

THE IMAGE OF FAIRY TALE PRINCESS AND
THE REPRESENTATION OF THE HEROINE
IN CONTEMPORARY FILM

by

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Introduction

In 2015, Disney studio released a live-action film *Cinderella* directed by Kenneth Branagh. In the film, the heroine is amazingly good and kind. She keeps her mother's belief "have courage and be kind," and tries to be gentle with her cruel stepfamily. Her sweetness to people and animals may make the audience smile warmly.

Cinderella's goodness and kindness has been considered as her important trait in some versions. In the story of the Grimm Brothers, Cinderella keeps being good, following her mother's words. The graceful and sweet attitude of Perrault's Cinderella to her stepsisters equates with Branagh's heroine. Walt Disney's Cinderella is also represented as kind and gentle.

This thesis aims to analyze the image of Cinderella's goodness incorporated in Kenneth Branagh's *Cinderella* (2015), examining the other tales and films. Chapter I discusses Charles Perrault's "Cendrillon ou la petite pantoufle de verre" whose image of graceful and sweet-natured Cinderella inspired Branagh's film. Chapter II considers Disney's animated feature *Cinderella*, which is the original of Branagh's adaptation. In Chapter III, contemporary filmic variations including *Cinderella* (2015) are discussed. The thesis examines how the traditional Cinderella embodies the views of goodness, and also how Branagh's version inherits the goodness from them.

Chapter I Cinderella in Literature

Charles Perrault's "Cendrillon ou la petite pantoufle de verre"

Alongside the Grimm Brothers' "Aschenputtel," Charles Perrault's "Cendrillon" is the most famous and authoritative version. It has been adapted to popular Cinderella films including Walt Disney's *Cinderella* (1950) and Kenneth Branagh's *Cinderella* (2015). The movies inherit the storyline, the motifs, and the characters from the tale of Perrault. Moreover, Perrault's story played an important role to concrete the image of "good Cinderella" seen in these films. Therefore, discussing the details of Perrault's "Cendrillon" is essential to consider Branagh's *Cinderella* and its original version: Disney's *Cinderella*.

1. Backgrounds of "Cendrillon ou la petite pantoufle de verre"

Charles Perrault was a man of letters in France in the 17th century, an official in Louis XIV's court, and a member of the early French Academy. His "Cendrillon ou la petite pantoufle de verre" ("Cinderella or the Little Glass Slipper") was published as one of eight fairy tales in *Histoires ou contes du temps passé. Avec des moralités* (*Stories or Tales of the Old Times with the Morals*) in France in 1697. "Cendrillon" and the other *contes* in the book are based on old stories that had been told among people in France. Each *conte* consists of a story part in prose and a moral part in verse.

The tales and the morals in *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* projected the culture in the French court in the late 17th century. For

example, in “Cendrillon,” the details of the stepsisters’ hairstyle and dresses show the fashion in Louis XIV’s court (Niikura 278). Moreover, in the French court at the time, the term called *conte de fée* (“fairy tale”) appeared, and “became fashionable among the men and women” (Stein 167). French oral tales were successively transformed into the literary form, and announced in the salons. Many *contes de fée* were written by the ladies such as Marie-Catherine d’Aulnoy and Perrault’s niece Marie-Jeanne L’héritier. Perrault joined in the salons of d’Aunoy and of L’héritier, and of other ladies (Zipes, “Perrault” 379). In this way, Perrault’s tales can be associated with the fairy-tale popularity in the French court in the 17th century.

Perrault’s fairy tales show his ironical view of the court society. The 17th century was the period that the French *moraliste* writers inquired and satirized people and human lives. As Yoko Kudo points out, Perrault also has the eyes of the *moraliste*, and describes human temperament and the inner subtleties of the characters (Kudo 183). The morals of the tales also come from his observations on the human world.

The two morals of “Cendrillon” describe the ideal and the reality of the French court. The first moral tells the ideal that inner grace is worthier than outward beauty. The moral stresses “[s]ans elle on ne peut rien, avec elle, on peut tout.” (“we cannot succeed without the grace, but we can make everything possible with it”; Perrault 164). But, another moral denies this line; it says that the grace is wasted without a godmother’s help. Another moral reflects the court society

which was difficult for the courtiers to survive without patrons (Kudo 183). In another moral, Perrault sharply represents the bitter reality in the court.

Histoires ou contes du temps passé outwardly seems an educational book for children because of the morals and the preface that refer to the tales' value for children. But it is substantially placed in the literary fashion of the French *moralistes* in the 17th century, and inquires what the human being is.

2. Cendrillon: Brilliant and Graceful Heroine

Cendrillon is featured by the perfection of beauty and goodness. Perrault describes her beauty in comparison with her stepsisters:

Cendrillon, avec ses méchants habits, ne laissait pas d'être cent fois plus belle que ses sœurs, quoique vêtues très magnifiquement (Perrault 158).

Even in her ragged clothes, she [Cendrillon] looked a hundred times more beautiful than either of her sisters, despite their splendid dresses (Betts 130).

