest, a rapidly growing hole in the ozone layer, a wildfire in Yellowstone Park and a nuclear reactor in Chernobyl. One would simultaneously have seen a world population reaching 5 billion people as well as a U.S. president announcing the 1990’s as being ‘the decade of the environment’ (Glottfelty xvi). These events and phenomena may all have different economic and social reasons to be the root of their occurrences; e.g. a nuclear reactor in Chernobyl and the destruction of the tropical rain forest may seem like two separate phenomena that humans have created. Thus, these phenomena have different roots in the form of warfare, politics, capitalism, social improvement, etc., however, due to a growing awareness about the environmental crisis, these different phenomena and problems all become active participants in the veracity of the environmental crisis. Thus, despite their different roots, they have all become part of a consensus about what humanity does wrong in the anthropogenic world and, thus, the environmental crisis. Thereby, they all belong on the same listing of the wrongdoings in the age of the environmental crisis. Therefore, these different categories now belong under the same category of ‘the environmental crisis’ and are all participating in the general problematics of the crisis. Although the danger of humanity’s impact on the planet have been current for many years before the late twentieth century, literary scholarship here began to respond to contemporary pressures and thereby enabled the widespread discourse about humans’ inflicted changes on the planet. As a result, the mid-eighties’ scholars commenced undertaking collaborative projects about this crisis, which enabled the literary theory of ecocriticism to be coined; the theory merely became more popular in the nineties and henceforth (ibid.). Therefore, these environmental concerns are no longer to be kept out of narrative and are merely becoming more present with time; environmental preoccupations are

now registering across a wide range of texts as well as discourses (Kerridge 4). This narrative is visible through ecology in advertisements, Disney remakes, tourism, children's books, nature programs as well as documentaries. Ecocriticism is thus a relatively new branch in literary theory though the environmental crisis has been present for multiple centuries. The starting point for the theory of ecocriticism is that there really exists a global environmental crisis; however, Kerridge believes the current global crisis to be different compared to the crisis that took place hundreds of years ago, "Never before has so much scientific argument been assembled to support the perception of a global ecosystem and its difference is profound: the contemporary movement [...] expresses a new perception of the relationship between human practices and the material world" (Kerridge 7). Thus, the environmental crisis has been present for hundreds of years, however, due to a more open and direct discourse regarding the environmental crisis, people have become more aware of the veracity and importance of the situation; this has resulted in the emergence of the ecological literary study that functions as a critical school. Ecocriticism has since its establishment been popular to apply on modern literature as well as older literature that can reveal a relationship between humanity and the environment. Ecocriticism is unique and thus stands out amongst contemporary cultural and literary theories due to its close relationship with ecology (Gerrard 5). Though ecocritics may not be equipped to participate in debates regarding ecology, nonetheless, they must transgress disciplinary boundaries and thus create their own 'ecological theory'. It is therefore essential for ecocritics to recognise the environmental problems and the threat they pose to the world as well as the possible solutions to the environmental problems (ibid.). Therefore, this theory section will contain a paragraph concerning 'the Anthropocene', which will allow for the project's ecocritical readings to recognise current environmental problems and thus enabling the optimal analysis of the chosen empiricism. But firstly, it is essential to define the critical theory.

2.2 Ecocriticism

What then is the theory of ecocriticism about? Glotfelty defines the concept as being "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. [...] Just as Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts; ecocriticism takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies" (Glotfelty xviii). The critical theory, thus, focuses on the relationship between nature and culture in texts. Gerrard presents a similar definition; he defines the concept as a theory that explores the ways and manners in which we imagine and portray the relationship between humans and the environment in all areas of cultural production (Gerrard i). Barry offers a similar definition and subsequently adds that ecocritics seek

to read, or even re-read, major literary works from an ecocentric perspective with a particular focus on the representation of the natural world (Barry 254). Nature display can thus accentuate the plot of a text by supplementing the characters' characteristics; similarly, by reading literary works from an ecocentric perspective, one can find a message of the relationship between culture and nature, and possibly an environmental message. All of these definitions are essential for the understanding of the critical theory; however, other scholars argue for the theory to be a more socially relevant theory. Kerridge has a similar definition to the scholars above, however, he argues for the theory to be closely linked to the environmental crisis, which the ecocritical reading of a text should be displaying, "Most of all, ecocriticism seeks to evaluate texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to the environmental crisis" (Kerridge 5). Therefore, he argues for the environmental crisis to be a vital key factor in the readings of literary works. Hutchings stresses one of the theory's fundamental premises, which is that literature both reflects and helps to shape human responses to the natural environment. Furthermore, Hutchings argues, "By studying the representation of the physical world in literary texts and in the social contexts of their production, ecocriticism attempts to account for attitudes and practices that have contributed to modern-day ecological problems" (Hutchings). Like Kerridge, Hutchings similarly argues that the environmental crisis is the key indicator for the motivation of the critical theory, "Ecocritical practice is generally motivated by a sense of political urgency associated with the desire to investigate and remedy current environmental problems such as threats associated with anthropogenic pollution, deforestation, species extinction, and climate change" (ibid.). Thereby, Kerridge and Hutchings believe there should be dominating traces of the current environmental problems in the ecocritical readings of the texts, and the texts should thus reflect current environmental problems in society and, thus, the social contexts of their production. All the presented definitions are valid; however, the project will particularly focus on Kerridge's and Hutchings' definitions of the ecocritical theory, where the environmental crisis plays a significant role in the ecocritical readings of literary works. Thus, due to Kerridge's and Hutchings' definitions, it is essential to further establish nature perception today, as both of the chosen films for this project stem from the 21st century; this will further allow the project to analyse the films in accordance with the environmental crisis and the current geological era, which are the films' social contexts of production. Thus, the current nature perception will be elaborated and outlined in the subsequent section, 'the Anthropocene'.

Nevertheless, despite the broad scope of definitions, all ecological criticism shares the same fundamental premise that humanity and culture are connected to the environment, both affecting it and affected by it (Glotfelty xix). Ecocriticism perceives nature as an entity that really exists out in the world, affecting humans and correspondingly is affected by humans, possibly with fatal consequences if humans mistreat it (Barry 243). Thus, by focusing on the relationship between the physical environment and the varieties of texts, an ecocritic asks questions such the following, ‘how is nature represented in this text?’, ‘which role does the physical setting play in the plot?’, ‘In which way has literacy itself affected humankind’s relationship to the natural world?’, ‘How has the concept of wilderness changed over the course of time?’, ‘In which way and to what effect is the environmental crisis seeping into contemporary popular culture and literature?’ (Glotfelty xix). All of these ecocritical questions will be of relevance during the analyses and discussion of the two films. Furthermore, it is generally agreed that literature that represents modern environmentalism begins with, what Gerrard calls, ‘A Fable for Tomorrow’. Thus, by concentrating on images of natural beauty by stressing the harmonious relationship that ‘once’ existed between humanity and nature, the fable first presents its audience with a picture of essential changelessness, which human inflicted changes then disturb. In the ensuing paragraphs of the plot, every element of this rural idyll is then torn apart by some agent of change; this mystery is often emphasised by the use of supernatural terminology such as a spell. This passage of change and destruction often concerns the collapse in bird populations. The disruption of rural harmony often brings the warning of an environmental apocalypse (Gerrard 1-2). These factors are thus essential to notice when during an ecocritical examination of literary works, because they carry environmental themes and warnings.

Additionally, when studying the theory of ecocriticism in literary texts and films, one must be aware of the presence of different areas of nature. There is a nature/culture distinction, which ecocritics are inclined to recognise when studying literary works; however, in modern works, this distinction is not always clear like black and white as nature and culture seem to overlap one another. Barry has argued for there to be four different areas of environment, where the areas gradually move from nature to culture along the following areas (Barry 246).

Area one: ‘the wilderness’ (e.g. deserts, uninhabited areas)

Area two: ‘the scenic sublime’ (e.g. forests, lakes, waterfalls)

Area three: ‘the countryside’ (e.g. hills, fields, woods)

Area four: ‘the domestic picturesque’ (e.g. parks, gardens)

As one would mentally look through these four areas, it becomes certain that the areas move from what can be called ‘pure’ nature in the first two areas into what is predominantly ‘culture’ in the fourth. Areas two and three contain large elements of both culture and nature, and it can thus be difficult to establish when nature is represented in favour of culture (ibid.). Furthermore, though ‘the wilderness’ positions itself as ‘pure’ nature, it cannot avoid being affected by culture due to global warming, which is cultural. Similarly, area four depends on sunlight to enable the growth of plants, which is a natural force. Therefore, the areas overlap one another. However, it has been argued whether or not modern environmentalism actually presents area one; the actual wilderness seems to fade away in the modern world due to humanity’s dominance, which can correspondingly be seen in the arts. ‘Wilderness’ has thereby lost a sense of its original meaning as culture now dominates more than ever before. Gerrard describes the most potent construction of wilderness in modern environmentalism as the following, “The idea of wilderness, signifying nature in a state uncontaminated by civilisation [...] and is seen as a place for reinvigoration of those tired of the moral and material pollution of the city” (Gerrard 66). Thus, Gerrard describes ‘the idea’ of wilderness’ original meaning, however, the reality of such a state of nature in modern society is highly questionable. Additionally, Kerridge argues for the wilderness to may have existed at some point in history, however, he argues for the wilderness to simply be a mere desire for the planet to contain in the 21st century, “Since I’ve been reading environmental history, I’ll take it as a given that ‘wilderness’ is nearly as much a cultural expression of desire as Eden” (Kerridge 21). Thus, both scholars express great concern with the still present concept of ‘the wilderness’ as this concept rarely contains raw and pure ‘wilderness’ in favour of, what Gerrard describes as, modern environmentalism’s place for a reinvigoration of those tired of the material pollution of the city. This is relevant to keep in mind when studying ecocriticism in modern literary works.

2.3 The Anthropocene

As mentioned, it is furthermore essential for the project to establish the current perception of nature in modern society as it will allow for the project to analyse the films, *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012) and *Maleficent* (2014), in the social contexts of their production. With the emergence of a more open discourse about the environmental crisis, it has become certain that humans alter nature and are guilty of most of these environmental changes that have resulted in the environmental crisis to be a threatening reality. This has subsequently allowed for the emergence of a new geological era called the Anthropocene. Although we still officially live in the Holocene, this new geological term

was coined a few decades ago due to the open discourse about the crisis. What then does the Anthropocene entail when discussing a current nature perception? ‘The Anthropocene’ is a term for a new geological epoch, which has been argued that the planet entered during the Industrial Revolution, which began in England in the 18th century (Clark 2). Although it has also been argued that humans affected and altered the planet long before through agriculture; the 18th century offered new excessive changes, as humanity began to dominate at a higher rate than ever seen before (Haraway 159). ‘The Anthropocene’ stresses that humanity is now dominating the geological, chemical and biological processes on Earth. Nonetheless, most scientists agree that the force of the term particularly applies to what is called ‘The Great Acceleration’, which took place in the 20th century around World War 2. Here, new technologies, fossil fuels and a fast-growing population resulted in the Great Acceleration (Crutzen). This Acceleration meant that humans now began to have a dangerously and intensifying impact on the entire biosphere, which had increased and continued to increase henceforth. Humans’ exertion of warfare, politics, capitalism, technologies and social improvements are all contributing forces that result in humans becoming the dominant force for change on the planet and, thus, the environment. The excessive exploitation has thus become a matter of greed instead of a matter of need (ibid.). The world population will reach 11 billion by the end of the 21st century, however, if the birth rate rises and the population increases more than 11 billion, extinction is a reality (Haraway 161). The world population would then have increased to more than twice of the amount compared to the 5 billion people, which the world population reached at the end of the 20th century. For that reason, Haraway suggests that people should make kin in favour of babies; here meaning that one can create a kinship without it necessarily has to be a blood relation; one can thus make kin without being relatives and thus make the most of the people that are already placed on the planet. ‘Relatives’ in British English originally meant ‘local relations’ and then became ‘family members’ in the 17th century. Thus, Haraway yearns for the world’s population to keep this in mind so that the Anthropocene will not be the end of the world (Haraway 161-162). Scientists state that humans already now will affect the planet of the year 3000, and possibly also year 50.000 (Crutzen). Therefore, it is no wonder that this geological era stands for, ‘the Age of Humans’; this geological era is rapidly presenting threatening signs of humanity’s destruction of nature, which is happening amongst us at this very second.

During the historical period of the renaissance, humanism encouraged the idea that the human was the center of its own universe. What was then known as a positive term for the evolution of humanism has since taken a rapid and negative acceleration, and this geological era of

the Age of Humans has led humanity into hubris and extinction within reach. Humanity's cultural, biological, scientific and technological evolutions have taken us into a dangerous path that, amongst others, transforms cultural and biological diversity into homogeneity, and transgresses Earth-system boundaries (Albrecht). Some environmental critics emphasise the importance of being ideologically involved in the strive for a post anthropocentric era. Critics firmly believe the only solution to exiting the environmental crisis is to exit the age of the Anthropocene; thus, a post anthropocentric era. Several critics have proposed multiple names for this post anthropocentric era; Haraway suggests the 'Cthulhucene' whilst Albrecht calls it the 'Symbiocene'. Regardless of the specific name, the post anthropocentric era entails the hope of an upcoming era, where humans live sustainably in harmony with other species and ecosystems, "In what I hope will be a relatively short period of time, there will come a point in human social development where almost every element of culture, agriculture, economy, habitat and technology will be seamlessly re-integrated back into earthly symbiotic life" (Albrecht). However, to exit the Anthropocene requires a different mindset, which is challenging, but critics argue for the exiting of the Age of Humans to be the solution for preventing the destruction of the planet. Like Haraway suggests humans to make kin in favour of children as a solution to the rapidly increasing world population, the environmental crisis requests that humans alter their behaviour and mindsets in order to enter a new geological era, where humans are not the center of its own universe.

The term, 'Anthropocene', has promptly been adopted by the humanities and is visible through a wide range of texts and discourses. It can be seen as a continuous expansion of global capitalism with its increasing destructive side-effects of deforestation and pollution, which inevitably reaches a threshold of self-destruction (Clark 2). However, it has further been argued that the Anthropocene, despite its extreme danger, could also contribute to represent the hope of a new form of humanism; one that is tied to the realisation and self-recognition of humanity being stewards of the planet (ibid. 5). Thus, Clark writes that the Anthropocene in that way can mark the beginning of a geological epoch ripe with opportunities for humans to be better stewards in their beings, "The aim, nevertheless, is that politics, culture, and art should now aid a sort of species - consciousness, so that the worst effects of the environmental degradation can be countered by the redemptive force of an increased and shared self-recognition" (ibid. 17). Thus, Clark believes that by accentuating the presence and cruel reality of the Anthropocene, through e.g. literature, art and film, it will increase the seriousness as well as the self-recognition of humans responsibility as stewards of the Earth, "Yet the Anthropocene entails effects that tough on the viability of

ecocriticism itself as a possible force of significance change” (Clark 198). Like Albrecht and Haraway, Clark believes ecocriticism should alert the need for more direct kinds of activism; an activism that will inevitably lead the planet out of the Anthropocene. Thus, this creates the hope of the minatory dangers of the Anthropocene, which is portrayed through both films and literature, will be sufficient to induce such a shift in humanity’s behaviour. According to Clark, the humanities can thus contribute to the awareness about the dangers of continuing to live in the Anthropocene, and thus enabling to induce the shift that will inevitably lead to us out of this geological era. Thus, during the analyses of the two films, the environmental crisis and the Anthropocene will be of great importance and will be kept in mind during the ecocritical readings. This will thereby enable the discovery of current environmental threats as well as environmental messages conveyed in the plotlines.

3.0 Methodology

In order to make a thorough ecocritical analysis of the films, the project will employ Film Analysis from Yale Film Studies as the chosen method for the analysis. This method will enable a thorough environmental reading of the visual features of the films, which will enable the project to see how the different environments function as projections as well as supplements of several of the characters in the plots. The analysis will particularly employ cinematography and sound within the method of Film Analysis as these film techniques are predominately relevant in the two remakes; these are especially relevant within the genres of both fairy tale and fantasy. Thus, with the aid of Film Analysis and the theory section, the project will be able to analyse the films’ plot and examine the representation of nature in the two films; furthermore, this method will enable the project to perceive the relationship between the human characters and nature. Moreover, the project will utilise cinematography and sound in order to examine the films’ environmental themes and messages.

Along with the method of Film Analysis, this project will also employ the perception of deep ecology; this is one of the most influential forms of environmentalism beyond academic circles as it inspires many activists. Deep ecology seeks to position itself away from ‘shallow’ approaches to nature that is arguing for preservation of natural resources only for the sake of humans; instead, deep ecology demands for a recognition of what they call ‘intrinsic value’ in nature (Gerrard 23-24). Founder of the concept, Arne Næss, emphasises the most indicative principle of deep ecology as being, “The wellbeing and flourishing of human and non-human life

on Earth have value in themselves [...] independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes” (Næss 86). Næss considers deep ecology to be a movement, which is encouraging people to thoroughly question the presuppositions underlying the dominant economic approach of Western society in terms of values and priorities (ibid. 84). This form of environmentalism identifies humans and nature as two separate units and perceives Western philosophy and culture as the source of the environmental crisis. They similarly argue for a reduction in the long-term world population and would certainly agree with Haraway’s notions in this regard. They argue for a shift; the shift from a human-centred to a nature-centred system of values, which is the very core of the radicalism that is attributed to deep ecology (Glotfelty 77). The dogma that culture will always master and dominate nature has long directed Western progresses, inspiring multiple wars, invasions, as well as other conquests that have crowded the Earth (ibid.). Furthermore, deep ecology believes humans to have an obligation to implement radical changes to human ideologies and economics, thus, de-emphasising consumerist forces and ideals to enable a reduction of our excessive interference with the non-human world (Næss 84). Therefore, deep ecology does not merely focus on the environmental crisis as being damaging for the human health, instead they focus on life as a whole, including the life conditions of species and the entire ecosystem. They focus on long time solutions of pollution, resources, increasing world population and similar environmental problems. The project will carry this position implicitly and explicitly in its bearings when doing the ecocritical readings of the films; furthermore, this perspective will be of further relevance in the project’s discussion.