This part shows that Cendrillon's beauty is opposite to her stepsisters' artificial beauty. At the ball, her beauty rivets attentions of the people. When she enter the ballroom:

Il se fit alors un grand silence ; on cessa de danser, et les violons ne jouèrent plus, tant on était attentif à contempler les grandes beautés de cette inconnue. On n'entendait qu'un bruit confus : « Ah, qu'elle est

belle ! » (Perrault 160)

A great silence fell; the dancers stopped their dancing, the musicians stopped their music, so eagerly were they gazing at the great beauty of the unknown girl. The only thing that could be heard was a murmur of voices exclaiming: ‘How beautiful she is!’ (Betts 134)

Perrault amazingly represents that Cendrillon’s beauty fascinates people in the ballroom. This description of the “great silence” is impressive that she is so attractive that the participants forget to dance.

Cendrillon’s goodness is also outstanding. She is described as “une jeune fille ... d’une douceur et d’une bonté sans exemple” (“a young daughter, who was amazingly sweet-natured and kind”; Perrault 156; Betts 130). No matter how she is abused by her stepfamily, she is kind to them, and works for them patiently. Even when her stepsisters make fun of her, she treats them sweetly.

Moreover, the happy ending of this tale displays her incredible goodness. When Cendrillon reveals herself as the girl whom the prince looks for, her stepsisters apologize to her for their spiteful deeds:

Cendrillon les releva, et leur dit, en les embrassent, qu’elle leur pardonnait de bon cœur, et qu’elle les priaît de l’aimer bier toujours. ... Cendrillon, qui était aussi bonne que belle, fit loger ses deux sœurs au Palais, et les maria dès le jour même à deux grands Seigneurs de la Cour. (Perrault 164)

Cinderella made them get up, embraced them, told them

that she forgave them with all her heart, and said that she begged them to love her kindly always. ...Cinderella, who was as good-natured as she was beautiful, arranged for her two sisters to live in the palace, and married them on the same day to two great lords at the Court. (Betts 139)

Perrault's ending is unique that the heroine and her rivals become happy together. The punishment of the stepsisters nor the separation between the heroine and her antagonists are not seen in this version. Moreover, this part describes Cendrillon "as good-natured as she was beautiful," and thus the excellence of her goodness is shown as equivalent to her noteworthy beauty.

Cendrillon's superb beauty and goodness make her graceful and unrivaled. Her charm pleases the prince and the people at the ball, and also makes her stepsisters happy finally. Cendrillon's brilliance makes her less miserable than the Grimms' Aschenputtel and Disney's Cinderella. Perrault describes how Cendrillon kindly acts toward her stepsisters rather than the heroine's adversity by the stepfamily's wickedness. At the ball, Cendrillon is polite and kind to her stepsisters, and gives them some of the fruits that the prince gave her. At the house, she enjoys hearing about herself at the ball from the excited sisters who do not know Cendrillon is her. Then, she smilingly and kiddingly asks one of the sisters to lend her a dress for the second day.

The impression of the shoe fitting scene is also opposite to the versions of the Grimms and of Disney. In the Grimms' "Aschenputtel,"

the heroine's father thinks her as unsuitable for the prince, and ignores her until the prince asks to see her. In Disney's film, the wicked stepmother locks Cinderella in the attic. Perrault stresses Cendrillon's sweetness and brightness rather than her humiliated situation. When the gentleman from the palace visits her house with her slipper, she offers to fit it with laughing. Perrault's focus on Cendrillon's brightness makes the tale unique among these popular Cinderella stories.

Cendrillon's sweetness and brilliance is linked to the grace called *bonne grâce* in the first morals. As mentioned above, the moral says the *bonne grâce* is more precious and powerful than the beauty. The moral also tells "C'est ce qu'à Cendrillon fit avoir sa Marriaine" ("It [the grace] is what Cendrillon was bestowed from her godmother" Perrault 164). Consequently, Cendrillon embodies the *bonne grâce* as the inner charm but not the outward beauty and materialism embodied by her stepsisters. The sisters are featured by haughtiness and splendid and fashionable materials such as English lace, beauty spots, and corsets. Their character is opposite to Cendrillon who is sweet and mysterious.

The *bonne grâce* was a notable idea in the French court under the Louis XIV. The term includes kindness, sincerity, and goodness that Cendrillon represents (Kudo 182). It also means indefinable charm which comes out from human inner (Katagi 53). Furthermore, for the French courtiers in the 17th century, the *bonne grâce* evoked the idea *plaire* ("to be favored") that was considered significant in the court at the time (Mizuno 126). For the courtiers under the absolute reign of

Louis XIV, the king's favor was crucial to be in a high position in the court (Mizuno 6-7). Therefore, in the court, being agreeable was important, and behaviors were greatly paid attention (Mizuno 7). Cendrillon as the embodiment of the *bonne grâce* offers a model of the good attitude in the French court in the 17th century.

In the court, the behaviors controlled by reason were considered agreeable (Mizuno 235). The courtiers' behaviors should have corresponded with the circumstances, and also their emotions should have been restrained (Mizuno 235). In the tale, Cendrillon's actions and feelings are well-controlled. She keeps the order of the places: she behaves obediently as a servant in her house, and becomes a graceful princess in the palace. When her stepsisters asked to help their preparations for the ball, "Cendrillon les conseilla le mieux du monde" ("Cendrillon advised them better than any others" Perrault 158). When she was in the center at the ball, "[e]lle" dansa avec tant de grâce, qu'on l'admira encore davantage" ("she danced so gracefully that she was admired even more"; Perrault 161; Betts 134). Cendrillon's charm is that she can act properly as the lady in the French court.

Thereupon, Cendrillon's forgiveness of her stepsisters in the ending is based on the rational principle of the French court. Her acceptance of the sisters' apology is a reasonable act because she is not influenced by her vengefulness, and also the forgiveness finally brings harmony to the relationship between her and the sisters. This scene displays the peak of her sweetness and graceful behavior parallel with the ideal of restrained and well-proportioned human figure.

Thus, Perrault created the image of a beautiful and good heroine. The moral value of “Cendrillon” is linked to his eyes on the human qualities of the French court society in the 17th century. Thus, Perrault stresses the manners to survive in the French court rather than the universal value of good and evil. Cendrillon embodies the ideal person with tranquility and sweetness preferred in the court of Louis XIV.

Chapter II Modernized Cinderella

Walt Disney's *Cinderella* (1950)

Walt Disney's *Cinderella* (1950) is an adaptation of Perrault's "Cinderella" and also the original of Kenneth Branagh's *Cinderella*. This canonical movie of Walt Disney has amplified and disseminated the magical and romantic image of the heroine and her story. Cinderella's metamorphosis from a girl in rags into a princess with the sparkling glass slippers is shown as magnificent and dramatic. The ball scene is highlighted by her fairy godmother's magic and her romantic dance with the prince. Today, Disney's Cinderella is an idol. She is a member of Disney Princess, and appears in the toys for little girls and the cosmetics for grown women. Today's generalization of Disney's Cinderella overshadows the film's uniqueness that reflects the sense of value of Americans after World War II. This chapter describes the image of Disney's Cinderella connected to the ideal woman in post-war America.

1. Good Cinderella and Evil Stepfamily

The antagonism between Cinderella and her stepfamily is a major element of Disney's version. Their bad relationship is more similar to the one in the Grimms' tale than Perrault's version. In both Disney's film and the Grimms' tale, Cinderella is good-hearted, and her stepfamily is represented as extremely evil. Perrault's Cinderella and her stepsisters are finally reconciled, but the Grimms and Disney divide

Cinderella and her stepfamily throughout the stories. In both versions, only Cinderella is rewarded. The Grimms' stepsisters are punished by Cinderella's birds, and Disney's stepfamily does not appear in the last scene of Cinderella's wedding. As Jack Zipes points out, Disney follows and reinforces Grimms moral framework (Zipes, *Otogibanashi* 242). Disney's *Cinderella* emphasizes the confrontation between good Cinderella and her evil stepfamily and also good Cinderella's triumph.

The mice's fight against the cat named Lucifer is an element that reinforces the hostility between Cinderella and her stepfamily. They are unique characters in Disney's version, and do not appear in the tales of Perrault and of the Grimms. The mice are Cinderella's good friends, and Lucifer is the "mean" cat of the stepmother. The small mice are threatened by big and fierce Lucifer, but confront and outwit him. Their comical battles are the miniatures of serious tension between Cinderella and her stepfamily. Both Cinderella and her mice are oppressed by the force of her stepfamily and the bad cat. The double plots blame the oppression to the innocent characters: Cinderella and the mice, and also praise the triumph of the good heroine and her small company.

Disney's *Cinderella* emphasizes dream, and the heroine does not embody only the goodness but also the ideal of fulfilling dreams. She believes that her dreams come true in her adversity, and finally realizes her wish of becoming happy. Different from the Grimms' and Perrault's versions, the word "dream" appears many times throughout the film. In the opening scene, Cinderella sings "the dream that you wish will come

true.” This song called “A Dream is a Wish Your Heart Makes” also appears when the fairy godmother comes to her and in the scene of her wedding. The song symbolizes her positive attitude to her dream, and thematizes that the faith makes the dreams come true.

The spiteful and depressing stepfamily appears as the obstacle that Cinderella has to overcome in order to achieve her ideal. They try to break her dreams of going to the ball and marrying the prince by tearing her dress and locking her in the attic. Cinderella’s triumph over the stepfamily enhances the rightness of her faithful attitude to her dreams. Thus, the film praises the faith in the dream and Cinderella as an American ideal. The film’s trait evokes the idea of American dream as a victory of the individual will and effort over the birth and the social class. Consequently, Disney’s *Cinderella* is the Cinderella story based on Americans’ sense of value. The film’s assessment of the good and the evil also reflects the American sense.

2. Cinderella and her Stepsisters

Perrault and the Grimms focus on the rivalry between Cinderella and her stepsisters. In the house, the sisters are in a stronger position than Cinderella, and marginalize her covered with ashes. In these stories, the stepsisters are beautiful girls; Perrault’s sisters are fashionable, and the Grimms’ sisters look “beautiful and white” (Tatar, “Cinderella” 117). The beauty of the spiteful sisters emphasizes their vanity and inner ugliness. At the ball, Perrault’s stepsisters’ beautiful hair and dresses are defeated by Cendrillon’s graceful and sweet charm.