4.0 Analysis

The ecocritical theory and chosen methodology will be employed on the two fantasy films, *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012) directed by Rupert Sanders, and *Maleficent* (2014) directed by Robert Stromberg. Both of these films have been made based on well-known fairy tales. These folktales about Snow White and Sleeping Beauty have existed for several centuries, and the 21st century has produced new live action remakes of the stories with new renderings and modern plotlines. These two films are thereby based on already established stories, and the project will therefore draw from this existing intertextuality in the new films. The most famous and well-known productions of these folktales have been conveyed and produced by Disney; thus, the project will use intertextuality through the Disney films, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959). The project finds Disney remakes extremely relevant in the context of ecocriticism,

because these new films can represent a modern spin on the stories including modern environmentalism. Therefore, it is interesting to see if and how nature's role has changed into playing a more significant role in these modern plots due to an anthropocentric time with a threatening environmental crisis, which could ultimately convey important themes and messages about modern society. Furthermore, the intertextuality will allow the project to see alterations to the characters, nature display, the relationship between the human characters and the environment as well as the general plotlines.

The analysis will be divided into three sections, where it will firstly analyse and thus make an ecocritical reading of *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012). The analysis will particularly be focusing on the characters of Snow White and Ravenna as well as how they function with the non-human world. The second part will analyse and make an ecocritical reading of *Maleficent* (2014), where there will be a specific focus on the character of Maleficent as she is the main character of the film and not just the villain, who curses princess Aurora. The third section of the analysis will subsequently sum up central ecocritical themes of the two films as well as relevant ecocritical alterations to the Disney's plots. The two films will additionally be compared in regard to their relevant alterations and ecocritical messages.

5.0 Analysis of *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012)

Before the analysis can begin, it is relevant to firstly present a short summary of the film, which will create an understanding of the plot of *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012), which will then enable a fuller understanding of the analysis.

King Magnus and his queen have a beautiful daughter with fair skin and black hair, named Snow White. Snow White is raised in the castle with her friend William, and she grows up to be a kind and caring young woman. When the queen dies while Snow White is still but a girl, the king grieves her death. Shortly after, he must fight against a dark army that has invaded his land; here he rescues a beautiful woman, Ravenna, and decides to marry her the next day. On their wedding night, Ravenna stabs the king and turns out to be the leader of the dark army; she then destroys the king's army and imprisons Snow White in the Northern Tower of the castle. William and his father, the Duke, escape from the castle unable to rescue Snow White, who they believe is later killed by the Evil Queen. Years pass whilst Ravenna is on the throne, the kingdom is depleted, and the once lush nature is now barren and hostile due to the Queen's merciless manner of ruling. Ravenna keeps her youth and beauty by draining the youth of young ladies, who are subsequently

left as old women. When the golden mirror informs her that Snow White will be the source of her immortality, the Queen asks her brother, Finn, to bring the princess to her. However, Snow White manages to escape and flees to the Dark Forest. Ravenna promises a huntsman, who misses his deceased wife, that she can restore the life of his wife and bring her back to life on the premise that he catches Snow White and brings her to Ravenna. Discovering that that the Queen has lied to him, the huntsman instead decides to protect Snow White on her quest to find the Duke's castle and defeat Ravenna. Meanwhile, William learns that Snow White is alive, and he decides to join the Evil Queen's men to find Snow White in order to protect her from Ravenna's men. On their journey, Snow White and the huntsman meet eight dwarves that lead them to the beautiful and magical forest, Sanctuary. The Queen's men later find Snow White and the huntsman in Sanctuary, where William is successful in protecting Snow White and joining her, the huntsman and the dwarves on their journey to the Duke's castle, where they will be able to rise against the Evil Queen. On their journey, love begins to blossom between Snow White and the huntsman, as well as between Snow White and William. Ravenna takes advantage of this relationship and pretends to be William, who is able to make Snow White take a bite of a poisonous apple which kills her. Snow White is taken to the Duke's castle, where she is awakened by the huntsman's kiss. The uprising can then begin, and Snow White gathers an army that attacks Ravenna's castle and defeats her. Subsequently, Snow White becomes queen and the land restores its lushness and beauty.

The project has now made a short summary of the plot; therefore, the analysis can begin.

5.1 A Fable for Tomorrow

The film opens with a crane shot that functions as an extreme long shot depicting the garden of the palace. The tranquil snow-covered garden ensures the audience of the season being winter. This is area four of Barry's four stages of the environment as this scene takes place in the domestic picturesque. A tilting of the crane shot reveals a palace covered in tranquil snow. Light and peaceful tones function as non-diegetic sound, which supplements the tranquil landscape and setting. A woman in a white cape walks quietly through the snow, while a voice over commences to narrate, "Once upon a time, in deep winter, a queen was admiring the falling snow when she saw a rose defiance of the cold. Reaching for it she pricked her finger and three drops fell. And because the red seemed so alive against the white, she thought, "If only I had a child as white as snow, lips as red as blood, hair as black as a raven's wings, and all with the strength of that rose"" (00:01:01-00:01:38). As the voice over narrates the scene, the rose is in shallow focus with an extreme close-up. The red

colour of the rose appears as a contrast to the snow-covered landscape, which has whitened everything. The shallow focus with extreme close-up pans to give the optimal view of the red rose. The choice of focus enables the viewer to see the blurred queen gazing at the red rose (00:01:11). The three drops of blood are similarly in shallow focus and an extreme close-up portrays them as they fall into the white snow (00:01:19-00:01:24). Though the rose and human blood are two separate things, they become a similar contrast to the white snow in this scene. They both share the deep red colour, which insinuates that humans and nature are connected. It is similarly interesting to notice that the queen wishes for her daughter's strength to be that of the rose instead of her daughter resembling the rose's beauty. A rose is often thought of as being the most beautiful of flowers, however, red roses additionally symbolise true love. Thus, the queen does not wish for her daughter to be as strong as iron nor stone; nevertheless, she wishes for her daughter to become as strong as a rose that can withstand the cold winter. Already here, a connection between the characters and the physical environment is established.

Non-diegetic peaceful music functions as a sound bridge to present the subsequent scene of Snow White. A low angle following shot portrays Snow White as a child walking through the cornfields in the village followed by her friend, William. A close-up portrays her holding a bird in her hands. The subsequent long shots portray a cornfield where farmers are working the rural agriculture. A similar bird to the one Snow White holds in her hands is flying towards a tree near the entrance to the green forest at the edge of the cornfield. The environment is rural and idyllic, which is visible through the several crane shots of the area. As the characters and the idealised agriculture are portrayed, light and upbeat non-diegetic music creates an idyllic sentiment (00:01:46-00:02:11). Thus, the film portrays the agriculture of the kingdom to be rural idyll. To portray Snow White and William reaching the garden of the castle, the camera is tilting to reveal a glorious apple tree standing in the middle of the area. The tree is filled with white flowers and apples, and it takes up a lot of space in the entrance to the castle (00:02:17). Diegetic sound reveals birdsong as the birds fly amongst the magnificent tree. The apple tree symbolises life, and it is no coincidence that the tree is in focus in this scene.

In the subsequent scene, the viewers are informed of the reason for Snow White to be caring the bird in her hands; it is injured and has broken its wing. Snow White says that she will tend to it until it is once again in good health (00:02:32-00:03:42). While the non-diegetic music turns gentle and peaceful, the mother looks at her daughter, "You possess a rare beauty, my love." The camera is tilting slightly, and the mother points at Snow White's heart and adds "in here. Never

lose it. It will serve you well when you become queen” (00:02:43-00:02:53). Here, it is essential to notice that the queen does not comment on Snow White’s obvious exterior beauty, but she instead chooses to point out the importance of her inner beauty. Thus, vanity is not a value to Snow White. She cares for her fellow creatures, which is portrayed through her caretaking of other species; furthermore, this portrays a strong and spiritual mindset. Snow White is thereby immediately displayed as a caring character. A film critic has commented on this characteristic, “Snow White is a young girl born to a king and queen who possess an ethereal, almost otherworldly connection to the mystical world of nature (birds and other creatures love her)” (Taylor). Taylor points out that no human has such a deep connection to nature and thus it seems ‘otherworldly’, however, that is exactly the point of her character. Snow White, being the heroine of this plot, must have a deep connection with nature as it carries an environmental message in times of the environmental crisis. Taylor adds to his meaning of the words, ‘ethereal’ and ‘otherworldly’ by saying ‘(birds and other species love her)’; thus, he finds it strange that she is admired by other species. The fact that it is ‘otherworldly’ for a human being to have, what deep ecologists would call, intrinsic values in nature, is something to reflect on in an anthropocentric era with an environmental crisis.

The following scene portrays a close-up of a branch of the aforementioned apple tree in the garden; red apples are in shallow focus on the branch (00:02:54). The non-diegetic music is light and joyful as the idyllic nature is portrayed, and Snow White and her friend, William, are playing in the tree. The apple is placed subconsciously in the audience’s minds in an early stage of the film; thus, due to the intertextuality, the audience is reminded of the importance of the apple in this tale. Moreover, birdsong functions as loud diegetic sound, and a subsequent shot reveals the above flying birds (00:02:55-00:02:57). Birdsong is dominant in this scene, which emphasises the positive condition of nature, which is often accentuated by the bird population. Already in the first three minutes of the film, there are loads of idyllic and lush nature displays. Here, it is possible to see, what Gerrard calls ‘A Fable for Tomorrow’, which is seen in these opening scenes, as everything is idyllic and peaceful in the kingdom. The film displays images of natural beauty by stressing the harmonious relationship between humanity and nature, where birdsong is constantly present outside to stress a picture of harmony and essential changelessness. Snow White and the well-functioning nature around the kingdom stress a positive relationship between the fictional characters and the environment; Snow White and William similarly portray the innocence of childhood. Furthermore, Snow White possesses intrinsic values, which are already portrayed as she

pays attention to other species. Nevertheless, this changelessness is disturbed by other humans, which will be seen in the subsequent scenes after Snow White's mother has died.

5.2 The Anthropocentric Temptation of Destruction

Snow White's father, the king, is riding through the forest with his army, as he must face a dark army that threatens his kingdom (00:03:45-00:03:51). While the king and his army ride through the green forest to reach the mysterious dark army, a following long shot reveals that the closer they come to reaching the dark army, the darker and more wrecked the forest appears. The non-diegetic music creates a serious and dark sentiment; the sound thus informs the viewers of the danger, which the dark army poses to the land. This mysterious army has destroyed parts of the forest, which is seen through long shots of the king's army, who pass the burning trees on their way to face the dark army. As the king's men have reached the minatory army, an extreme long shot via crane shot portrays the landscape; a large part of the forest has been burned to the ground and is completely darkened. Thus, both armies are standing on the ashes of the burned forest (00:03:52). The shot enables the viewer to see the contrasting colours of the dark ashes compared to the green forest in the background. The non-diegetic music intensifies as this specific shot reveals the destruction, here deforestation, which the warfare has caused. Smoke appears from different areas of the ashes, which ensures the audience of the destruction of the forest. Thus, it becomes certain that this army is dangerous as it destroys nature, which is a contrasting feature to Snow White's father, who simply rode through the forest without destroying it. Therefore, the green forest is associated with the king's army, whereas the burned and darkened forest is associated with the dark army. Furthermore, this specific long shot reveals the dangers of warfare, which the environment also suffers from (ibid.). As mentioned in the theory section, warfare is merely one of the contributors to the veracity of the environmental crisis. Moreover, it is interesting that the dark army's danger is portrayed through their negative relationship to nature; therefore, the plot reveals that those who treat nature unkindly are the villains.

Having been 'rescued' by the king and subsequently married him, Ravenna begins to unfold her true darkness during her wedding night with the king, "I was ruined by a king like you once. I replaced his queen, an old woman. And, in time, I too would have been replaced. Men use women. They ruin us and when they are finished with us, they toss us to the dogs like scraps. When a woman stays young and beautiful forever, the world is hers" (00:07:31-00:08:17). The non-diegetic music creates a sad and serious sentiment as the viewer perceives Ravenna's cold facial expression in a close-up whilst talking to the king. This clarifies that Ravenna has suffered in the

past. In Elizabeth Parker's work, *The Forest and the EcoGothic*, Parker observes the carefully chosen words of Ravenna, "Her words could equally be read as denouncement of humanity's treatment of the natural world and the Western tendency to 'feminise' Nature as merely an 'object' to be similarly 'used' and 'ruined'" (Parker 122). Ravenna has been hurt by other humans who have taken advantage of her beauty, just like nature has been exploited by humans. According to Parker, Ravenna can be seen as a reflection of what humans have done to nature; carelessly exploiting nature for humanity's own selfish purposes. Thus, Parker perceives her as a reflection of nature turning on humanity; she takes revenge by making nature turn on humanity and making the people of her land suffer. However, she can alternatively be seen as a reflection of the materialistic and vain values which the Western society tends to give in to, as it is affected by industrialisation and capitalism. Thus, the film portrays Ravenna as vain, selfish, materialistic and greedy, and her evilness is particularly portrayed through her damaging effect on the non-human world, which will be emphasised several times through the analysis. Thus, Ravenna can be seen as a representation of a selfish and exploitive human in the age of the Anthropocene; she is exploiting the people and nature around her due to her vain and materialistic norms, which the film characterises as 'evil'. Thus, Ravenna is treating other people and the environment just like she was once treated herself. She is thereby reflecting a vain and selfish human who, similar to the Western culture, constantly seeks to improve her conditions and gain more power regardless of the exploitation and destruction of nature. As mentioned in the theory section, the dogma that culture will always dominate nature has long directed industrialised and Western progress, inspiring multiple wars, invasions, as well as other conquests that have crowded the Earth. The very worst sides to humanity in an industrialised, capitalistic, and anthropocentric world are thus reflected in Ravenna's mindset and behaviour. As mentioned, this will be seen several times throughout the analysis. The Evil Queen's hurtful sentence is followed by killing the king by stabbing him with a knife in the heart; Ravenna thus reveals her true self by subsequently taking over the kingdom with Snow White as her prisoner (00:10:48-00:11:02).

The Evil Queen has gained power in the kingdom and therefore welcomes her dark army and brother inside to help her destroy the king's army. However, the most important thing she welcomes in her new castle is a golden mirror, "Mirror, Mirror, on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?" (00:11:54-00:12:13). A question, which the Queen nervously and anxiously asks while walking back and forth in the room staring uneasily at the golden mirror; thus, the audience can see the great importance of the answer to this question. Due to the knowledge of *Snow White and the*

Seven Dwarves (1937), one would already know this question is essential to the Evil Queen as she needs to be the fairest of them all. This is a vital correspondence between Disney's version and the modern remake. In this scene, the Queen's aforementioned vanity is stressed. The non-diegetic music is gloomy, which stresses a serious and supernatural sentiment. The music increases as the golden surface becomes fluent on the floor to create an anthropomorphic golden person (00:12:15-00:12:57). Furthermore, it is important to notice that unlike Disney's version of Snow White, the golden mirror is not an actual mirror, however, it is a golden plate which allows for a faint reflection when gazing into it. This is an interesting distinction; the colour of gold represents perfectionism as well as materialism. Thus, Ravenna strives for the acknowledgment of the mirror as it can affirm her perfection. Furthermore, this fortifies Ravenna's perception of what true beauty is, a mere superficial exterior. With a male voice, the mirror then answers the Queen, "It is you, my queen. Yet another kingdom falls to your glory. Is there no end to your power and beauty?" (ibid.) As the mirror is speaking, a shot reveals a close-up of the Queen with tears in her eyes, while carefully listening to the mirror. Both the serious non-diegetic music and the close-up of the Ravenna's facial expression stress the importance of the mirror acknowledging her overshadowing beauty, which stresses an intensely vain norm. Once again, it is possible to see reflections of the negative qualities to the dominant approach of the Western society in terms of values and priorities. Ravenna constantly seeks for ways to increase her beauty, and her greedy quest of constantly wanting to increase her abilities and thus obtain her goals are reflections of capitalism. Ravenna's darkness and selfishness merely unfold the further the plot continues. Ravenna shows no mercy when seeing the remnants from her seizure of power in the kingdom. This is seen when serious non-diegetic music plays as the Queen perceives the remaining remnants, and she demands them to be executed, "To the sword!" (00:13:13-00:13:31). She subsequently orders Snow White to be locked away; not because she shows her mercy nor kindness, however, "One never knows when royal blood may be of value" (ibid.).