The Grimms' "Aschenputtel" contrasts the sisters' "beautiful and white" appearances with their "foul and black" hearts (Tatar, "Cinderella" 117). When the prince looked for the girl whose foot fitted the golden shoe, "[t]he two sisters were overjoyed, for they both had beautiful feet" (Tatar, "Cinderella" 121). But, their feet do not fit Aschenputtel's shoe, and finally their beautiful body is damaged. Their mother hurts their feet in order to fit them to the small shoe, and moreover, their eyes are pecked by birds "for their wickedness and malice" (Tatar, "Cinderella" 122). Therefore, these tales demonstrate the superiority of Cinderella's inner charm and goodness over the stepsisters' outward beauty.

However, in Disney's version, the stepsisters called Drizella and Anastasia are featured by their exaggerated ugly looks. Different from the sisters in the literary versions, they are weak rivals for their pretty stepsister. Their advantage is brought by not their charm but their mother's power. Their actions are also represented silly, and their characteristics are opposite to Cinderella's beauty and graceful actions. Cinderella moves elegantly and smoothly even when she is busy with the hard chores. However, the sisters restlessly look around and bump their unshaped bodies against each other. The scene of the ball clarifies the difference between Cinderella's refined manner and the awkwardness of the sisters. The stepsisters restlessly move, childishly jump, and clumsily bow. Their funny movements are completely incongruous with the ladies in the ballroom. Contrary to the sisters, Cinderella's walking and dance with the prince is graceful. Her modest

actions match the prince's noble appearance and the magnificent castle.

Furthermore, the sisters' loud voices and terrible musical talent are contrasted with Cinderella's gentle voice and singing which fascinates her animal friends. Disney's princesses are always good singers, and their beautiful voices are tied to their attractiveness. In *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), the princes are attracted to the songs of the heroines. Their sweet and quiet voices are associated with their feminine attractiveness (Whelan 23). Although Cinderella's singing does not make the prince find her, the contrast of "Sing, Sweet Nightingale" between the stepsisters and her shows that Cinderella is more attractive than them.

There is a big gap between the representations of Cinderella's good quality and the sisters' faults. In the film, beautiful Cinderella's image and the ugly sisters' figures effectively display their opposite inner features. The heroine's beautiful images are directly connected to her kind, adorable, graceful character. The stepsisters' ugly appearance is tied to their nastiness and stupidity.

2.1. The Dresses of Lights and Darkness

At the ball, Cinderella is shown as a special woman who is chosen by the prince. She is the only one who attracts his attention because she is "the girl of his dreams" and also "the maid predestined to be his bride." Associated with lights, she is distinguished from the other participants who wear ordinary dresses. Cinderella's outfit is covered with the magical sparkles of her fairy godmother, and shines

white in the ballroom. White is a color of purity, chastity, perfection (Olderr 219), and the wedding dress. Thus, her dress shows her not only remarkable visually, but also as the virtuous and eligible woman for the prince symbolically. Cinderella's brilliant appearance manifests her fine quality, and reinforces her perfection for the prince.

The dresses of her stepsisters express both their loudness and the incongruity with the palace. The whitish tone of Cinderella's outfit is in harmony with the prince's cream-colored jacket when they are together. The color of her costume also evokes the image of the white and pale blue castle. However, the sisters' darkish and loud pink and green dresses are out of harmony with both the prince's clothes and the bright ball room. They match the dark and gaudy tone of their malicious mother's house. Thus, their loud-colored dresses have the opposite image to Cinderella's pale dress. They are contrary to purity and modesty which the heroine embodies. Combined with the plumes on their head, their vivid-colored dresses make the sisters look like the show girls rather than the bride. Consequently, the outfits of the stepsisters evoke the image of imprudence and coarseness. In the scene of the ball, the colors visually and symbolically separate the loud stepsisters from Cinderella's whitish-colored world. While Cinderella is welcomed to the place of her dream, the sisters are rejected from there.

2.2. The Charm of the Blond

Cinderella has blond hair. In the film, there is no blond person

but the heroine; therefore she looks remarkable in her dark house and among the people in the palace. Marina Warner says that Cinderella's hair has been traditionally represented as the blond "as the mark of her perfect loveliness," (Warner, *From* 365). Warner points out the connection between the blond and the beauty:

[b]londness and beauty have provided a conceptual rhyme in visual and literary imagery ever since the goddess of Love's tresses were described as *xanthe*, golden, by Homer (Warner, *From* 363).

Moreover, the blond called "fairness" has also symbolized the goodness:

fairness was guarantee of quality. It was the imaginary opposite of 'foul,' it connected all that was pure, good, clean (Warner, *From* 364).

Thus, Cinderella's blond is a manifestation of her perfection. Warner also mentions the contrasting colors between the blond and the sisters' hair in Disney's *Cinderella*. Drizella's dark hair and Anastasia's red hair can be placed in the tradition of portraying the evil (Warner, *From* 366). Warner's analysis sheds light on the symbolic connection between the beauty and the virtue seen in the blond. In Disney's film, Cinderella's fair hair is the embodiment of her amazing goodness and beauty.

Cinderella's blond is also parallel to the fashionable blond shown by Hollywood actresses from the 1930s to the 1950s. During the period, "actresses from Shirley Temple...to Lana Turner...were willing

to sell themselves as...blondes” (Poole 209). Moreover, there was a flood of the word “blonde” in the titles such as *Blonde Venus* (1932) and *My Favorite Blonde* (1942) (Poole 210). Since Jean Harlow in the early 1930s, the blond had been special attention as a sign of brilliancy (Vigarelli 293-4). The popularity of the blond in the American films generated the stereotypes of the blond women.

In the 1950s, three stereotypes of the blond women prevailed. Christine Margaret Young calls them “the ethereal blonde,” “the bombshell blonde,” and “the girl next door” (Young 1). The ethereal blondes are elegant and mysterious, and conceal their darkness and sensuality (Young 19). Grace Kelly and Ingrid Bergman in the films of Alfred Hitchcock represent this type (Young 19). Marilyn Monroe is the typical bombshell blonde, who is sexually attractive, “beautiful and often perceived as ‘dumb’” (Young 10). The ethereal blonde and the bombshell blonde were popular before the 1950s, but the girl next door emerged during the 1950s (Young 16). Debbie Reynolds and Doris Day as the girls next door are young, cheerful, innocent, and less sexy than the old types (Young 20). These stereotypes are different, but share the idea that the blond girl is attractive. Therefore, in Disney’s film in 1950, the blond hair characterizes Cinderella as charming and pleasant.

Disney’s Cinderella looks elegant and calm like the ethereal type. But, she is essentially warm, young and innocent, and therefore heralded the friendly girl-next-door when the film was released. Consequently, she is a perfect bride because the girl next door was expected as “a model for young woman to practice attractiveness which

would lead to marriage” (Young 21). In the 1950s, an ideal American wife was a cheerful, homely, and modest woman (Kawamoto 162-4). Cinderella’s character and actions correspond to the ideal. She sings happily, takes care of the animals kindly, and does chores silently and efficiently. Thus, Cinderella’s blond can be associated with the idea that she is successful and reasonable as a wife.

From the traditional and the fashionable points of view, Cinderella’s blond hair is tied to her charm, pleasantness, and perfection. Especially, in the 1950s absorbed in the “blondes,” it is possible that her hair made her attractive and significant for the American audience. Drizella’s dark hair and Anastasia’s dull red hair make the contrast with the brightness of Cinderella’s blond. Moreover, the mismatch between the colors of their hair and dresses makes them unattractive. The loud and uneasy tone of their colors is associated with their noisy and vulgar character. In this way, the colors of hair create the bright image of Cinderella and the dark image of her stepsisters.

Thus, Disney’s version tightly links the appearances of Cinderella and her stepsisters to their inner qualities. Cinderella is associated with the visual brightness and the image of the attractive American blondes in the early 20th century. On the contrary, the darkness and the ugliness are the traits of the stepsisters, and therefore they set off Cinderella’s brilliance. Cinderella demonstrates happy fantasy for the Americans after the Second World War. Her femininity as the attractiveness and her happy marriage are parallel to the post-war popular connection between the beauty and the good marriage. At the

time, the advertisements of the beauty products for the women tied being beautiful to marriage (Evans 387). The films also showed a lot of charming brides. Marilyn Yalom says:

[t]he popular media of this period projected images of women determined to catch and preserve a husband. Gone were the career-women films of the thirties and forties, where stars such as Katharine Hepburn and Rosalind Russell triumphed as confident airplane pilots, lawyers, and journalists. Instead, cute coeds and spunky wives, played by Doris Day and Debbie Reynolds, incarnated the American ideal—upbeat, earnest, and coyly sexual. Even such superstars as Elizabeth Taylor and Marilyn Monroe, who exuded polymorphous sexuality, were generally crowned with wedding veils by the end of the film. (Yalom 322-3)

Cinderella is also one of the ideal brides who appeared in the post-war American films. In the comparison with her ugly stepsisters, Cinderella is defined as the attractive bride who is suitable for the happy marriage.

3. Cinderella and her Stepmother

The stepmother in Disney's film is described as "cold" and "cruel." The motive of Disney's stepmother is also jealousy for "Cinderella's charm and beauty" as Perrault's one. However, Disney emphasizes her cruel and malicious act rather than her feeling. Different from Perrault's stepmother, she interferes in Cinderella's way

to become the princess. Like the Grimms' stepmother who cuts off her daughters' toe and heel, the cruelty of Disney's stepmother works in order to make one of her daughters marry the prince. She craftily tries to spoil Cinderella's chances of going to the ball and her romance with the prince. Knowing that Cinderella is too busy to prepare for the ball, the stepmother permits her to go to the palace. When she sees that Cinderella can go, she induces her daughters to tear Cinderella's dress. After the ball, the stepmother realizes that Cinderella is the maid whom the prince loves, and prevents her from trying the glass slipper. Finally, she has the messenger stumble over her cane so that the glass slipper is broken. The collision between Cinderella's dreaming power and the stepmother's depressing force is full of suspense.

Her refined and annoying crafts make her a major and shocking character in the film. In Perrault's version, the stepmother vanishes from the story after the ball is announced. The Grimms' version also describes the stepsisters more than the stepmother. But, Disney foregrounds the stepmother; thus the antagonism between Cinderella and her is a significant element in the film. The stepmother's toughness, cunningness, and cruelty overshadow her stupid daughters, and also make her a great threat for Cinderella. She oppresses her stepdaughter, and Cinderella must overcome her stepmother to achieve her happiness. In this way, the film focuses on the confrontation between "good" Cinderella and her "wicked" stepmother.