Ravenna has now gained full control of the kingdom. Thus, Gerrard's 'A Fable for Tomorrow' continues in the ensuing paragraphs of the plot as every element of this previous rural bliss is torn apart by some agent of change, here being the minatory alterations caused by Ravenna. This disruption of rural harmony often brings the warning of an environmental apocalypse, which the film portrays in a low angle close-up shot by the trunk of the idyllic apple tree. Here, an apple lies on the ground surrounded by flowers, which instantly become rotten. The minatory nature display, which is caused by Ravenna's altering of the land, is stressed by the narrator, who

functions as a voice over as the idyllic display is decaying, “So poisonous was the reign of Ravenna that nature turned on itself and people turned on each other. The land died and with it, hope.” (00:13:45-00:13:55). The once rural and idyllic nature in the kingdom is now black, rotten and barren. This is an essential ecocritical observation as her altering and reign entail the destruction of nature. Her greed and vanity are thus killing the environment around her; this can be seen as an anthropocentric reality. This disruption of the rural bliss thus brings a warning of an environmental apocalypse. A subsequent crane shot portrays the previous green kingdom now dark and gloomy while sad non-diegetic music is applied to create a depressing sentiment (00:13:56-00:14:03). As mentioned, Ravenna represents several anthropocentric features from both the Western lifestyle and capitalism, whose priorities and values are at fault; Ravenna is an example of the frightening consequences of humans altering nature in the age of the Anthropocene. The environmental apocalypse in this plot is thus represented through a human altering nature for its own selfish purpose; alterations resulting in nature to ‘die’ and ‘turn on itself’. The apocalypse is, thereby, a result of a careless human; thus, this fantasy plot conveys a genuine reality in the Anthropocene.

In a flashforward to several years later, Ravenna is seen eating the hearts of three birds with a metallic claw attached to her finger (00:16:32-00:16:42). Once again, Ravenna does not care for other species nor the lives of others. It is no coincidence that she is portrayed eating the hearts of birds as this scene can then be compared to one of the opening scenes, where Snow White carried an injured bird to nurse it back to health. This is a noticeable difference between the two characters as it portrays Snow White’s kindness and inner beauty compared to Ravenna’s vanity and selfish exploitation. In a subsequent scene, Ravenna is seen gazing dissatisfied into the golden surface of the mirror; the Queen tears up in an extreme close-up with shallow focus. An over-the-shoulder shot enables the viewers to see her dissatisfaction with her golden reflection; she looks at her skin, which is seeming less tight and youthful than normally. The Evil Queen is dressed in a gown with her crown and several pieces of jewellery that accentuate her vanity and power. She maintains her youth through many years by sucking the youth out of young and beautiful women; a sacrifice which does not bother her. This wickedness is portrayed as she sucks the youth out of a young woman, and after draining the woman from her youth, Ravenna once more asks the mirror the famous question. An over the shoulder shot with shallow focus on Ravenna reveals her eager facial expression, which intensifies as the mirror answers, “My queen, on this day, one has become of age fairer even than you. She is the reason your powers wane [...] Snow White. [...] Take her heart in your hand and you shall never again need to consume youth. You shall never again weaken

or age” (00:22:13-00:23:01). Thus, the Queen can gain immortality by killing Snow White; a killing, which does not bother the Queen the least. Ravenna’s wicked powers of ruining lives and nature stress the selfishness of her character; she is the center of her own universe and thus a minatory example of a greedy and selfish human in the age of the Anthropocene. She represents the worst human qualities in an industrialised and capitalistic world.

5.3 The Dark Forest

Snow White, now being a young woman, sits in the Northern Tower as a captive of the Evil Queen. Once again, birds play an interesting role in the plot; from her window, she sees a bird similar to the one she nursed back to health when she was a child (00:23:29-00:23:39). The bird sits near a rusty nail on the side of the little window in her cell, which enables Snow White to see and grab the nail. The bird symbolises the freedom Snow White once had and can obtain once more, for this nail enables Snow White to defend herself against the Queen’s brother, Finn, who is supposed to hand her over to the Evil Queen so she can gain immortality by killing Snow White (00:25:26-00:25:34). Thereby, the bird helps Snow White, which portrays the positive relationship the princess has to other species. Birds help her once more in the courtyard of the palace; Ravenna’s guards are chasing Snow White, but the birds guide her by flying to a sewer, which is her only way to escape (00:26:44-00:27:03). Rapid point of view shots enable the viewers to sense Snow White’s stressful situation. Moreover, non-diegetic music functions as a supplement to the rapid movement of the camera, which creates a stressful sentiment. The sewer leads her to the ocean, where she escapes. Subsequently, Snow White is lying in the ocean looking at the birds who are leading her once again. A handheld camera is portraying Snow White following the birds, which adds an authentic feeling to the scene. The birds lead Snow White to a white horse who is resting on the beach; the horse subsequently transports her through the kingdom. (00:28:07-00:28:22). A Crane shot portrays Snow White riding through the land in the kingdom; the once rural and idyllic land is now barren and dark. This shot stresses Ravenna’s brutal effect on the environment (00:28:41). Snow White and the white horse appear as a contrast to the dark land. This symbolises that Snow White is the light in the darkness; the hope of something better to come. As the narrator previously said, “the land died, and with it, hope”; Snow is depicted as the hope in the darkness. Nature needs a human with intrinsic values in order to save it from the environmental apocalypse. Yet another crane shot portrays the barren land; the panning of the camera portrays the now darkened land without any signs of green lushness, merely dark topsoil (00:29:14-00:29:17). The rural idyll has been destroyed by Ravenna’s exploitive powers, and she alters nature in the most negative manner possible. The

film portrays loads of idyllic nature imageries in the opening scenes to subsequently allow for the audience to see the horrific difference to the land after Ravenna has gained power; this scene stresses, 'A Fable for Tomorrow'. Ravenna is the minatory example of a human in the Anthropocene; an example of what will happen if humans continue to alter and exploit nature for their own selfish needs; thus, humanity must be stewards of nature in order to exit the geological epoch of the Anthropocene. The loud non-diegetic music is using high beats and creates a dangerous sentiment as Ravenna's army is chasing Snow White through the barren land. A panning of a crane shot portrays Snow White arriving at the Dark Forest. Unlike the environment in the kingdom, which is already barren and destroyed, the Dark Forest has a mist around it, which creates a dangerous and mystical appearance. The non-diegetic music becomes serious and intensifying when displaying the Dark Forest; the music thereby informs the audience about the danger of this forest (00:30:01). Thus, the film is displaying several shots of a minatory and suffering nature, which suffers due to the human villain's alterations and inflicted changes. Ravenna's selfishness is exactly the opposite of what Deep Ecology stands for. Deep ecologists argue for a shift from a human-centred to a nature-centred system of values.

The Dark Forest is frightening, dark and threatening in its appearance. The several shots are panning slowly to depict the wrecked forest (00:30:54-00:31:06). The music is absent, instead, offscreen sounds function as cracking branches and Snow White's heavy breathing, which create suspense. Until this point, the plot has mostly taken place in area four of Barry's stages, as most scenes have taken place in the kingdom; but this scene takes place in a different area. This environment appears uninhabited and is feared by all the characters in the kingdom; therefore, this area may appear to be area one, the wilderness; however, this forest has not always been hostile and wild. In the opening scenes, this forest appeared green and lush as a bird flew towards it. Therefore, though this forest appears as the wilderness, it is a result of Ravenna's wicked powers. It is, thus, 'destroyed'. Nature has become extremely hostile due to Ravenna's exploitive powers. Her vanity, greed, and envy have resulted in an exploitive relationship to both the human and non-human world. Her wickedness is thereby projected on the Dark Forest. This scene is an example of humanity affecting nature and, similarly, nature affecting humanity. A low angle shot portrays Snow White lying on the grounds of the forest, where she frightfully discovers dead birds by her hands; similar to those birds Ravenna ate the hearts of (00:31:26-00:32:29). Snow White's loud breathing accentuates her discomfort and anxiety as nature becomes alive through black bugs, dark shadows and black oil running from the trees. An extreme close-up portrays Snow's eyes widening

while gazing at the minatory nature in the forest. The scene uses panning of the camera, which enables the audience to see Snow White and the forest at the same time; a pan directly and immediately connects two places or characters, here the Dark Forest and Snow White. The speed at which a pan occurs can be exploited for different dramatic purposes; here, the pan is moving rapidly, which resembles the stressful feeling Snow White experiences. The Dark Forest represents modern environmentalism as it reflects a minatory nature. Parker agrees with the Dark Forest's importance to the authenticity of the environmental crisis, "It is our job to steer ecocriticism away from an uncritical idealisation of nature as the epitome of idealised nature is destructed" (Parker 66). She further argues for the Dark Forest to represent a twisted Eden; possibly an Eden with a modern environmentalist spin, as it appears as the diametrical contrast of what one would visualise when thinking of Eden. Thus, she argues, "The Dark Forest [...] is filled with serpentine imagery." (ibid.). If the forest could be perceived as a twisted Eden; Ravenna, being its creator, could equally be seen as a twisted human-god in the age of the Anthropocene, as humanity dominates and alters the geological and biological processes on Earth. Furthermore, it is essential to stress the Evil Queen's destruction of nature in this plot; this characteristic is absent in Disney's version. However, now the Queen has the ability to destroy nature, and she is not simply a vain person seeking to kill Snow White; she additionally destroys nature and possesses a real danger to the environment. This is a conscious choice as it carries an environmental message, which reflects the damaging impact humanity has on the non-human world. Therefore, the Evil Queen's wickedness is more potent than Disney's version, as this plot entails environmental themes. The open discourse about the environmental crisis was absent when Disney produced their version in 1937, however, the open discourse and the increased veracity of the crisis are perceptibly visible in the modern plotline. In a subsequent scene, Snow White faints in the forest due to her anxiety, which is portrayed through a crane shot. The crane shot makes it appear as if she is lying in a maze filled with barren trees. Her white skin functions as a contrast to the darkness of the forest (00:32:34). The forest was frightening in old folktales because it was wild and unknown; however, in this modern tale the forest is 'human-destructed' and is dangerous because of that very fact.

Equivalent to Disney's version, a huntsman is ordered to carve out Snow White's heart to hand to the Evil Queen. However, having been hired and conned by the Queen for the empty promise of resurrecting his deceased wife, the huntsman protects Snow White from Finn and his men. The huntsman is an essential companion on Snow White's journey to the Duke's castle, as she does not know the Dark Forest and is therefore in need of a person, who is familiar with its

strangeness; the Dark Forest is feared by the majority of the characters due to its unnaturalness and ‘human-destructed’ wickedness. In a subsequent scene, the huntsman, still being unaware of the identity of Snow White, has a dialogue with her in the forest portrayed through a following shot of the characters as they walk through the dark and barren forest (00:47:46-00:47:57). Here, Snow White wonders who the huntsman serves. The huntsman informs her that he serves no one but himself, and that all royalty is damned. Thereby, he also criticises the former king, Snow White’s father, “The King? He’s the one that led the devil in the door. It’s his fault the kingdom’s plunged into darkness. [...] The land is deceased. Nature is upturned. This, this is the legacy of your precious king” (00:48:07-00:48:43). The huntsman then points to the dark ground, where a dead deer is lying in a slough being devoured by butterflies; butterflies do not normally feed on animals nor are they thought of as being bugs, who devour corpses. Diegetic sound functions as the sound of the bugs devouring the dead animal while gloomy non-diegetic music creates a frightful feeling amongst the viewers. Thus, the plot stresses that nature is dysfunctional. A butterfly is often symbolising hope and life; however, the peaceful and idyllic butterfly now devours corpses. Thus, the butterfly’s positive connotations and symbolism are not connecting with what one would visualise when thinking of a butterfly and, therefore, it functions as an example of the hostility of the forest and nature being ‘upturned’.

In her kingdom, Ravenna is, once again, presenting herself as being wicked and careless. A beautiful flower has managed to grow on one of the barren branches in her kingdom, which is displayed through a close-up with a shallow focus on the flower (00:50:51-00:51:07). The Queen is then plucking the flower from the branch, while a close-up portrays her crushing the flower. The offscreen sound of the flower’s juices confirm the audience in the Queen’s merciless act. Subsequently, she opens her hand and the flower has turned into black ashes; similar to everything else in the kingdom. Once again, in Disney’s plotline of Snow White, the Evil Queen does not destroy nature; nevertheless, this is a central characteristic and an obvious alteration to this modern plot. Several depictions of nature portray her evil alterations to nature; her powers are extended so they suit the problematics of the environmental crisis. Additionally, the flower manages to grow in the barren landscape of Ravenna’s, which portrays hope, here being Snow White.

The huntsman and Snow White are almost at the end of the Dark Forest when they meet a troll on their way. The troll is depicted from a low angle, thus, making it appear very powerful and dangerous. The troll seems to be made of branches from the forest and, thus, appears as a living result of the wrecked nature; its hostility is similar to that of the forest. Though the

hunter tells Snow White to run for her safety, Snow White portrays her bravery by yelling at the creature in order to gain its attention to save the unconscious hunter (00:52:28-00:53:23).

However, instead of attacking each other, Snow White and the troll simply observe one another, where an eyeline match has been applied to portray their observations. Snow White and the troll seem to come to an understanding as the troll gently turns around and leaves them be. Once again, this portrays Snow White's good heart and inner beauty. She has a connection with nature, which this creature of nature senses.

Meanwhile, the Queen is portrayed in her castle through a close-up with shallow focus, which accentuates her aging during the short time that Snow White has been on the run. The non-diegetic sound of a violin creates a depressing sentiment (01:01:18). A flashback in faded colours portrays Ravenna's mother talking to a juvenile Ravenna. The village is at war as the mother whispers to Ravenna, "Your beauty is all that can save you, Ravenna. This spell will make your beauty, your power and protection" (01:01:25-01:01:52). Her mother's faded mouth is in an extreme close-up while whispering the vain words to Ravenna. Thus, it becomes certain that Ravenna's mother is the one, who encouraged her to begin this vain lifestyle. She was parted from her mother when she was a girl due to war, thus, she learned that materialism and vanity are priorities. She has grown up with an overshadowing norm in her life; exterior appearance and materialism are everything to Ravenna. She has adopted the lifestyle, where essential norms are a continuous conquering of land, maintaining her youth and beauty, and constantly finding manners that can enrich and improve her life. The flashback functions as a way to inform the audience of Ravenna's tragic upbringing, which resulted in her vain motivations. Unlike Disney's version, the Queen now has a history, which creates more depth to the character. However, her vanity overshadows all else and she is a rebel towards nature and the entire biosphere. Thus, as Parker emphasised, Ravenna resembles the Western tendencies through a constant need to improve her living conditions through materialism and greed. However, more importantly, Ravenna represents a frightening and even 'evil' human being in the age of the Anthropocene; she exploits and alters the non-human world due to her selfish and vain values. Ravenna's character reflects anthropocentrism in mindset and behaviour, which the film characterises as 'evil'. Thus, the Queen's new ability to destroy nature emphasises modern environmentalism and anthropocentrism; the Queen's wickedness is therefore projected on the suffering and destructed environment. As mentioned, the film thereby determines the villains and heroes of the plot based on their relationship to the non-human world. Furthermore, the barren environment in Ravenna's kingdom

can be seen as a reflection of her interior being; e.g. the Dark Forest is rightfully feared by the majority of the characters; therefore, it can be seen as a connotation and reflection of its creator, the Evil Queen.

5.4 Sanctuary

The two characters have now managed to find their way out of Ravenna's kingdom, which is seen through the changed nature; a crane shot depicts a well-functioning forest (01:02:11-01:02:15). The forest has green and lush trees which appear as a contrast to the environment in the Evil Queen's kingdom. Offscreen sound functions as a murmur from a river along with birdsong; birdsong is essential to notice in the offscreen sound as birdsong stresses a well-functioning nature. As mentioned, the presence of birdsong signifies a positive stage of nature. In Ravenna's kingdom, there is no birdsong, merely a couple of birds that were present for the sake of Snow White. As Snow White and the huntsman have been captured by the dwarfs, a medium close-up portrays a lush environment while birdsong continues as offscreen sound; this creates an idyllic scenery (01:03:15). Thus, the viewers can see the characters no longer being in the Evil Queen's land, which is wrecked and hostile. The long shots and lack of shallow focus stress this new stage of nature, which is the scenic sublime of the forest, thereby area two of Barry's stages (01:05:30). The film could have chosen close-ups of the conversations between the characters, however, it specifically wants the audience to perceive the lush forest; a forest that is entirely different from the Dark Forest. The dwarves are residing in the forest, where they are living harmoniously with it (01:06:13-01:06:21). This is both seen through the trap where they captured Snow White and the huntsman and, furthermore, in a cave where branches naturally grow around the entrance to a different area of the forest (01:06:49). Long shots of the characters walking in a bright cave reveal natural sunlight and birds flying amongst them in the cave; birdsong, once again, functions as diegetic sound. On the other side of the cave, beautiful and lush nature is met by the heroes (01:07:03-01:08:58). The characters have arrived in a beautiful forest called, Sanctuary. Several extreme long shots portray a lush and green nature touched by natural sunlight. Everything flourishes and is luxurious while harmonious non-diegetic music creates a calming sentiment. The scene continues to utilise long shots to display the luxurious and green area of nature, and the many nature displays from previous scenes in the Dark Forest enable the viewer to compare the wrecked environment to this well-functioning environment (*ibid.*). The further the characters move into the forest, the film portrays several close-ups of the idyllic nature; here, there is shallow focus on squeals climbing in a tree, living mushrooms with eyes, butterflies flying harmoniously around

flowers, a snake with the skin of grass, a grass-covered tortoise and fairies while subtle non-diegetic music creates an idyllic sentiment, as it only uses light tones. Sanctuary contains a rich animal life filled with natural creatures from nature as well as supernatural creatures. Sanctuary can be seen as an example of a mixture between area one and two of environments, as the forest appears untouched and unaltered. The butterflies here appear in their natural habitat around flowers unlike in the Dark Forest, where they appeared as an example of the environment being dysfunctional; the butterflies thereby accentuate the contrast between the two forests. Sanctuary has a continuous presence of offscreen birdsong to stress the idyllic scenery. However, through Sanctuary, the film portrays an unaltered nature; thus, it appears strange to include such an idealisation of nature. As Parker mentions, “It is our job to steer ecocriticism away from an uncritical idealisation of nature as the epitome of idealised nature is destructed (Parker 66). Thus, the film represents a nature that is the diametrical contrast to the minatory nature in the Dark Forest, which manages to create a frightening image of human inflicted changes on the environment. However, Parker further stresses the following about the presence of Sanctuary, “The ‘good’ forest, here, is termed ‘Sanctuary’: a name that underlies its formation as the ‘antidote’ to civilisation; [...]” (Parker 121). Parker makes an interesting observation which essentially explains the presence of such a luxuriant nature in the plotline. The name ‘Sanctuary’ is interesting for the lush and magical forest to be named; here, ‘sanctuary’ is perceived as unaltered nature, and a rich and lush nature is similarly seen as something holy and picturesque. The very name of this idyllic environment, thus, justifies the implementation of such an idealised nature. This is yet another essential ecocritical message of the plot. Furthermore, the presence of Sanctuary allows the audience to compare this lush and unaltered forest to the Dark Forest, which is ‘human-destructed’, as Ravenna has wrecked the once naturally lush forest. Moreover, one can now observe that the plot has stirred away from a cultured nature, through the gardens in the kingdom, to a purer nature through area one and two; Sanctuary is lush and the dwarves, who live in Sanctuary, have avoided to alter the environment and, therefore, manage to live harmoniously with nature. The dwarves, thus, possess intrinsic values in nature as they perceive it as ‘sanctuary’ in favour of something they can utilise and alter. Snow White is very impressed by the sights in the forest, which is shown through eyeline matches of her and the different nature displays (ibid.).