3.1. The Ideal Housewife vs. the Old-Fashioned Mistress

As mentioned above, Cinderella's relation with her stepsister is associated with her quality as the bride. The contrast between her and the stepmother can be linked to the female life after the wedding. During the post-war period absorbed in the marriage as happiness, being a good wife and a mother was important for women. At the time, a family was considered as a worthy unit. Theoretically, it was the peaceful cosmos contrasted to the hostility and collisions outside of the home (Evans 383). Women were expected to be the center of the family, and to support their family members. The housewife "as a construction of a white middle-class, heterosexual femininity" was the "assumption of a proper feminine identity" (Lloyd and Johnson 141). They were considered as "responsible for managing an entire household" and important to "shape the next generation of Americans [their children]" (Catalano 46-7).

In the media, the housewives were idols. Marilyn Yalom states, "[t]he 1950s television sitcoms featured families," and "[l]ovable stay-at-home wives sparred with breadwinning husbands, usually besting the men with a lighthearted touch" (Yalom 323). The wives in the TV were "spotless" and "reigned over superclean homes and superclean children" (Yalom 323). The popular image of the housewives was associated with not only the attractiveness but also the cleanness. The ideal of the happy and clean home in the period seems to be almost obsession. Sara M. Evans mentions that the high quality of whiteness was a selling point of the post-war washing machines (Evans

391). Yalom says that the media such as TV and magazines promoted “higher standards of household cleanliness and personal attractiveness” (Yalom 323).

The post-war ideal of the charming and clean housewife is also reflected in Disney’s *Cinderella*. Cinderella is the girl expected to be a good housewife. When she takes on housekeeping, she wears the white apron as a symbol of the virtuous middle-class housewife (Kawamoto 122). Besides the pure image of her white apron, she is represented by clean images such as water and soap bubbles. In the scene that she sings “Sing, Sweet Nightingale,” she cleans the floor with the clear water and the soap. Interestingly, the appearance of Disney’s Cinderella is not dirty although she works in the dust and dirt. The movie displays the cleanness of her body, showing that she washes herself. In the scene of the morning, she bathes, and the mice brush away dust on her shoes. Thus, Cinderella does not look dirty and tired but pure and healthy even though she is described as “abused” and “humiliated.”

Furthermore, Disney’s version completely ignores and purifies the meaning of the name of “Cinderella” in the traditional stories. In Perrault’s tale, the stepsisters give the heroine the nickname “Cinderella,” mocking at her covered with “cinder” in the hearth. Also in the Grimms’ version, the heroine “always looked so dusty and dirty that people started to call her Cinderella” (Tatar, “Cinderella” 117). However, Disney’s version shows her name as a manifestation of her amazing character. The first song of the film describes her: “Cinderella, you’re as lovely as your name.” In the film, “Cinderella” is not the

wicked nickname but shown as the heroine's real name. In this way, Disney's version removes the darkness and the dustiness from the name of the heroine, and redefines it as the ideal femininity featured by her purity, prettiness, and romantic marriage with the fine prince.

Disney's film also emphasizes and praises Cinderella's motherhood. She takes care of her animals as if they were her beloved children. She serves clothes and food to the mice, and warns her dog to get along with Lucifer. Moreover, at the palace, the king welcomes Cinderella as a mother of his grandchildren rather than his son's partner. The king's only wish is "to see my [his] grandchildren" before he dies, and he grieves that his son does not marry and have children. At the ball to find the bride, the king is angry to see the prince is not interested in girls in the ballroom, and complains: "there must be at least one who'd make a suitable mother!" He unconsciously calls his son's bride "mother," and this scene shows that he naturally expects his son's wife to be a mother. After the prince is attracted to Cinderella, the king is so satisfied that he has a happy dream of his grandchildren. The king's character, words, and behaviors reinforce Cinderella's identity as a young woman who naturally becomes a mother after the wedding. Thus, the film associates Cinderella with the model of housewife who is responsible for keeping her home clean and raising her children.

In this context, the stepmother is a model of the terrible housewife. She is completely opposite to Cinderella and the "superclean" mothers on TV in the 1950s. She embodies the old ruling class woman who makes her servants do domestic chores. In the film,

she is described as “a woman of good family,” and her lifestyle is luxurious and aristocratic. In the 1950s’ consideration that the wives should serve for her family, abandoning domestic chores is linked to irresponsibility and laziness.

The stepmother does not keep her home clean, but turns the lovely “stately chateau” into the gloomy place. Using the dark visual images and music, the film intimates that the stepmother brings Cinderella’s house darkness and ominous mood. In the opening scene, little Cinderella is in the bright garden with her father, and on the other hand, her stepmother stays in the dark room with her daughters. As soon as the father dies, Cinderella’s pastel-colored world is overshadowed by the stepmother’s dark world, and the white chateau becomes dark. This opening scene symbolizes the stepmother’s existence as the threat to Cinderella.

The image of the stepmother is opposite to the idea of warm and self-sacrificing housewife who devotedly supports her family. Traditionally and in the post-war period, a family’s success and failure were considered to depend on the wife, and her bad relationship with her husband and her children’s troubles were accounted to her problems (Yalom 325). From this point of view, the stepmother is represented as the corrupt wife and mother. She never shows affection for her husband and stepdaughter, and indulges her selfish and rude daughters. The stepmother’s evilness is related to not only her cruelty but also her identity as the blameworthy housewife. In this way, the representations of Cinderella and the stepmother reflect the post-war view of the

American housewife. The home setting of the Cinderella story plays an important part in the characterizations of the heroine and her stepmother.