In the evening, the dwarves and Snow White are talking by the fire. The dwarves explain how they experienced Ravenna gaining power when they were working in the mines, “Gus, you were just a boy, but do you remember? When we returned to surface, there was nothing. The

land was blackened. Everything, everyone was gone. Was dead” (01:10:35-01:10:55). Snow White expresses her sorrow for their experience. The way he describes the situation sounds like an apocalypse has taken place with Ravenna’s power, thus, an environmental apocalypse, which is accentuated by ‘A Fable for Tomorrow’. The subsequent morning, Snow White awakens in Sanctuary in an extreme close-up, where the sun touches her face (01:13:44-01:13:57). The offscreen sound functions as bird noise; the birds are similar to those, who helped her escape the Evil Queen. A point of view shot enables the viewers to perceive what Snow White sees, which is a tree from a low angle where two birds fly amongst it, supplemented by diegetic birdsong (01:13:58-01:14:29). Two Fairies magically appear from inside of the birds and hint that Snow White must follow them; a shallow focus is used to maintain focus on the dialogue between the characters that merely functions through body language. Therefore, shallow focus enables the audience to focus on the characters. The film often portrays the shots from the animals’ point of view; often set in a tree through high angle or low angle if the animals are on the grounds. This adds different perspectives to the scene and enables the animal life in Sanctuary to carefully observe the strangeness of the new human in their land. Snow White continues to follow the fairies while being observed by the animals (01:14:47-01:15:51). The light non-diegetic music creates a calming and spiritual sentiment as Snow White is walking through the forest while the natural sunlight touches her face, thus accentuating her exterior beauty. Snow White is led to a magnificent tree, where a majestic white stag is standing in front of the tree in a long shot, awaiting Snow White’s arrival (01:15:51-01:16:51). The animals and magical creatures of the forest gather around the tree as Snow White approaches the stag. Different angles of framing are used to accentuate the many different and magnificent animals of the forest while the magical non-diegetic music continues (01:17:00-01:17:47). The white stag has antler made of birch branches. The stag appears as a spiritual ‘king’ of the forest, and as the king bows down to Snow White, it has a powerful message. The dwarves confirm this message as they observe the situation, “He is blessing her! [...] You have eyes huntsman, but you do not see. You have been with her the longest. She is life itself. She will heal the land. She is the one. Can’t you feel it? Aren’t your ailments gone? Gold or no gold, where she leads, I follow” (ibid.). Non-diegetic music increases as the stag bows to Snow White, which creates a magical and idyllic sentiment. A close-up with shallow focus is portrayed of Snow White as she is stroking the stag kindly; thus, she is being benign and respectful towards it as she is to every other fellow creature. When she was a child, the viewers could already see her innocence and intrinsic values in nature, however, as a grown woman it is a central awareness she carries; her

connection with nature has thus become even stronger. All the dwarves decide to follow Snow White wherever she goes due to her powerful connection with nature. This sends an ecocritical message of humanity being the one creating the mess and destruction of the planet, seen through Ravenna, and it is thus humanity who must be a steward of the planet, through Snow White, in order to exit the environmental crisis and the geological era of the Anthropocene. There is an eyeline match in a close-up from the huntsman to Snow White with shallow focus; this allows the audience to comprehend, what the huntsman sees as the dwarves explain Snow White's abilities. One can see that the huntsman is impressed by Snow White and her inner beauty. The idyllic scene is then destroyed as the Queen's men and William find Snow White. This is accentuated through the idyllic non-diegetic music, which changes into stressful and dark tones as an arrow is mercilessly fired at the majestic stag. The animals of the forest flee with the approaching of the Evil Queen's men while rapid shots reveal the panic amongst the animals and Snow White. The stag is dissolving into white butterflies, which is seen through tilting of the camera as the butterflies flee. Once again, the human villains destroy the idyllic area; this accentuates a reality in the Anthropocene.

5.5 The Happy Ending: Humans as Stewards of Nature

After having defeated the Queen's men in Sanctuary and reunited with William, a crane shot portrays Snow White holding the dead Dwarf, Gus, in her arms; the shot is tilting to reveal the forest from above. Here, the Dark Forest in the Evil Queen's kingdom can be seen in the great distant (01:23:18-01:23:34). Once again, this allows the viewer to compare the two different conditions of nature. Sanctuary is green and lush from above like a natural sublime forest; however, the Queen's land is completely darkened while black smoke is steaming from her land. This display portrays two different kinds of nature; a human altered nature and a nature that has been left in peace. This stresses the seriousness of how culture can impact the non-human world and why the planet must enter the post anthropocentric era, which merely happens if humans take upon themselves the roles as stewards of nature. Furthermore, the shot accentuates the great difference between Ravenna and Snow White, who can both be represented through the environment in the film; as Parker argues, "Snow White is thoroughly associated with the 'Sanctuary', whilst 'the Dark Forest' is created and animated by Ravenna" (Parker 121). Once again, the film projects the characters' role as villain or hero through their connection to the environment. Thus, the plot's utilisation of nature stresses an environmental message and, furthermore, supplements the two main characterisations. Ravenna has vain and capitalistic norms that reflect an excessive

anthropocentrism in her behaviour and mindset, which result in the destruction of nature; whereas Snow White portrays an example of a person, who has intrinsic values in nature and believes the wellbeing of human and non-human life on Earth have values in themselves. She perceives the non-human world as independent for the usefulness of human purposes. Thus, the film's perception of a villain is a selfish, vain, and greedy human character who has a destructive and exploitive relationship to nature; this is thereby reflecting anthropocentrism and its damaging consequences to the environment. Thus, the film emphasises that greed, vanity and selfishness will inevitably destroy the environment, as it is already doing through the environmental crisis. Furthermore, the film thereby portrays that humans have an obligation to implement radical changes to human ideologies and economics, thus, de-emphasising consumerist forces and ideals to enable a reduction of humans' excessive interference with the non-human world. Therefore, the salvation and hero of the plot is a human with these intrinsic values. Snow White has an undeniable connection with the natural world, which is stressed through several scenes in the film. She does not interfere with nature; however, she admires the non-human world and respects it as an independent entity.

In one of the evenings on the heroes' journey, William talks to the huntsman while observing Snow White sleeping by the fire, "She hasn't changed. She has that same light inside her" (01:27:49-01:28:12). Shifting shots between William and the sleeping Snow White create an eyeline match, thus, the viewers know William admires Snow White. Through close-ups of William and the huntsman, it becomes certain that they both feel romantically for her, as they both see her caring and spiritual mindset. The shallow focus allows full attention on the characters' dialogue (01:28:49-01:29:07). A long shot with panning of the camera display the location of the heroes; still a well-functioning forest, however, winter has come and thus everything is covered in white snow. The subsequent morning, long shots are portraying Snow White walking through the snow-covered area. The camera angles are shot like the ones in Sanctuary, meaning the long shots appear from inside of the branches of the trees as if the forest is watching her. As the Evil Queen, disguised as William, is joining her, their dialogue is displayed through a medium close-up enabling the audience to see the environment, which the characters discuss, "William, it's as if nothing has changed here. The world seems beautiful again" (01:29:09-39). In this scene, the characters' dialogue is never portrayed through shallow focus nor close-ups due to the nature depiction. However, as the characters reveal their feelings to one another, or as the Queen is tricking Snow White into believing it to be William's feelings, over the shoulder shots with shallow focus are used to maintain focus on their confessions of feelings as well as their shared kiss (01:30:22-01:31:04).

True to Disney's plot, Snow White eats a poisoned apple given to her by the Evil Queen, here disguised as William (01:31:02-01:33:28). When William and the huntsman come to her aid, Ravenna turns into ravens and disappears (01:33:30). Similar to Disney's version, Snow White 'dies' and can only be awakened by her true love's kiss. William tries to kiss her, which is seen in a shallow close-up; however, unlike the classic tale, Snow White is not awakened by his kiss. When returning to the castle, the Evil Queen turns back into herself. However, it is not without difficulty as her black gown and cape are filled a sticky black liquid, which resembles oil. This is seen through a close-up of her cape being smutched in the oil (01:36:06). The remaining ravens around her have the oil on their feathers and can hardly fly nor move as a result. Therefore, it appears to be Ravenna who has polluted the ravens and being of fault for their oil smutched wings. This resembles one of the vital contributors to the environmental pollution in the world, which is oil spill caused by the industrialisation. Thus, the film emphasises industrialisation to be one of the key anthropocentric factors to human's destruction of the environment.

The heroes arrive at the duke's castle with Snow White's body (01:36:59). She is being carried on a bier with green leaves that surround her face, which is seen through a close-up with shallow focus while offscreen sound functions as church bells which creates the sentiment of a funeral. Unlike Disney's tale, it is the huntsman, who awakens Snow White with his kiss (01:39:00-01:40:03). This is seen in a close-up of Snow White as sad non-diegetic music plays in the background. The huntsman kisses her before exiting the room in anger and sorrow for the loss of yet another love. The non-diegetic music intensifies and changes into light and upbeat tones as a close-up with shallow focus reveals Snow White opening her mouth, breathing, with tears running down her face and at last, opening her eyes. A long shot portrays Snow White in the courtyard as she has awoken from her death. With her fair skin and white dress, Snow White appears as a contrast to the darkness of the night; once again, she is the light in the dark, the hope (01:41:04). She gathers an army at the duke's castle and will now ride to defeat the Evil Queen.

Ravenna stands in darkness in the castle while ravens fly amongst her. Her cape consists of black feathers (01:27:01-01:27:18). Ravenna thus represents a domination against nature by wearing the cape, and, furthermore, materialism through a gold dress that resembles the mirror. Non-diegetic music creates a frightening sentiment, which stresses her power and danger. A close-up portrays her old skin and slightly grey hair; she has been weakened. As Snow White's army arrives at Ravenna's castle, oil is being let out in the courtyard by Ravenna, which is seen through a long shot (01:51:33). The oil is used as a weapon, as she pours it out on Snow White's army. The

black oil is similar to the black oil in the Dark Forest and, once again, there is a clear connection between Ravenna and the hostile nature. Oil spills are a key factor in pollution and, thus, oil is similarly represented damagingly in this film. Thus, the portrayal of black oil in the Dark Forest, the oil smutched on the ravens' wings and the oil as a weapon in the courtyard all present oil as having a dangerous effect on the environment; thus, the film reflects the anthropocentric industrialisation and its damaging consequences. A low angle shot portrays the stairway to Ravenna's room; it is gloomy and filled with hostile and barren branches; another sign of Ravenna killing nature (01:52:44-01:52:46). This is seen as Snow White runs up the stairs, and a tilting of the camera reveals the scenery whilst gloomy non-diegetic music plays. Ravenna's room is dark like the stairway; she is depicted in a long shot standing in black colours as fire is burning behind her; she almost resembles the devil himself (01:54:34). Non-diegetic dark music plays as the Evil Queen turns around to face the pure Snow White (01:56:37-01:56:57). Rapid shots portray Snow White, her fighting men and Ravenna. Ravenna resembles the devil in a long shot as the fire burns her dark body. She thus looks like the devil in human form, which stresses that Ravenna represents the very worst sides to humanity, greed, envy and vanity. Snow White kills the Queen with a knife, which is portrayed through a close-up from Snow White's eyeline match on to the knife in the stomach of Ravenna (01:57:27-01:57:49). Three drops of blood drop from Ravenna onto Snow White's armour (01:58:07). This shot is similar to the film's opening scene, where Snow White's mother loses three drops of blood in the snow. Thus, the red colour is a thread which both the rose, blood and the apple portray; the colour therefore ties humanity to nature as humanity is dependent on the non-human world. The Evil Queen has died, and her exterior beauty instantly decays to old skin (01:59:13). Snow White has gained power and is crowned queen. Nature is responding to the loss of Ravenna, which is seen through the blooming nature (01:59:58-02:00:22). A close-up of a flower in shallow focus is seen blooming rapidly, thus, gaining its strength while offscreen birdsong is applied to inform the audience of the well-functioning nature; furthermore, joyful and light non-diegetic tones play and function as a sound bridge that introduces the next scene, where Snow White is being crowned in the castle. A medium close-up of Snow White portrays an essential detail; as she is crowned queen, Snow White carries a branch with flowers instead of a sceptre, meaning she is a steward of nature (02:00:26). Furthermore, she has joined together the people of the land, which is seen through the dwarves, William and the people of the Duke's castle. Furthermore, it is now possible to see that Snow White has gained the strength of the red rose in the opening scene; thus, the rose functions as a premonition to the strength of her character; a strength that enables her to

defeat Ravenna and restore the balance in the non-human world. Everyone is honouring the new queen and bows to her as heroic and joyful non-diegetic music plays (02:01:33). The film has reached its happy ending to which Taylor comments, “At this point, all those beautiful, tangential stylistic flourishes that the movie nursed in its first two acts feel even more like a burden – with two hour plus running time, all you can think of is, “if they had cut that stuff out we would have been much further along by now”” (Taylor). Hence, the film critic does not find it necessary for the great amount of nature display in the film; however, the great amount of nature display reflects environmental problems, which are realities in the Anthropocene. Thus, the film reflects its social contexts of production. The great amount of minatory nature creates a frightening image of an altered nature as well as functioning as reflections and supplements to the main characters of the plot. Furthermore, the film portrays an environmental message through the happy ending, where nature is being restored by Snow White, who carries a branch as a sceptre. The sceptre symbolises life and growth, which is accentuated by the restored nature. This ‘happy ending’ stresses an environmental message of humans destructing the planet, which is seen through Ravenna; however, humans are also the ones who can save the planet, which is seen through Snow White as queen.

6.0 Analysis of *Maleficent* (2014)

Due to Disney’s first production of *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), the majority of people are already familiar with who the villains and heroes of this fairy tale. However, this modern remake offers a new interpretation of the old tale as well as telling the story from a new and different point of view. Unlike the 20th century’s version, *Maleficent* (2014)’s main character is not the Sleeping Beauty, it is the well-known villain of Maleficent. Thus, the project will mainly be focusing on the character of Maleficent and how she is represented through her connection to the non-human world. The project will thus focus on the new ecocritical alterations to the fairy tale. Before beginning the ecocritical analysis of *Maleficent* (2014), it is firstly relevant to present a summary of the film in order to establish a general understanding of the plot.

Two separate kingdoms are introduced as the worst of neighbours. The human kingdom is ruled by a power-eager king, while the Moors are a peaceful and idyllic land, where nature is booming and inhabited by supernatural creatures. A young fairy girl, Maleficent, is the protector of the Moors and the land’s magical beings. Young Maleficent is alerted that a human has been seen near the entrance to the Moors, and that this human intends to steal a crystal from the Moors. Maleficent confronts the young thief, Stefan, who returns the crystal to her. Subsequently,

the human boy and Maleficent become friends. Stefan proves his friendship to Maleficent by casting away his iron ring as Maleficent informs him of the pain iron does to her body. Their friendship develops over time; on Maleficent's 16th birthday, Stefan gives her 'true love's kiss', but Stefan eventually abandons Maleficent to pursue his hunger for power in the greedy king's inner circle. One day, the king decides to attack the Moors due to greed and envy of the Moors. Maleficent defends the Moors, where she is helped by several other fairy creatures. On the king's death bed, he promises that the person who avenges him and kills Maleficent becomes king and marries his daughter. Stefan takes upon himself the quest and seeks out Maleficent in the Moors. Here, he drugs Maleficent and cuts off her wings to offer the king in order to prove that Stefan has avenged him. Maleficent awakens weak and in pain after having lost her wings to Stefan; furthermore, she is in agony for having been betrayed by whom she thought was her true love. Having lost her ability to fly, Maleficent rescues a captured raven, Diaval, who then devotes his life to Maleficent; he now becomes her spy as she is unable to fly herself. An angry and revengeful Maleficent subsequently returns to the Moors where she declares herself as the ruler of the Moors; here, the idyllic surroundings are infused with her dark magic. Years pass, King Stefan and his queen are christening their new-born daughter, Aurora. Uninvited, Maleficent attends the ceremony, where she curses the child; on her 16th birthday, she will prick her finger on the spindle of a spinning wheel where she will fall into an eternal sleep. Aurora can only be awakened by true love's kiss, which Maleficent, due to Stefan's betrayal, does not believe exists. To protect his infant daughter, the King sends Aurora away from the castle to a cottage in the woods. Here, she is raised by three pixies. Maleficent watches over Aurora during her upbringing and saves her life multiple times; Maleficent becomes fond of Aurora, realising that she is good-hearted and kind. When Aurora is aged 15, Maleficent tries to undo the spell but without being successful. Aurora eventually meets a young prince in the woods, who is on his way to Stefan's castle. He promises he will revisit her in the woods on his way back. Aurora, believing that Maleficent is her fairy godmother, spends more time with Maleficent in the Moors. On the day before her 16th birthday, Aurora finds out the truth about Maleficent being the one who cursed her, which makes Aurora go to the castle, where she accidentally pricks her finger on the spindle. Maleficent finds the young Prince Phillip, who she hopes can rescue Aurora. However, the prince's kiss does not awaken the princess. Maleficent is in sorrow and kisses Aurora on her forehead, which Aurora awakens from. The King then attempts to kill Maleficent by using iron, which he almost succeeds in. But Aurora manages to find Maleficent's wings, which she releases so they are able to find Maleficent and

reattach themselves to her body. Maleficent manages to defeat the King, who accidentally dies in the process. She then undoes her dark magic in the Moors. Aurora is subsequently announced queen of both the Moors and the human kingdom by Maleficent; with this crowning, everyone is joyful, and everything becomes idyllic and lush in the Moors once more.

6.1 A Fable for Tomorrow

The film begins with a long opening scene. This scene is vital, as it introduces the two different lands in the plot as well as their environments. A crane shot firstly presents the human kingdom and subsequently continues to introduce the Moors. The crane shot creates an overview of the humans' land in the plot; the camera is tilting through the land with the diegetic sound of wind. Everything is rural and green with a touch of natural sunlight, and a voice over commences narrating,

“Let us tell an old story anew and we will see how well you know it. Once upon a time, two kingdoms that were the worst of neighbours, so vast was the discord between them that it was said only a great hero, or a terrible villain might bring them together. In one kingdom lived folk like you and me, with a vain and greedy king to rule over them. They were forever discontent, and envious of the wealth and beauty of their neighbours. For in the other kingdom, the Moors, lived every manner of strange and wonderful creature. And they needed neither king nor queen but trusted in one another. In a great tree on a great cliff in the Moors, lived on such spirit. You might take her for a girl, but she was just not any girl. She was a fairy.” (Stormberg, 00:00:32-00:01:38).

The crane shot and the voice over supplement each other as the crane shot moves across the land. The land of humans is presented through rural and idyllic scenery; fields of idealised agriculture are depicted as well as a mill, small cottages, gardens, and a lake going through the land (ibid.). This area can therefore be described as area three and four in Barry's four areas of environments; as mentioned in the theory section, these areas are mostly affected by culture. When the narrator continues to present the other land, the Moors, nature is then wild, lush and beautiful. Unlike the human kingdom, the environment is no longer affected by agriculture and traces of human organisation. Thus, the land is wild with waterfalls, cliffs and wide lakes while fairy creatures' wings function as offscreen sounds. Like the narrator informs, nature is lush and filled with strange and wonderful creatures. Offscreen birdsong creates an idyllic sentiment in the Moors. The Moors

can be seen as a mixture of areas one and two as it is a rougher and purer environment with waterfalls, lakes and forests; however, the land also appears untouched by humanity. Thus, it is possible to argue for the area to contain traces of area one, as this land is uninhabited by humans. The Moors are represented as the epitome of pure nature, which exists in harmony with its animal life and magical creatures. Throughout the crane shot in the opening scene, a tranquil sentiment is created by the idyllic nature depiction in both the human kingdom and the Moors. However, the Moors appear more appealing with its pure and idyllic nature as well as fairy creatures living harmoniously with nature. As mentioned, the environment in the Moors appears wild and rich compared to the rural nature in the human kingdom; therefore, there is a clear distinction between the two lands. The narrator describes the human king as ‘vain’, ‘greedy’ and ‘envious’, thus, the introduction to the human world is rather negative compared to that of the Moors. Thus, there is already a premonitory contrast between the two kingdoms and, moreover, a premonition about an interference from humanity due to the human king’s descriptive adjectives. The contrast between the two kingdoms is further enhanced when introducing young Maleficent. The young fairy is introduced while lying in a tree with a content smile and magical fairy dust (00:01:33). She looks like a young girl; however, she has big horns that resemble that of a bull whilst having feathers like an eagle, thus, Maleficent is anthropomorphic in her appearance but her other features clarify that she is no human. It is an essential ecocritical detail that Maleficent is a nonhuman, which will be emphasised several times throughout the analysis. Close-ups and long shots portray Maleficent from different angles to enable a thorough representation of her. Meanwhile, offscreen birdsong is unavoidable to notice among the idyllic nature. Maleficent lives harmoniously with the non-human world and can be seen as a part of nature; she has magical powers that a close-up portrays as she heals a broken branch in the tree. Diegetic sounds and golden light ensure the audience of her using magical powers on the branch. An extreme close-up displays the branch becoming whole again where Maleficent smiles kindly and satisfied while gazing at the branch, “There you go” (00:01:54-00:02:06). On Maleficent’s morning flight around the Moors, she greets many fantasy creatures of the Moors. The creatures are shot from Maleficent’s point of view and thus from a high angle (00:02:22-00:03:04). Furthermore, the high angle enables the display of the idyllic and lush changelessness in the Moors; the environment is filled with blue idyllic water and multiple colours of flowers. Fairies, trolls and similar fantasy creatures of nature are portrayed in this scene, and it becomes certain that Maleficent is genuinely well-liked by the inhabitants. Light and idyllic non-diegetic tones create a magical and idyllic sentiment. The opening scenes thus ensure the viewers of

the harmonious changelessness in the Moors, where creatures live happily and harmoniously with nature. It may appear rather strange for a modern film to include such an idealised nature in a time with an environmental crisis, however, due to modern environmentalism, this uncritical and idealised nature will not remain throughout the plot.

The three pixies in three different colours, known from the animated Disney version, are introduced as citizens of the Moors who have just seen a human near the entrance to the Moors. The red pixie looks worried in a close-up with shallow focus, “Humans here? I hope it’s not another war” (00:03:39-00:03:43). The use of shallow focus here stresses the importance of her line; this line insinuates that humans are already known for causing damage to the creatures of the Moors. Thus, the human King interferes with the non-human world due to exploitation and greediness. This is, thus, a reflection of the Anthropocene. Maleficent arrives at the entrance to the Moors. The shot is seen from the flying Maleficent’s point of view, which enables the audience to perceive the crystal-clear water being touched by natural sunlight (00:03:44-00:03:53). Offscreen sound functions as the sound of a small waterfall running nearby. Furthermore, one can see the human-sized diamonds that have grown along the entrance as well as two creatures of the Moors, who guards the entrance. They resemble trees and are the first creatures introduced as rather frightening, which the human boy, Stefan, confirms as he fears to come out from hiding due to, “they’re hideous to look at!” (00:04:03-00:04:07). Maleficent defends the guard’s appearances when Stefan insults them, which portrays her as a protector of both the Moors and their magical creatures. The many long shots are applied to depict the beautiful imageries of the Moors. Maleficent demands Stefan to return the little diamond he took from their land, which he does (00:05:06-00:05:32). Maleficent escorts Stefan back to his own land, where the environment is clearly different than that of the Moors (00:05:35). There have been used several long shots to portray the stage of the environment instead of close-ups with shallow focus on the characters; thereby, the setting of the environment becomes the main focus. Maleficent and Stefan instantly bond as they have an important thing in common; their parents are dead. Stefan reveals his desire of becoming king one day. Maleficent and Stefan agree that they must meet each other again, and as they will shake hands in a close-up, Maleficent instantly burns her skin by touching the ring on Stefan’s finger, while saying, “Iron burns fairies” (00:06:24-00:06:32). Stefan shows kindness by taking the ring off and casting it away, which is seen in a long shot. Thus, a friendship is blossoming between the two characters. In her academic essay, Balachandran observes the friendship, “This friendship can be interpreted as a link between the natural and human world” (Balachandran 200). This is a relevant point due to the

narrator's separate presentation of the two worlds, where it became certain that the human kingdom is a land with materialistic values and priorities, whereas Maleficent's land is based on pure and harmonic nature, where creatures trust one another. Only within a few minutes of the film, Maleficent has already been portrayed as a caring creature, who protects and cares for the natural elements of the non-human world. Her character can be seen as a metaphor for nature, or even Mother Nature. Doctoral scholar Jigyasa Hasija agrees with this interpretation, "She empathises with her fellow creatures and is akin to their mother. She is the fairy-embodiment of the environment" (Hasija 41). The project will thus perceive Maleficent as the embodiment of nature throughout the ecocritical analysis. Maleficent's embodiment of nature merely enhances throughout the plot as she comes of age; this will be accentuated several times throughout the plot.

Maleficent and Stefan enjoy each other's company henceforth and as they play together in Maleficent's land, long shots portray them in the idyllic nature having fun together (00:07:23-00:07:41). Tender non-diegetic music stresses that Maleficent and Stefan are developing romantic feelings for one another. This music continues as a sound bridge as several scenes portray Maleficent and Stefan together in the Moors; the sound bridge thus creates a coherence and continuation between the scenes. Meanwhile, the narrator functions as a voice over, "[...] And for a time, it seemed as if, in them at least, the old hatred between men and fairies had been forgotten. As it will, friendship slowly turned into something else" (00:07:33-00:07:42). Thus, humans and creatures of the Moors have been fighting over a long time; this can be seen as humanity seeking to exploit this untouched area of nature. The voice over and the several shots of Maleficent and Stefan in the lush nature in the Moors confirm that the two have become love interests. Birdsong functions as offscreen sound, which stresses a well-functioning nature; similarly, it stresses the first part of Gerrard's 'A Fable for Tomorrow'. Thus, by concentrating on images of natural beauty by stressing the harmonious relationship that now exists between humanity and nature, the fable firstly presents its audience with a picture of essential changelessness, which human interference then later disturbs. When Maleficent turns 16, a long shot portrays Stefan giving Maleficent, what he calls, 'true love's kiss'. Here, the sunset creates a pink sky, which creates a romantic sentiment; thus, nature supplements Maleficent's emotions. However, 'true love's kiss' is not actually the case, which the rest of the plot will stress.

A shot of the sky is revealed as Maleficent flies around; the voice over narrates, "As the years passed, Stefan's ambition pulled him away from Maleficent, and towards the temptations of the human kingdom. While Maleficent, the strongest of the fairies, rose to become the protector

of the Moors” (00:08:12-00:08:31). The Moors are then depicted again as a following shot portrays an adult Maleficent flying around the land faster than ever before. The following shot enables the audience to see Maleficent’s flying abilities as well as the Moors; the environment is still lush and beautiful as it was when she was a ‘child’. Non-diegetic upbeat music creates an idyllic and startling sentiment while the many fantasy creatures are portrayed during Maleficent’s flight. She flies to the sky to enjoy the natural sunlight touching her face (00:08:40-00:09:23). Here, it accentuates Maleficent in her natural habitat in nature; she is the protector of the Moors and, thus, nature. The narrator continues as sad non-diegetic music plays, “[...] for she (Maleficent) had never understood the greed and envy of men. But she was to learn. For the human king had heard of a growing power in the Moors, and he sought to strike it down” (00:09:18-00:09:35). Once again, the narrator stresses the contrast between the human king and the creatures of the Moors, which enables Maleficent to be seen as a metaphor for nature; she protects, heals and tends to nature while being unable to understand the greedy and materialistic side to humanity.

6.2 Humans’ Exploitation of the Natural World

A fog is surrounding the King as he arrives with his army near the entrance to the Moors (00:09:58). In this scene, a low angled camera from the grass portrays the King and his army. The low angle makes the King and his men appear powerful and frightening, thus the angle aggrandises the King’s appearance (00:10:01). In a medium close-up from a low angle with serious and dark non-diegetic tones, the King speaks to his men, “There they are, the mysterious Moors where no one dares to venture for fear of the magical creatures that lurk within. Well, I say crush them!” (00:10:11-00:10:22). The angle of framing along with the King’s merciless line confirm his frightening and powerful appearance. He is thus portrayed greedy and careless about nature and merely wants materialism in the form of wealth and power; furthermore, he shows no compassion for the creatures of the Moors nor the exploitation of nature that will resultingly be ‘crushed’. His greed for materialism can further be seen as a reflection of capitalism and its profit maximisation. Loads of alterations to nature are caused by humans who are giving into selfishness and greediness as well as constantly needing to better themselves and improve living conditions; the King thus ultimately reflects anthropocentrism and its damaging consequences. The Moors’ protector, Maleficent, defends the land and leads the battle against the humans. She is helped by fellow magical creatures of the Moors (00:11:08-00:14:06). These creatures all resemble elements of nature, which are e.g. seen through living trees and animals with moss; thus, it is humans against nature. In their fight, the humans use weapons of iron to fight the creatures of the non-human world.

Balachandran also notices the iron's role in the plot and its negative effect on Maleficent, the embodiment of nature, "Weapons and tools made of iron are used by the King and his army in their efforts to defeat Maleficent. Thus, Iron can be considered as a metaphor for industrialization and machines which destroyed nature in countless ways" (Balachandran 204-205). Thus, the film's choice of using iron as the weakness of Maleficent can be seen in a historical context as iron was a key factor during the Industrial Revolution's starting point in England during the 17th century and 18th century. The humans' use of iron to crush the creatures of nature thus creates a reference to when the Earth has been argued to enter the geological era of the Anthropocene; an era, where humanity dominates the planet at a higher rate than ever before.

After their defeat against the creatures of the Moors, the King blames Maleficent for him lying on his death bed, "I promised the people that one day we would take the Moors and their treasures. [...] Kill the winged creature. Avenge me, and upon my death, you will take the crown" (00:14:10-00:15:13). As Stefan and the King's advisors listen to the King, a close-up with shallow focus of Stefan portrays his eager facial expression as the King's promise functions as offscreen sound. Having earned Maleficent's trust long ago, Stefan visits Maleficent in the Moors at night with the false pretence of wanting to protect her from the King; here, he subsequently drugs Maleficent's drink and lures her into a deep sleep which enables him to cut off her wings (00:15:33-00:19:12). Gloomy non-diegetic music plays while a zoom shot portrays Stefan right before cutting off the wings. When Maleficent awakens in deep pain, the environment in the Moors is dominated by a blurry fog, and the lush and bright colours of the land are no longer present; instead, the colours are dark and portray the misery Maleficent experiences after being betrayed by whom she thought was her 'true love'. She experiences both an emotional pain as well as a physical pain from losing her beloved wings. The environment now appears cold, and the fog resembles the same fog that surrounded the King on the battlefield as he intended to 'crush' the creatures of the Moors. Thus, the fog connects the two scenes, as the King is successful in harming Maleficent. Sad minor non-diegetic chords are playing along with Maleficent's cries, which stress her tragic experience and create a sad sentiment (*ibid.*). The previous presence of birdsong is now absent. This accentuates that nature is dysfunctional and is thus reflecting Maleficent's pain, as she is the embodiment of nature. Thus, the human, Stefan, has exploited nature and caused a damaging alteration. This reflects an environmental reality as well as a minatory warning of humans' selfish and greedy behaviour towards nature. Loads of alterations to nature are caused by anthropocentrism, as most humans constantly seek to improve their living conditions. Thus, the

narrator's premonition about an interference from humanity in the opening scene has now occurred. Moreover, the passage of change of Gerrard's 'A Fable for Tomorrow' has now taken place. This passage of change and destruction often concerns the collapse in bird populations; thus, the lacking birdsong stresses this change. As mentioned, this disruption of harmony often brings the warning of an environmental apocalypse, which can already be seen in the Moors due to the lacking colours and lushness. For the first time in the Moors, snow is falling in the land, which is seen through a crane shot of the land that subsequently portrays a close-up of Maleficent who is in agony, which slow and minor non-diegetic tones supplement. In an eyeline match to a stick on the ground, Maleficent takes the stick and turns it into a magical cane, where an extreme close-up portrays golden fairy dust surrounding the stick in her hand (00:20:35). In long shots, one is able to see Maleficent walking around in the Moors that now look unmagical and barren; it is no coincidence that her angry and suffering face expression is not shown in several close-ups; Maleficent is a part of nature and, thus, her mood is shown through the suffering nature (00:20:40-00:21:19). The humans' land is also affected by the cold and their land looks similar to the Moors. Maleficent isolates herself in a dark and cold ruin in the human kingdom. Slow and minor non-diegetic tones function as a sound bridge to connect the several long shots of Maleficent walking sadly through the cold landscapes. The constant display of nature imageries accentuates the major contrast between the Moors before and after human exploitation.