Today, Walt Disney's *Cinderella* is considered "the classic," but it is unique and fresh in Cinderella's tradition. The theme of dream and the images of good and evil are tied to American sense of value after World War II. This American and "modernized" Cinderella shares the attractiveness of the popular heroines in the post-war media of the country. She is the ideal girl who gets her happiness as marriage by her beautiful qualities such as her appearance, gentleness, and ability of managing home. The film emphasizes the possibility of the future and next generation. Cinderella believes that her dreams will come true, and displays her ability for her future life as a wife and a mother. Her stepmother is featured by old lifestyle, and thus symbolizes the past. Therefore, Cinderella's triumph over her stepmother means the preeminence of the next generation over the old world.

Cinderella's "success story" must have been vivid for the audience who wanted to recover the harmony: the peace and the gender order. During the war, a lot of wives worked outside of the home. Marilyn Yalom refers to the working wives during World War II:

[D]uring the Depression, the working wife had been the object of widespread disapproval for "taking away a man's job," now [during World War II], with the labor shortage, she was courted and praised. Rosie the Riveter, housewife-turned-factory worker, became a national

icon (Yalom 289).

However, when their husbands returned from the war, the wives were expected to go back to keep their home. Yalom says that it was the “popular sentiment” at the time (Yalom 313). After the war, motherhood was also insisted as the women’s nature (Evans 375). Therefore, Cinderella’s housewifely characteristics respond to the dominant value in the post-war America. Even at present time, this Cinderella film is influential in associating two images: happy marriage and being the good housewife.

Chapter III Cinderella after Walt Disney

Kenneth Branagh's *Cinderella* (2015)

Charles Perrault's tale and Walt Disney's animated feature greatly inspired Kenneth Branagh's *Cinderella* in 2015. It vividly represents these stories' well-known images: the fairy godmother's "bibidi-babidi-boo," the pumpkin carriage, the brilliant palace, and the crystal-clear glass slippers.

The screen has favored fairy tales, and contemporary filmmakers still continue to create adaptations. After 2010, there are a rush of the fairy-tale films such as *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012), *Mirror Mirror* (2012), *Frozen* (2013), and *Maleficent* (2014). But, recent fairy-tale princesses are very different from Disney's classical heroines: Snow White in 1937, Cinderella in 1950, and Aurora in *Sleeping Beauty* (1950). Snow White, Cinderella, and Aurora quietly sing their love for their princes, smiling sweetly. On the contrary, the contemporary heroines are more spirited and heroic: they are armed, have their adventure, and fight against injustice. In *Snow White and the Huntsman* and *Mirror Mirror*, Snow Whites take swords, and save their kingdoms from the evil queens. *Frozen* and *Maleficent* praise the sisterhood and friendship, and refuse the romantic relationship between the princess and the prince.

Therefore, in a film review in *the Guardian*, Peter Bradshaw commented that Kenneth Branagh's *Cinderella* is "trad." The structure of this film actually follows the "traditional" Cinderella story: patient

Cinderella overcomes her spiteful stepfamily and marries the prince. The heroine named Ella is characterized by her sweetness and grace. These features make this film unique in the contemporary fairy-tale films which prefer a twisted plot and empowered heroines.

1. Contemporary Fairy-tale Princesses on the Screen

Patrick McCormick contrasts the modern “do-it-all damsel” with the “damsel in distress who dreams that someday her prince will come to whisk her away to his castle” (McCormick 40). Feminism has greatly contributed to the formation of the brave heroines; McCormick also calls the spunky modern heroines “feminist princesses” (McCormick 41). In modern reviews of the fairy-tale film, the “traditional” representations of the heroines are frequently censured. Instead, the “revisionist” and “feminist” heroines are praised and commented positively. In the article in *the Guardian*, Marina Warner says:

[s]ince the 1960s, criticism has pointed to the lies peddled by stories such as “Beauty and the Beast” – especially the overvaluing of wealth and power invested in the male – and as a result, the generations brought up by grandmothers and mothers who know their Betty Friedan, Angela Carter and Naomi Wolf have brought a new consciousness to the new way classic stories are reshaped for the screen.

Therefore, the contemporary fairy-tale heroines usually display their independence and activity to confront the difficulties. Jack Zipes

criticizes the traditional Disney princess as the “trophy” for the prince (Zipes, *The Enchanted* 24). The modern heroines are not the “prince’s trophy,” but they are so adroit and powerful that they can contest with the heroes. They also choose to reveal their emotions and opinions rather than to be the symbol of prettiness.