Having helped a crow that was about to be killed by a human, Maleficent turns the crow into a man called Diaval (00:23:05-00:23:08). Similar to the animated version from 1959, Maleficent now has a crow as a helper. Diaval shall mainly function as her wings, as she can turn him into a crow again whenever she pleases. He therefore becomes her spy whose mission is to observe what happens in the human kingdom, where Stefan now rules. When Diaval later informs Maleficent that Stefan merely exploited her to become king, she becomes furious and her magical powers, that normally resemble golden dust, now resemble a green flame. This is portrayed through a slightly low angled shot, which makes Maleficent seem dangerous and powerful; her exterior now resembles Disney's animated version (00:24:14). Maleficent's change of magic from golden fairy dust to a green flame stresses her wrath towards humanity. Subsequently, long shots portray Maleficent walking back to the Moors. Non-diegetic up beating tones and diegetic sound of stones falling apart around her create a dramatic sentiment (00:24:43-00:26:00). As Maleficent reaches the entrance to the Moors, a tilting crane shot reveals a dark shadow in the idyllic scenery. Long shots of Maleficent are portrayed as she walks through the Moors while the dramatic non-diegetic music

continues and the lighting changes from light to dark; creatures of the Moors observe her and comment on her missing wings. Close-ups reveal the idyllic nature turning dark; trees turn into a resemblance of bones to create a throne for Maleficent; similarly, Maleficent's horns are now covered in black to resemble a dark crown. Thus, darkness has overshadowed the Moors; Maleficent's sadness and anger thereby affect the land. Close-ups of the fantasy creatures reveal their scared faces as they observe Maleficent's changed persona and bow to her in fear (ibid.). This long, dramatic and sad scene ends with a crane shot that functions as a reversed zoom shot of the creatures of the Moors; once again, the long shots of nature imageries portray Maleficent's emotions as she is a part of nature. This scene stresses the once idyllic kingdom, where fairy creatures coexisted and trusted one another, no longer remaining due to humanity's exploitation. Balachandran also addresses the ecocritical importance of this scene, "Maleficent's fury at being betrayed drains out the vitality from the Moors and turns the vibrant Moors into a dark kingdom, wilted, lifeless, and devoid of greenery. On an ecocritical note, this change in setting can be interpreted as consequences of man's over exploitation of nature and nature's retaliation" (Balachandran 200). This stresses that humanity affects nature, and nature similarly affects humanity. The Moors have thus lost a part of their lushness due to Maleficent having lost a part of hers. This vital scene also stresses the passage of change in the environment as well as a warning of an environmental apocalypse. Moreover, the fact that Maleficent is a part of nature is an entirely new alteration from Disney's animated version, where the villain's background is not revealed. She is now a victim of human exploitation, and Aurora's father is now portrayed as a human villain. This creates depth to the film's main character as well as stressing an ecocritical message in a time of an environmental crisis; unlike the animated version, nature has a dominant and significant role in the plot.

Months later, Maleficent is shot in an extreme long shot in the Moors, where the sun has returned (00:26:19-00:27:04). The environment in the Moors went dark because it reflected Maleficent's anger; though the sun has returned, the land is no longer the same magical and harmonious environment. Maleficent is informed of the upcoming christening of Stefan's infant daughter, Aurora. Equivalent to the animated version from 1959, all manner of people come to celebrate the christening of the princess. The three pixies of pink, green and blue, previously portrayed in the Moors, give Aurora exterior and interior gifts of beauty and happiness, as the fairies desire to foster peace and goodwill (00:27:20-00:28:26). Unlike the animated version, the pixies' magical powers are stressed by the appearance of flowers; emphasising the fairy creatures'

connection to the non-human world. Once again, nature plays a new and essential role in this modern plot. Maleficent makes her entry with dramatic non-diegetic music and darkness in the castle. A long shot portrays Maleficent now dressed in black with her green cane. While dramatic non-diegetic music plays, Maleficent bestows her gift on Aurora, “[...] Before the sun sets on her 16th birthday, she will prick her finger on the spindle of a spinning wheel and fall into a sleep like death [...] The princess can be awoken from her death sleep but only by true love’s kiss. This curse will last till the end of time! No power on Earth can change it” (00:31:07-00:32:56). Maleficent specifically chooses for Aurora to be awoken by true love’s kiss because, after Stefan’s betrayal, Maleficent no longer believe it exists. Subsequently, a sound bridge introduces Maleficent sitting on her throne in the Moors, where nature is now dark again, resembling her mood.

In the subsequent time after the christening, Stefan sends his men out to hunt Maleficent. She builds a wall of thorns around the Moors, which the narrator explains through a voice over while dramatic non-diegetic music plays, “But she made walls of her own so that the Moors might never again suffer the touch of any human” (00:33:51-00:34:00). This wall can be seen as a psychological wall, which prevents Maleficent from ever getting exploited again. The wall is seen through a crane shot, where it disrupts the green lanes with its black thorns and following white fog. Once again, nature functions as a projection of her inner feelings. The narrator confirms that humans hurt nature, and Maleficent can therefore be seen as an epitome of that nature. Thus far, the film represents humans of this plot to exploit nature for selfish purposes; this carries an undeniable environmental message as it reflects the anthropocentric problems of society, where the environment is hurting due to humanity’s exploitation. Thus, *Maleficent* (2014) stresses the presence of the Anthropocene and the issues it causes to the environment. King Stefan’s army violently attempts to break the wall of thorns to enable access to the Moors. This is seen through long shots of catapults shooting at the entrance to the Moors (00:37:48-00:39:33). However, this merely makes Maleficent reinforce the wall, which attacks the humans who try to break through the thorns. Maleficent is portrayed in a close-up seeming satisfied by the result of her wall’s spread of fear. The wall’s attack is seen through rapid medium close-ups, which create a stressful sentiment. The scene can be seen as nature retaliating on humans, and the moral of when being hostile to nature, nature will inevitably return the hostility; humans are dependent on nature as a vital resource, however, nature is a separate entity that does not need humanity. With the following news of Maleficent’s attack, Stefan is shot in a close-up with an eyeline match to an iron dagger in his

hand. The audience then knows he is reminded of iron's ability to burn Maleficent's skin, and that he will now utilise this knowledge to his advantage (00:40:10-00:40:15).

Similar to the original tale, the three pixies are to watch over Aurora for 16 years and a day in a cottage far from the castle. The cottage has a rich and flourishing nature blooming around it, which is seen through a long shot where the sunlight creates an idyllic sentiment around the setting. The cottage is placed in the woods, where offscreen birdsong stresses the well-functioning nature (00:34:17). The cottage is located in the humans' land but far from Stefan's castle. As Aurora grows up, Maleficent watches her from afar. Unaware of how to take care of a baby, the pixies cannot feed the baby. Therefore, Maleficent helps by letting her crow feed the princess while the pixies are asleep. What is interesting to notice is that Aurora is being fed by the liquids of a flower; Maleficent uses nature for all good purposes and it stresses her being a part of the non-human world (00:37:00-00:37:14). In the subsequent scene, the toddler is following a butterfly on a grass-covered cliff. The scene introduces this event through a crane shot which is enabling the audience to see Aurora being inches away from falling off the cliff. The pixies are constantly unaware of Maleficent's presence during Aurora's upbringing, but Maleficent sits in a tree nearby to observe Aurora. Maleficent must save her life as, once again, the fairies are unaware of the toddler being in danger (00:40:20-00:41:34). To save the princess, Maleficent uses her magic to make the branches along the cliff alive in order to catch her fall. A crane shot portrays how the branches lift her back on the cliff in a rural idyllic scenery with the sound of calming and light non-diegetic tones. Thus, the film stresses Maleficent being a part of nature as she constantly uses the natural world. Though she will not admit it, Maleficent is fond of 'the little beast', which the crow observes. Maleficent observes Aurora for her entire upbringing and saves her life multiple times by using nature. This inevitably leaves Aurora with a positive perception of the non-human world; due to Maleficent, nature is always saving Aurora and thus, the receptive princess perceives nature as a kind and benevolent entity. As mentioned, a vital difference between the animated version from 1959 and the modern remake from 2014 is Maleficent's deep connection to nature and her embodiment thereof. She is represented as a part of nature, which humanity exploits; this is resulting in her to retaliate. That creates a minatory message of nature turning on humanity. The character is often seen tending to nature, which stresses that she has a kind mindset. Near Aurora's cottage in the woods, Maleficent is seen saving an injured tree with her light magic that comes forth through golden light (00:41:42). Thus, she has an 'evil' use of magic, which the green flame stresses, and a benevolent form of magic, which is golden light. Thus, her 'green flame' of magic

comes forth whenever she is retaliating on humanity. However, the golden light comes forth when she is in her rightful element tending to nature, like a true Mother Nature.

6.3 A Human with Intrinsic Values in Nature

Years have passed, Aurora has now aged 15. Her bedroom is portrayed in a long shot, where flowers have grown around her bed (00:42:45). This creates the premonition of Aurora having a connection with the non-human world. In the subsequent shots, the princess is seen in the idyllic nature of the woods enjoying nature while the narrator explains through a voice over, “[...] And as the seasons changed and the flowers grew, so did she” (00:42:59-00:43:15). It is unavoidable to notice her connection with nature merely enhances as she becomes a young woman. Furthermore, the narrator explains her aging in the context of nature; once again, this emphasises nature’s significant role in this remake. When Aurora was a child, her connection with the non-human world was affected by the innocence of childhood, however, as Aurora becomes older, the connection is more conscious, and it becomes a part of identity. Until this point, the plot has introduced all humans to be careless about nature and its creatures; this is seen through all the inhabitants in the castle as well as the man who intended to kill Diaval. Therefore, Aurora is the first human to be introduced as having a positive relationship with the non-human world. During winter, Aurora helps a deer in the frozen landscape by feeding it. The princess is receptive in her upbringing; nature has always been benevolent throughout her childhood and, therefore, the princess is similarly benevolent towards nature. Light non-diegetic tones play as an eyeline match portray Maleficent in a tree observing Aurora as the narrator explains, “She wondered at the world about her, and at what lay beyond the fearsome wall of thorns” (00:43:25-00:43:51). Aurora is seen gazing at the thorns in a long shot. Subsequently, Maleficent uses her magic to bring an unconscious Aurora with her through the thorns and into the Moors. The thorns move to make room for the two characters, which is seen in a long shot while non-diegetic tranquil music stresses that Aurora is safe with Maleficent. Aurora is shot in a close-up on the grass in the Moors as she awakens; she instantly smiles by the sound of offscreen birdsong and fairies’ movements. Her smile widens as she observes the beautiful nature, which is portrayed in long shots to create an eyeline match. From hiding, Maleficent observes Aurora; however, Aurora convinces her to come out from hiding believing that Maleficent is her fairy godmother, “I know who you are [...] You’re my fairy godmother. [...] You’ve been watching over me my whole life. I’ve always known you were close by. Your shadow, it’s been following me ever since I was small. Wherever I went, your shadow was always with me” (00:49:14-00:49:43). Here, it is possible to see that Aurora has a deep connection to the non-human

world as she was always able to sense Maleficent, the embodiment of nature, being nearby. Her kind heart thinks the best of Maleficent, who has too been functioning as a protector for all those years. Subsequently, Aurora connects with the fairy creatures of the Moors, with Maleficent by her side (00:52:25-00:53:12). Idyllic and light non-diegetic tones play while portraying several long shots of the princess engaging with the creatures. Aurora's spiritual mindset is portrayed through her deep connection with nature; furthermore, the film presents her as having intrinsic values due to her positive interaction with nature. Thus, for the first time in the plot, a human appears to have a positive and deep connection with nature. Her connection with nature informs the audience of her being a 'good' character, unlike her anthropocentric father. The same night, Maleficent looks at Aurora sleeping in her bed at the cottage; she attempts to revoke the curse, "I revoke the curse, let it be no more. I revoke the curse, let it be no more" (00:53:35-00:54:15). However, the curse is unbreakable, which she made sure of when creating it at Aurora's christening. Thus, her own words are repeated as a whisper, "This curse will last till the end of time. No power on Earth can change it" (ibid.). A zoom shot portrays Maleficent looking sadly at the ground while her own words are repeated to her.

At the castle, Stefan is portrayed going out of his mind, fearing Maleficent's next move; here, the castle looks dark and gloomy (00:55:02). The dark castle thus appears as a contrast to the bright nature imageries in the Moors. The castle can therefore be seen as a metaphor for human culture; the film's use of colour thus clearly stresses that nature is 'good' whilst culture is 'evil' due to its anthropocentric connotations in the plot. In the Moors, Maleficent and Aurora are spending time together. Non-diegetic tones from a harp are playing while Aurora is seen in a long shot gazing at a fairy creature. Maleficent is observing the princess through an eyeline match; she sighs by the thought of the curse still being a fearful reality. When Aurora and Maleficent are having a dialogue, Aurora's hair is covered in colourful flowers, stressing her connection with nature (00:57:25). Aurora joyfully says she wants to live in the Moors so she and Maleficent can protect one another, "I'll sleep in a tree and eat berries and black nuts, and all the Fair People will be my friends. I'll be happy here for the rest of my life. I'm going to tell my aunties tomorrow" (00:58:12-00:58:28). Close-ups have rarely been used in the Moors in order to see the rich nature. Moreover, Aurora's quote stresses her intrinsic values in nature as she desires to live independently from culture. Thus, she desires to live harmoniously with nature. Furthermore, it is noticeable that the Moors appear lush and idyllic with the presence of Aurora; as mentioned earlier, the

environment of the Moors reflects Maleficent's feelings. Therefore, Maleficent's fondness of Aurora is portrayed through the idyllic nature imageries. Balachandran agrees with this observation,

“Her love for Aurora makes Maleficent so happy that it is reflected on the natural world around her. Maleficent being a part of the natural world, her happiness is also seen among the creatures around her. The lighting, color tone, and background music become pleasant again. Picturesque shots are portrayed during these scenes [...] This in turn also hints that though nature reacts violently against humans when disturbed, it is also ready to trust and embrace humans as long as they don't exploit it” (Balachandran 202).

Thus, Aurora manages to heel Maleficent, whose agony fades in the company of the young princess; as Balachandran observes, Aurora's effect on Maleficent is reflected on the positive nature display in the Moors. Equally to Balachandran's observation about nature's reaction towards humanity, the same reactions are seen from Maleficent because she is the embodiment of the non-human world. Thus, it is not merely Maleficent who is the main character of this modern remake; nature carries an irrefutable role as well. Hasija has made the same ecocritical observation, “[...] with respect to Maleficent, the environment's pivotal role in the story is innovative. Apart from all the male and female characters, it is nature which is the real protagonist” (Hasija 42). Thus, nature has a main character in the film along with Maleficent, who the project perceives as the epitome of nature; this is a vital ecocritical alteration compared to Disney's animated version from 1959.

On the day before her 16th birthday, the three pixies accidentally tell Aurora that an evil fairy cursed her when she was an infant. Aurora immediately seeks out Maleficent and discovers that she is the one, who cursed her (01:04:01-01:05:10). After Aurora have heard the truth, she runs away from Maleficent while deep and slow non-diegetic tones add a tragic sentiment; Maleficent instantly decides to seek out Prince Philip as she hopes he can save the princess from the curse. Maleficent is seen in a long shot from a high angle to show her vulnerability after Aurora's departure. Aware of the prophecy, Aurora returns to the castle on the evening before her 16th birthday; here, she is locked in a room for her own safety (01:06:37-01:06:44). However, this does not prevent the curse from happening; an offscreen whisper lurks Aurora into a room of spinning wheels. The castle's room is dark and gloomy, and, once again, nature and culture are portrayed differently in this plot (01:08:21-01:09:14). Non-diegetic dark music is added to the scene, which creates a dramatic and mystical sentiment. Meanwhile,

Maleficent finds Prince Philip in the woods looking for Aurora; here, she puts a spell on him so she can peacefully take him to the castle and find Aurora (00:07:48). Maleficent and an unconscious Prince Philip are seen riding in an extreme long shot where the idyllic nature is displayed as the sun is about to set. Hence, nature is once again playing an essential role as the sunset informs the audience that time is running out. It is noticeable that Maleficent is the hero in this story and the Prince merely has a minor role. Concurrently, a close-up portrays Aurora pricking her finger on the spindle of a spinning wheel while offscreen whispers of Maleficent's curse create a dramatic sentiment. In the subsequent scene, nature has fallen into darkness as the sun has set and the castle is covered in darkness (01:10:07).

Hours later, Maleficent arrives at the castle with the young Prince. Here, King Stefan has made iron challenges that resemble Maleficent's wall of thorns (01:11:51-01:12:01). Once again, the iron's negative effect on nature along with its connotations to the industrialisation stress a critic of the industrialisation and its following anthropocentric issues; the human villains are greedy, exploitive and materialistic, which further reflect the problems of capitalism. The only human who is represented positively is Aurora; her kindness is represented through her relationship and interactions with the non-human world. Thus, the film's 'heroes' are the ones who have a positive relationship to nature. That in itself is an essential environmental message of the film. Maleficent risks her life by going through the thorns of iron to save Aurora. Close-ups portray Maleficent almost touching the iron that becomes red in her presence, and the iron thorns' danger are stressed by a diegetic magnetic sound. She finally manages to make her way through the iron thorns, thus, enabling the Prince to kiss Aurora. Unlike the 20th century's version, Prince Philip's kiss does not awaken the princess (01:13:41-01:15:40). A long shot portrays Maleficent walking disappointedly towards Aurora, who is lying alone on the bed (01:15:46). The long shots enable the viewers to see that though the morning sunlight is present outside the windows, the room remains dark and gloomy like the rest of the castle. Maleficent looks sadly at Aurora in a close-up, "I will not ask your forgiveness because what I have done to you is unforgiveable. I was so lost in hatred and revenge. Sweet Aurora, you stole what was left of my heart. And now I have lost you forever. I swear, no harm will come to you as long as I live" (01:15:50-01:16:52). Sad non-diegetic music plays as Maleficent kisses Aurora on her forehead, and her true love's kiss awakens Aurora. Once again, this differs from the original tale. Here, it is the embodiment of nature who saves Aurora; thus, the strong interaction between these two characters is once again emphasised.

Just as one would suspect the fairy tale to have reached its happy ending, rapid shots portray Maleficent being trapped under an iron net, which Stefan and his army have arranged. Her diegetic screams stress her suffering from the red iron touching her skin. Unable to help her due to the King's army holding her back, Aurora is taken away from Maleficent (01:18:38). King Stefan is seen walking through the fire completely covered with iron and a whip made of iron, which he beats Maleficent with (01:21:00-01:22:09). Once again, the film stresses iron's negative effect on the environment. Maleficent is seen in close-ups to emphasise her suffering facial expression, and a point of view shot portrays Diavel, now transformed into a dragon, falling to the ground. The point of view shot is blurred which makes the audience aware of Maleficent feeling weekend as Stefan is tormenting her. In an extreme close-up, Maleficent is seen while a golden light appears behind her along with an offscreen sound of attachment (01:22:41-01:22:49). Her wings are subsequently portrayed reattached on her back as they light up the room with their golden light. The following shot portrays Maleficent in a long shot with her wings spread out as powerful non-diegetic music plays. The golden light behind her makes her resemble an angel. A close-up portrays Aurora with an eyeline match to the flying Maleficent; the sight creates a great smile on Aurora's face. Maleficent then has the opportunity to kill Stefan but omits to do so; in favour of killing him she simply says, "It's over!" (01:24:53-01:24:56). However, Stefan, unwilling to face the fact, tries to kill Maleficent, resulting in both of them falling from the tower with loud and dramatic non-diegetic music. Maleficent manages to escape his grip whilst Stefan falls to the ground and dies.

The film represents the 'evil' side to humanity through greediness, selfishness, envy and deceitfulness. Thus, it is unavoidable for the human villains to seek out the treasures and beauty of the Moors. Thus, similar to the reality in the Anthropocene, the human villains exploit nature. Already in the opening scene, the narrator creates a premonition about humanity interfering with nature. Thus, the film differs from Disney's animated version where all humans are 'good' characters. This is thereby a vital modification in the remake, as humans are portrayed as rebels against nature which film critic Hawker also addresses, "It's a splendid-looking film. The effects are striking throughout, whether they are dramatic battle confrontations between humans and the forces of the natural world [...]" (Hawker). However, Aurora manages to be presented in an entirely different manner due to her interactions with nature. These interactions portray her as a kind and good-hearted human being. She has intrinsic values in nature, which is the film's epitome of 'a good human being'. Thus, the film reflects several issues from the environmental crisis during the age of the Anthropocene; the 'evil' humans are the ones who exploit nature due to greed and

selfishness, which can be seen as a reflection of the reason for the planet to have reached the Age of Humans. This will be further stressed when presenting the film's happy ending.

6.4 The Happy Ending: Humans as Stewards of Nature

Aurora is seen sitting on a cliff in the Moors in a long shot, where the audience can perceive the human kingdom in the great distance as well as the entrance to the Moors that is filled with thorns. The thorns are gradually disappearing while idyllic non-diegetic music and offscreen birdsong create an idyllic sentiment. The presence of birdsong stresses the environment in the Moors to be well-functioning once more. The narrator explains the scene through a voice over, "Maleficent brought down her wall of thorns and took off her crown. And she invited Aurora to see how the Moors had been once long ago, when Maleficent was but a child and her heart was bright. For now, it was again" (01:26:12-01:26:58). Maleficent's hostile throne in the Moors disappears as flowers magically appear. The Moors have thus regained their magical and idyllic appearance. The narrator's quote stresses that Aurora has healed Maleficent through her benevolence and kindness towards the non-human world; similarly, Aurora is receptive in nature and therefore experiences it as a benevolent entity, as it has saved her life multiple times. In the end, Aurora correspondingly saves nature through Maleficent. Maleficent puts a crown on Aurora's head in the Moors, where all the fairy creatures are there to witness the crowning in the idyllic setting, "Our kingdoms have been unified. You have your queen" (01:27:09-01:27:14). All the fairy creatures applaud Aurora's crowning. Balachandra addresses the film's happy ending, "Towards the end of the movie, the audience is shown the Moors in their past glory, thus showing the recovery of Maleficent and the natural world from human intrusion. Maleficent's Moors and Aurora's kingdom are shown to exist side by side in an ideal, non-exploitative, symbiotic relationship" (Balachandran 204). Thus, as Balachandra argues, the film stresses that humans and nature can function together, nevertheless, it requires for humans to be benevolent stewards of the environment. This happy ending thereby stresses the film's environmental message of humanity as stewards of nature instead of selfish rebels. Aurora is the film's solitary 'good human being' because of her intrinsic values in nature. Therefore, the film represents humans from their worst sides through anthropocentric behaviours; thus, the film correspondingly portrays a human from its best side through her intrinsic values in nature and her role as a steward of nature. Thus, the film stresses what it means to be a good human being in the age of the Anthropocene. The idyllic and happy ending in the lush nature of the Moors ends out in a zoom shot while a harp creates a joyful and peaceful sentiment. The zoom out functions through a crane shot where Maleficent and Davial observe Aurora and the fairy creatures

with a smile. Thus, as Balachandra argues, the fairy tale's happy ending is thus nature and humanity functioning symbiotically together.

7.0 *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012) and *Maleficent* (2014)

The project has analysed both films based on the ecocritical theory presented in the theory section. The ecocritical readings of the two films clarify the presence of environmental messages conveyed in the plotlines. Furthermore, the analyses have emphasised vital ecocritical alterations that differ from Disney's versions from the 20th century. The project will now sum up the ecocritical findings of the two analyses and thereby accentuate the environmental messages of the films. Lastly, the two films will be perceived parallelly in order to see equal environmental alterations and traces of the environmental crisis.

Snow White and the Huntsman (2012) features modern environmentalism. The most vital alteration to the modern version is the Evil Queen's new abilities to alter and destruct nature. Thus, the plot often stresses the Queen's wickedness through her destructive interaction with nature. Similarly, the Queen now has a name and a painful history, which creates depth to her character. The film thereby manages to stress that an 'evil' human is one who gives into selfishness, envy, greed and the destruction of nature; thus, the villain reflects anthropocentrism in her exploitive and selfish behaviour. The film correspondingly represents several daily issues in the Anthropocene such as war, selfishness, vanity, materialism and greed; the plot is set in an outdoor environment, where it is possible to see these qualities' damaging effect on nature. The plot is thus reflecting issues of capitalism, industrialisation as well as the Anthropocene, which are all contributing to the environmental crisis. Thus, an old tale has gotten new life in the form of reality's problems being applied to the plot. Through an ecocritical reading, the film thus reflects its social contexts of production. Ravenna and Snow White are two different characters which are seen through their norms and priorities. Ravenna is associated with the Dark Forest, whereas Snow White is connected to Sanctuary. As mentioned, Ravenna represents the 'evil' qualities to humanity, which are vanity, greed, envy and selfishness. These 'evil' qualities lead to the destruction of the natural world. Sanctuary creates a powerful message merely by its name; the untouched nature is holy as it is rare. Snow White possesses intrinsic values in nature and is therefore associated with the idyllic and unaltered Sanctuary. Hence, the film characterises its two main characters based on their ways of functioning with the non-human world. The environment, therefore, reflects whether or not the characters are heroes or villains. This enables the film to create a message of what it means to be a

good human being in the age of the Anthropocene. This message is emphasised by the choice of colours on the two characters; black is prominent to Ravenna's character, e.g. her dark army, black oil surrounding her body, darkness inside her castle and her black gowns. Whereas white is prominent around Snow White's character; e.g. the white horse when she rides through the dark kingdom, the white stag, the snow, and her white dress when she rises from her death bed.

However, as mentioned, the characters' treatment and connection to the non-human world are what determine their role as a villain or hero, which is an environmental alteration. Thereby, the film reflects several problems of the Anthropocene and, thus, the environmental crisis.

Maleficent (2014) also conveys modern environmentalism as a dominant theme.

Already in the opening scene, the narrator stresses that the human King is selfish, greedy and envious. Therefore, he cannot help himself to exploit the rich nature in the Moors. Similar to Sanctuary in *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012), the Moors have an idyllic and unaltered environment, inhabited by magical creatures. Naturally, this area of environment cannot remain unaltered throughout the plot because of the film's social contexts of production; the human villains are driven by anthropocentrism which lead them to selfishly exploit the environment. Maleficent is the epitome of nature, functioning as its protector and is akin to Mother Nature. Maleficent thereby represents nature in a living form, thus she is able to retaliate on the humans as well as stressing the suffering nature due to human inflicted changes. Maleficent's suffering reflects an environmental reality as well as a warning of the damaging effect humans' exploitation and greed have on nature. In this remake, Maleficent is thereby not a villain but the embodiment of nature, who retaliates on the evil human villains. The film, therefore, portrays a conflicting relationship between humans and nature; the humans constantly seek to exploit nature, and the human intrusion forces nature to retaliate. Maleficent can therefore be seen as nature turning on humanity after being exploited and intruded. The human villains are driven by materialism and greed, which reflect the anthropocentric issues of capitalism. However, just as the film portrays the worst quality of humanity through anthropocentric behaviour, the film correspondingly portrays a human at its best side through Aurora. Her and Maleficent have an undeniable connection, which differs from Disney's animated version; the characters affect and protect one another. Thus, bright and multiple colours are used to portray the Moors and Aurora, whereas black and grey are mostly used to describe the evilness of humanity seen through the castle, Stefan and the army. Thus, the film's use of colours accentuates the 'villains' and 'heroes' of the film. The non-human world can only function symbiotically with humans if these humans have intrinsic values in nature and perceive it as a separate entity, like

Aurora. She is the paradigm of how humanity must interact with nature. Similar to *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012), the film stresses what it means to be a good human being in the Anthropocene, which can then lead the planet to exit a post Anthropocentric era. Thus, the princesses have an essential new role in the modern remakes, as they function as role models for the entire humanity. The films thereby represent humans giving in to their worst qualities in the Anthropocene, and correspondingly humans who possess the very best sides to humanity.

Though *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012) and *Maleficent* (2014) are made independently with years apart, they both carry strong and similar traces of modern environmentalism. The films portray all four areas of environment on Berry's spectra which stress the dominant display of nature in the films as well as how the environment functions at these different areas. Furthermore, the films both convey area one through an uncritical and idealised nature, which can seem rather strange due to the existence of 'the wilderness' being highly questionable in the 21st century; however, due to the presence of modern environmentalism, these idealised environments cannot be left alone from human intrusion and exploitation. The human villains' inflicted changes on area one reflect that the epitome of 'wild' environments are destructed in the Anthropocene. In both films, neither the animals nor fairy creatures of nature are portrayed negatively. In both films, humans are the villains and, similarly, humans are the ones who must solve the issues and join together humanity in a symbiotic and non-exploitive relationship with nature. Therefore, the films emphasise that selfishness, greed, envy and vanity are what characterise villains in these modern fairy tales; the villains thus reflect anthropocentrism and its destructive consequences. *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012)'s Ravenna and *Maleficent* (2014)'s Stefan possess all these negative qualities to humanity in an industrialised and capitalistic society; thus, capitalism and industrialisation are reflected as anthropocentric forces and issues. Their 'evilness' is thus reflected on nature and their exploitation of it; the films thereby represent modern environmentalism and reflections of humans as rebels against nature. Correspondingly, the films portray the Anthropocene's answer to 'good human beings'. The heroes', thus the princesses', kind, benevolent, selfless, caring and intrinsic values are emphasised as the very best sides to humanity. Their positive qualities are reflected in their relationship to nature, and the films thereby stress that the 'good humans' are the ones who have a positive relationship to the non-human world. Therefore, these characters are the ones who must rescue the environment and thereby create a symbiotic relationship to the non-human world. Thus, the princesses are the heroes of the films, as they manage to create the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature. As mentioned in the

theory section, humans are responsible for being stewards of the non-human world in order for the Earth to exit the Anthropocene. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the happy endings of both of these remakes emphasise humans as being stewards of nature and, thus, living harmoniously with it. Nature maintains a main character in both films, and the characters' interactions and effects on the non-human world thereby determine their roles as villains or heroes. Consequently, unlike Disney's 20th century versions, the films are not about the princesses being saved by their princes' true love's kiss. Nonetheless, the princesses are the heroes in these plots as they manage to restore the symbolic relationship between humans and nature, which Gerrard's 'A Fable for Tomorrow' stresses to be a vital lacking problem in the film. Thus, their roles are to be stewards of the environment which inevitably becomes the happy endings of the films. Thereby, the films convey irrefutable environmental themes and messages that reflect essential issues in the Anthropocene. The films thereby encourage their audiences to actively engage in this crisis and realise the responsibility humanity carries in order to exit the Age of Humans and, thus, the environmental crisis. Furthermore, both *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012) and *Maleficent* (2014) manage to position themselves in the discussion about when the planet entered the geological era of the Anthropocene. As mentioned in the theory section, it is still debatable when exactly the Anthropocene started as some argue for the era to have begun already with human organisation in the form of agriculture. However, both films present the agriculture in a rural and idyllic manner. This is seen in one of the opening scenes in Snow White's kingdom as well as the opening scene of the human kingdom in *Maleficent* (2014). Thus, as the two analyses mention, the films present an idealised agriculture before 'A Fable for Tomorrow' unfolds in the subsequent paragraphs of the plots, where every element of this rural idyll is torn apart by some agent of change. Nevertheless, instead of pointing at agriculture as being a sign of human exploitation of nature, both films represent the industrialisation as well as capitalism as the dominant factors of human exploitation. This is seen through Ravenna's negative use of oil as well as iron's damaging effect on Maleficent. Thus, both iron, oil and the villains' greediness are reflections of the industrialisation and the associated capitalism. Thus, according to the films, human exploitation through agriculture is not the root of the environmental crisis nor the starting point of the Age of Humans. The agriculture is represented idealised, rural and innocent in both films and therefore not perceived as an 'exploitation'. Therefore, these modern remakes manage to make a statement by presenting the industrialisation and the following capitalism as the root of the Anthropocene and humans' negative effect on the planet.

8.0 The Affect of Environmental Films

As mentioned in the introduction, there have been produced loads of modern films featuring elements and aspects of the environmental crisis. By analysing the films in accordance with their social contexts of production, the analyses have established how *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012) and *Maleficent* (2014) function as examples of such films. The project has made ecocritical analyses of the two modern remakes, where the analyses focused on the representation of the non-human world as well as the main characters' interactions and relationships to the environment. Furthermore, the project focused on vital ecocritical alterations from Disney's 20th century versions to the modern remakes; thus, the project's analyses emphasise how the two remakes in numerous ways portray modern environmentalism. However, though modern environmentalism is justified, it has limitations in these popular films. In the theory section, the project created an understanding of the term, deep ecology. Though both films present their princesses to have intrinsic values in nature, criticise the industrialisation and capitalism as being the root of the Anthropocene as well as encourage their audiences to be stewards of nature instead of greedy rebels, the films do not represent the very core of the radicalism that is attributed to deep ecology. This can be owed to the fact that these films are fairy tales and are therefore bound to have 'happy endings'. Therefore, though presenting several deep ecological standpoints among enabling the viewers to thoroughly question the presuppositions underlying the dominant and economic approach of industrialised and capitalistic societies in terms of values and priorities, the films have certain limitations as to how far they can present the movement as well as the radicalism of deep ecology. This is e.g. seen in the ending of *Maleficent* (2014) as Aurora becomes the ruler of the Moors, a wild environment that otherwise functioned perfectly well without a human ruler. Thus, the films manage to touch several anthropocentric and environmental issues and offer fundamental solutions to exit the Anthropocene in the form of humans as stewards towards the environment, nevertheless, the films' genre of fairy tale create a wide audience and thereby minimises the option to carry out the strong radicalism. Nonetheless, both films manage to represent thoughts of deep ecology as well as modern environmentalism in terms of representation of characters and the physical environments in the plots. The analyses have thus stressed a clear presence of modern environmentalism in the films. This further leads to the question of how films with modern environmental messages can affect an audience? The discussion will firstly present the importance of cognition when watching films and subsequently discuss how filmmakers use the viewer's cognition in order to affect the emotions of the viewer; this will lead the project to discuss how the filmmakers use and present the environment

in modern films. Lastly, the project will emphasise the importance of cognition and awareness in the production of films featuring modern environmentalism and, finally, emphasise how such films can affect an audience.

8.1 A Cognitive Ecocritical Approach to Narrative

Already from its establishment in the late eighties, ecocriticism has placed significant trust in the ability of environmental narratives to have lasting effects on the attitudes as well as behaviours of their readers and viewers (Weik von Mossner 5). Humans always seek to reason with the experiences they are having. Here, cognition plays an essential part; recent studies in psychology and neurology have emphasised not merely the importance of the 'mind's' cognition but also the 'embodied cognition'. This kind of cognition is deeply dependent upon features of the physical body as the senses of the human body play a crucial part in our ability to perceive and understand new things. Recent research thus emphasises the importance of the interaction between what we experience with our senses and what we remember; as a result, what we experience with our human senses is what we remember. Therefore, when the senses are affected, we tend to have the optimal prerequisites to remember the experience. Weik von Mossner stresses the importance of embodied cognition, as this is of vital importance to neuroscience and cognitive psychology and thereby also vital in order to comprehend modern environmental films (Weik von Mossner 5). Thus, throughout the discussion, the project will emphasise the importance of embodied cognition in order for environmental films to affect its audience.

For the last two decades, many ecocritics have had an eye on the perceptual affective processes of their audiences. Weik von Mossner e.g. argues for the late 20th century's ecocritical readings of works such as *Silent Spring* (1962) to have created a national roar about the dangers of pesticides that helped to launch the American environmental movement and thereby spread its influence among the rest of the world's population. Such works, like *Silent Spring* (1962), belong to a certain repertoire of narratives and rhetorical techniques that aim to engage their readers emotionally and thereby encourage them to activism (Weik von Mossner 7). Thus, in recent years, cognitive narratologies have focused on the affective dimensions of our engagement with literary texts. But it is not merely literature that spread environmental influence amongst the world. There exists an even richer and more dominant tradition of cognitive approaches in film and media studies; this affective dimension of cinematic response plays an essential role in motion pictures. Psychologists and the humanities have worked together to explore not only the ways a narrative is processed through embodied cognition but also what larger social effects such processing may

have, “Both reading and watching are highly embodied activities, not only in that we need our senses in order to be able to perceive things, but also in that our bodies act as sounding boards for our mental simulations of storyworlds and of characters’ perceptions, emotions, and actions within those virtual worlds” (Weik von Mossner 6-7). Films have thereby become a popular topic to spread environmental influence around the world. Therefore, the project will now further discuss how films featuring modern environmentalism can manage to affect its audience.

Psychologists use the term ‘transportation’ for when experiencing the environment through a film (ibid. 20). When watching a film that captives viewers’ attention, the viewers can experience a gradual disappearance of their physical environment and a ‘transportation’ into the alternative world of the film. Here, as mentioned, the film has created a storyworld which the viewer can then experience through this ‘transportation’. The filmmaker will then control the emotions of the audience through cinematic tools and guide the audience through the storyworld (ibid. 50). Films’ presentation of storyworlds have to be presented in certain details in order to captivate its audience. In literature, certain presentations can remain vague and up for the reader to imagine, however, unlike literature, a film offers its audience sound and sight. This means that films cannot afford such vagueness because they have more of the human senses at their disposal; films thereby deliver the viewers actual images. Therefore, filmmakers have to make very concrete and distinctive decisions about the storyworlds they present to an audience. Thus, it is a well-known fact that nothing is coincidental in films as every detail of the presented storyworld must be carefully considered when presenting it in motion pictures, affecting sight and sound. This is why the project has analysed the two films based on the cinematic tools of cinematography and sound; these film techniques are vital to notice as they function as the filmmakers’ tools to create the frames of the plot. The filmmakers have already done loads of the emotionally organising of the scenes, as Weik von Mossner argues, “in the case of film, cinematography, lighting, mise-en-scène, editing, and sound design, together with a range of effects that are added during postproduction, all crucially influence how viewers perceive a given scene” (Weik von Mossner 51). We all live in relation to landscapes, other people, objects etc. that are present in the real world; people thereby utilise an already established knowledge and familiarity when seeing a film featuring landscapes, feelings, characters, objects, etc.. This cognitive familiarity thus enables people to connect and understand the storyworlds they are presented to in the films, “The multimodal relationships between people, objects, landscapes, and our embodied brains are particularly complex in the case of film, which not only provides narrative (like literature) or visual information (like a painting) but also sound and,

most importantly, motion” (Weik von Mossner 53). In that way, films manage to create an even stronger message to an audience as they have many more human senses to affect and, as Flaxman argues, “Cinema not only puts motion in the mind, it also puts movement in the mind” (Flaxman 366). The filmmakers can, therefore, guide the viewers’ attention and thereby control their emotions through the cinematic tools. Grodal emphasises that the emotions we experience from watching films are what affect us and subsequently lead to the lasting effect on our attitudes and behaviours; thus, emotions are motivational forces (Grodal 127). The viewer is e.g. emotionally affected when seeing the human villains interfere with the tranquil and pure nature in *Sanctuary*; the viewer is similarly affected when seeing *Maleficent* in agony after having been exploited by Stefan. As mentioned, the filmmakers have already done loads of the emotionally work for us through cinematic techniques; e.g. the choice of colour in the films, where dark colours are mainly presented on the villains and bright colours are associated with the heroes. The filmmakers thereby ‘control’ the emotions of the viewers. These audio-visual data flow from eyes and ears to the brain, thus through embodied cognition (ibid. 128). When watching a film, the brain and body thereby constantly use their cognitive knowledge in order to understand the plot. Therefore, filmmakers have become more and more sophisticated in adjusting their films to this well-known cognition that exists in the human. Though the audience may not specifically pay attention to which cuts and focuses are used when and where in the film, nevertheless, these cinematic techniques are what guide the audience’s attention and thus telling them what they should notice (Weik von Mossner 54). For instance, the filmmakers created special attention on the environment in *Maleficent* (2014) by constantly using long shots of the environment which portrayed her emotions instead of her facial expression. The filmmakers can therefore create special attention around the environment as they can guide the audience’s attention, “Our cognitive skills enable us to analyse the situations that hold interest for us, which the filmmakers can guide our attention towards” (Grodal 127). Hefferman emphasises that the storyworlds of films enable us to connect to the past, present and foreseeable future; the ‘transportation’ to these storyworlds can help people to develop a better understanding of the world and the people in it through cognition. He stresses that this is one of the most potent reasons for people to love films and the narratives within them (Hefferman).

8.2 The Cognitive Use of the Environment

It has been established that filmmakers can create special attention to the environment of the film and create certain emotions through film techniques, which then leads to the next question of how they can use the environment? In most recent films, the diegetic space is not merely a passive

setting for action, nonetheless, it is an active agent and thus a part of the action. Hence, the space that surrounds the fictional characters in the films is not merely background for the foreground action, nonetheless, it plays an essential role in the plot and our cognitive perception (Weik von Mossner 70). In *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012), the Dark Forest and Sanctuary play essential roles in the entire film as they are representations of Ravenna and Snow White. Furthermore, the different representations and abilities of the Dark Forest and Sanctuary stress environmental realities; altered and exploited nature become hostile while nature that has been left untouched remains idyllic and tranquil. The film further stresses that untouched nature is rare and should for that reason be cherished and perceived as ‘sanctuary’. In *Maleficent* (2014) nature is one of the main protagonists and can therefore not be left out of focus; it supplements Maleficent’s emotions, and the environment is correspondingly connected to the main protagonist as she is the very embodiment of nature. Thus, in these films, the filmmakers have chosen to make the environments active agents, and this fact thereby emphasises the great importance of the environment in both films. As a result, due to the environmentalist alterations to the plots and thus the environment’s new and dominant role, these films become appropriations of the well-known fairy tales as the environment’s active and dominant role in the plots add new environmental themes to the fairy tales. Then why would the filmmakers apply such importance to the environment in these modern remakes and e.g. give the Evil Queen an entirely new ability to destroy the environment, and Aurora’s father a need to selfishly exploit nature? The productions behind the films have a cognitive knowledge about the presence of the environmental crisis, which is a determiner for their way of presenting the environments in the films. As mentioned in the theory section, the open discourse and awareness about the crisis are entirely different compared to when Disney produced the first versions of the films; back then, the filmmakers did not have the same cognitive knowledge and awareness about the crisis. Thus, these modern remakes differ significantly in representation and, therefore, the environments become active agents and the characters relate to the environments. Weik von Mossner argues that this constitutes an ecological view of the relationship between films’ fictional characters and their surroundings (Weik von Mossner 61). Consequently, the films’ new environmentalist and anthropocentric themes and messages result in the remakes becoming appropriations of the original versions.

8.3 The Environmental Crisis as a Present Reality

Filmmakers have the ability to affect the viewer’s emotions through cinematic techniques and emphasise the environment as an active agent. How are films featuring modern

environmentalism then useful in the creation of awareness and activism? It has been argued that though the environmental crisis is a popular topic on social media, politics, documentaries and other public discourses, the majority of the inhabitants of the globe remain passive instead of active in this crisis; Weik von Mossner argues that many simply perceive the crisis as a distant psychological risk instead of an actual danger. Because when talking about the crisis, the average person would not comprehend the frightening reality in the same way through the use of numbers and statistics, which is the frequent use of communication when talking about the danger of the crisis, as the person would through visualisation. A potential way to change this passiveness into activeness that has been considered by climatologists, sociologists, psychologists and cultural studies in the humanities is to offer people affective engagement with climate change on the imaginary level through motion pictures and narratives (Weik von Mossner 141). Through embodied cognition, this would create a more comprehensible idea of the crisis as they get to see the frightening crisis through motion pictures. Weik von Mossner stresses that this way of informing people is a strategy that especially makes sense from the perspective of cognitive science (ibid.). As mentioned in the theory section, Clark believes that by accentuating the presence and cruel reality of the Anthropocene, through e.g. film, it will increase the seriousness as well as the self-recognition of humans' responsibility as stewards of the Earth. Thus, the past fifteen years have produced a rising number of films that attempt to engage with humans' cognitive systems and thereby emphasise the potential future consequences of climate change and the geological era of the Anthropocene. Such modern environmentalist films use several narrative strategies to make their plots more emotionally engaging by framing climate change as a frightening, and most importantly, *present* reality. Thus, it has within these years become popular for filmmakers to use a narrative strategy where filmmakers include future environmental risks as if they were already a current and present reality (ibid.). For instance, both *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012) and *Maleficent* (2014) feature Gerrard's 'A Fable for Tomorrow' where the fable firstly introduces the audience with an image of idyllic changelessness, which the human villains' inflicted changes disrupt in the ensuing scenes of the plots. This disruption of rural and idyllic harmony often brings the warning of an environmental apocalypse that the filmmakers can enhance due to their ability to guide the audience's attention on the environment through cinematic techniques that, furthermore, can impact the viewer's senses. 'A Fable for Tomorrow' stresses these films as appropriations of the well-known fairy tales as the suffering environments subsequently become central themes throughout the plots; the suffering of *Maleficent* and the environment in Ravenna's kingdom, due to the human villains' exploitation,

become central themes. Thus, the human villains' anthropocentric exploitations of the environments are central and new themes which result in a change in the plots, which can be affirmed due to intertextuality. The well-known fairy tales and storyworlds are therefore not merely recreated, nonetheless, these plots have changed due to the modern alterations, where anthropocentric themes are dominant. 'A Fable for Tomorrow' thereby emphasises an important change in these modern fairy tales, which ultimately results in the films becoming appropriations. 'A Fable for Tomorrow' is merely one out of several narrative strategies that can emphasise the environmental crisis, as well as the environmental apocalypse, as a present reality. Thereby, the films do not shy away from creating an 'environmental dystopia', which is e.g. seen through the Dark Forest. Another narrative strategy that has been used by filmmakers to convey the reality of the crisis is to add a hopeful ending to the otherwise frightening environmental films. As mentioned, both *Maleficent* (2014) and *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012) have 'happy endings' that stress humanity as stewards of nature as the key solution to exit the crisis and, thus, the Age of Humans; thus, both films show their female protagonists to live harmoniously with the environment. Moreover, the 'heroes' manage to have a symbiotic relationship with nature throughout the plot. This kind of strategy creates a silver lining of it being possible to exit the crisis, however, it demands a change in mindset. Once again, such narrative strategies draw on the cognitive knowledge humanity already has about the crisis. Cognitive approaches in the humanities have always sought into psychological and sociological methods and explanations of cognitive science in order to explain how we feel when perceiving certain things (Weik von Mossner 196). The viewer will expectedly experience sadness when Snow White takes a bite of the poisonous apple, or relief when Maleficent saves Aurora from falling off a cliff; these emotions are caused by our senses which filmmakers affect through e.g. upbeat music or the image of Aurora suddenly disappearing from the edge of the cliff. Thus, the cognitive approach in the humanities engages in inter- and transdisciplinary collaborations to further explain e.g. how a viewer is affected when watching modern environmentalist films. Thus, as Weik von Mossner argues, such modern films with a minatory display of nature as an active agent enable the viewers to use their cognition to comprehend the narrative and images in motion pictures (ibid.). For instance, cognition enables us to understand why there are modern environmentalist alterations to *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012), such as the Evil Queen now having a damaging effect on the environment as well as why the suffering environment is emphasised several times throughout the plot.

Through a cognitive ecocritical perspective, the discussion has established how films dominantly affect an audience, as films differ from other arts because they feature motion pictures, where sight and sound are stimulated. When seeing a film, the viewer experiences a ‘transportation’ into the imaginary storyworld of the film, which climatologists, sociologists, psychologists and cultural studies have argued to be an effective way for a viewer to perceive the danger of the environmental crisis as a present problem. Thus, as mentioned, the message of motion pictures is particularly effective as filmmakers have more of the human senses at their disposal, which enable them to guide the individual viewer’s attention and emotions through cinematic techniques; the narrative therefore affects the viewer due to embodied cognition, “[...] narratives appeal to our sensual perception and embodied cognition in order to immerse us into their storyworlds and engage us in the gruesome tale they tell about environmental disaster and suffering” (Weik von Mossner 4). Consequently, films manage to use the cognition in humans and thus appeal to their senses; embodied cognition thereby enables the viewers to feel and understand the narrative in the plot. Cognition is therefore crucial for us in order to understand the plot and, additionally, for us to store this new information through our senses. Films featuring modern environmentalism can therefore be helpful to induce a shift in humanity’s behaviour and attitudes. The humanities can thereby also contribute to the awareness about the dangers of continuing to live in the Anthropocene

As mentioned, both of the project’s films are fairy tales, and thus their endings’ abilities to create a complete fright about the dangers of the Anthropocene and the environmental crisis are limited compared to other eco-dystopian films; however, the project’s chosen films manage to emphasise two examples of modern films that feature numerous environmental and anthropocentric threats as a frightening reality. Furthermore, both films point at the industrialisation and capitalism to be the source of the Anthropocene and our exploitive relationship to the non-human world, which has inevitably resulted in the environmental crisis. The project has also chosen these films because they are remakes, meaning there exists an already established intertextuality which enables the viewers to see the new environmental alterations to the plots. The alterations are so dominant that these remakes arguably become appropriations; the environment thus functions as an essential protagonist along with the human characters. For instance, both of the films’ endings have changed from the princesses marrying the princes; instead, now the ‘happy endings’ are the princesses restoring the symbiotic and non-exploitive relationship between humans and nature. This is yet another essential change to the plot, which stresses that these films are not merely recreated, however, they are appropriations stressing the environment as an active and central agent.

Consequently, the appropriations of the well-known fairy tales are examples of how the presentation and function of the environment have changed over the course of time, with an environmental crisis lurking and merely waiting to destroy the planet. The films thus work as examples of how many modern filmmakers have taken the cognitive knowledge of the crisis into their storyworlds in motion pictures, and through human cognition are able to affect an audience as well as emphasise the environmental crisis as a present problem.

9.0 Conclusion

The project has analysed and examined the presentation of ecocriticism in *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012) and *Maleficent* (2014) by using the theoretical backbone of ecocriticism and the cinematic film techniques of cinematography and sound. The analyses as well as the discussion have examined and analysed the presentation of nature in the two films and, furthermore, emphasised how humanity's interaction with nature is represented in the plots. The ecocritical analyses of the two films clarify the presence of modern environmentalism in the plots; thus, the two remakes' new and modern alterations show anthropocentric and modern environmental themes. Both films have human villains, whose wickedness are portrayed through anthropocentric mindsets and qualities such as greed, envy, materialism and selfishness; their wickedness is ultimately reflected through their exploitive and damaging relationship to the non-human world. In *Snow White and the Huntsman*, the Evil Queen is the selfish and vain villain whose wickedness is projected on her damaging effect on the environment in her kingdom and especially the Dark Forest, which she is associated with. In *Maleficent*, the main villain is King Stefan, which is a significant change compared to the original plot. He exploits Maleficent, thereby nature, to gain power, materialism and status. Both of the villains prioritise greed and materialism, which can be perceived as a critique of capitalism. Furthermore, the films both emphasise issues related to the industrialisation through iron's damaging effect in *Maleficent* (2014) and oil's damaging effect in *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012). In that way, the films point at the Industrial Revolution as being the root of the Anthropocene and, thus, the root of human destruction of the natural world. Consequently, these villains, Ravenna and King Stefan, portray the worst of human qualities in an industrialised and capitalistic society; they exploit and wreck the non-human world, which is a reflection of the damaging effect humans have on the environment in the Anthropocene. However, the films correspondingly portray humans to be the ones who can restore the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature by being stewards of nature. Thus, the princesses have a more

significant role than ever before as they must restore the symbiotic and non-exploitive relationship between nature and humans. The films thereby stress what it means to be a good human being in the age of the Anthropocene. A ‘villain’ in the storyworlds of the films is thus a character who is damaging and exploiting the environment, thus reflecting an anthropocentric behaviour. The environment’s new and crucial role as an active agent, or even protagonist, adds numerous new alterations to the two remakes, which result in the remakes becoming appropriations. The project has thus analysed the films based on their social contexts of productions, and thus emphasised how modern films can implement the environmental crisis in the plots. The project has additionally discussed how films featuring modern environmentalism can affect an audience through embodied cognition. Films manage to use the cognition in humans and thus appeal to their senses through sight and sound; embodied cognition thereby enables the viewers to understand the narrative in the film through their senses. Filmmakers thus appeal to humans’ embodied cognition in order to invite them into their storyworlds and engage them in the frightening tale they tell about the dangers of the environmental crisis. Cognition is therefore crucial for humans in order to understand the plot and, additionally, for them to store this new information through their senses. Climatologists, sociologists, psychologists and cultural studies have argued that films are an effective way for a viewer to perceive the environmental crisis as a *present* reality. Consequently, the ecocritical analyses have established how *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012) and *Maleficent* (2014) manage to represent two examples of modern films that feature several anthropocentric and environmental threats as a frightening reality.

10.0 Works Cited

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