1.1. Contemporary Cinderella 1: *Ever After* (1998)

In the sequence of the Cinderella films, *Ever After* is frequently related to feminism and modernism. Jessica Tiffin analyzes:

Ever After combines an unabashed appeal of the Hollywood notion of fairy-tale romance with a self-conscious determination to update the Cinderella narrative to more modern ideas of realism and feminist principles. (Tiffin 314)

Moreover, Richard Lawson calls the film “lite-revisionist tale” in an article written for *Vanity Fair*’s website. In online *Film Journal International*, Kevin Lally reviews “Barrymore [who acts the heroine] is the ideal revisionist Cinderella, still girlish and adorable, but also bright, headstrong and indomitable.” The heroine called Danielle is a representative of the contemporary princesses, who willingly tries to change the world. Her bravery, political intelligence, and defiant attitude are contrasts to the sweetness and meekness of Cinderellas in the stories of Perrault, of the Grimms, and of Disney. Danielle expresses her anger and resistance to the injustice and the oppression. Moreover, Danielle is different from the “traditional” Cinderellas

because she shows her interest in the society and the politics. She is influenced by Tomas More's *Utopia*, and confidently argues with Prince Henry on the way that the monarch and the state should be. She also uses her wisdom and bravery to save her servants maltreated by her tyrannical stepmother. The canonical Cinderellas of Perrault, of the Grimms, and of Disney do not challenge their world. They obey "the patriarchal symbolical order based on rigid notions of sexuality and gender" (Zipes, *The Enchanted* 19). Their profession is domestic chores, and their interest is going to the ball rather than reforming the unfairness. Thus, Danielle's eyes on the society are unique in comparison with "traditional" Cinderellas of Perrault, of the Grimms, and of Disney.

Contrary to Disney's *Cinderella* that emphasizes the heroine's dream and fantastic aspect, *Ever After* focuses on actuality. In the beginning of the film, Danielle's story is shown as a "true story" that her descendant told to the Grimm Brothers. The setting of the film is France in the 16th century, but not a faraway kingdom in old time. The film is negative of the magical and fateful power that guides the heroine. Instead of the fairy godmother, Leonardo da Vinci helps Danielle to go to the ball. Her love with Prince Henry is different from the simple and picturesque romance in Disney's *Cinderella*. They need a lot of time, misunderstandings, and effort to understand each other.

In *Ever After*, the characters have to decide wisely and act bravely in order to survive in the difficult world without the magic. Danielle is not protected and saved by neither the prince nor the magic.

She shows a model of the realistic heroine who has to save herself, and explores the world powerfully.

1.2. Contemporary Cinderella 2: *Into the Woods* (2014)

In 2014, the question of the traditional Cinderella image remained. Cinderella and her story in a musical film, *Into the Woods* (2014) are very different from the classical ones. The original musical first appeared in 1987, and has been presented around the world. The songwriter, Stephen Sondheim and the scriptwriter, James Lapine were interested in the fairy tales as the embodiment of human desire (Benson 497). In the interview recorded in the brochure of this film, Sondheim and Lapine say that the musical tells about the wish and its influence on the society. Therefore, *Into the Woods* is slightly different from the feminist fairy tales that resist the conventional gender roles. This film concerns the discord between the individual happiness and the ideal and happiness that the traditional fairy tales codified.

Into the Woods questions that the fairy-tale characters truly become happy after their happy endings. The first half follows the traditional fairy-tale plot. The characters such as Little Red Riding Hood and Jack of “Jack and the Beanstalk” overcome their adversity, realize their wishes, and have happiness. In the way of the Grimms’ Aschenputtel, Cinderella escapes from her nightmarish house, and becomes the prince’s bride. However, the second half shows that their “happiness” is wrong and uncertain. Cinderella realizes that the palace is not her place, and leaves the frivolous prince. In *Into the Woods*,

Cinderella's episode offers the antithesis of the marriage as the happy ending in the traditional Cinderella stories. For Cinderella in this movie, the marriage with the prince is represented as her wrong choice.

Into the Woods breaks the specialty of the girl called Cinderella; the canonical Cinderellas symbolize the rightness, but this Cinderella is imperfect and makes a mistake. The film denies the traditional sense that extraordinary kindness and grace must be the essence of the heroine. In the relation with her malicious stepfamily, this Cinderella doubts that being good would save her. Actually, being abused by her stepsisters, she sings "Mother said be good. Father said be nice. ... What's the good of being good?" In the scene, Cinderella does her sister's hair so roughly and tightly that it makes the sister offended. This Cinderella's rude attitude to her stepsisters is not seen in the versions of the Grimms, of Disney, and of the Perrault. Especially, Perrault's Cendrillon is a contrast to this Cinderella because Cendrillon does her stepsisters' hair gently and perfectly. Therefore, Cinderella in *Into the Woods* cynically questions the absolute goodness and sweetness of the traditional Cinderellas.

Furthermore, the film does not idolize but satirizes Cinderella at the ball. In the ball scene, her romantic encounter with the prince and dance are not represented. All she does is running down the steps of the palace from the prince. In the final day of the ball, she sings "On the Steps of the Palace." This song focuses on her quick choice whether she should be with the prince or back to her house. In the interviews in the film's brochure and in the online *Los Angeles Times*, the director, Rob

Marshall says that this song is partly altered in order to emphasize that Cinderella has to decide in the moment. In the original musical, it is presented after Cinderella returned to her home. But Marshall placed the song in her running scene, and changed the tense of the lyrics. Therefore, the scene of “On the Steps of the Palace” in the film is successful in representing the hastiness and the difficulty of making a decision quickly and properly. In that scene, Cinderella can’t move on the pitch on the steps by the prince’s artifice to catch her. Then, she knows that she has to decide whether she should be at the fantastic palace or her terrible house. It is difficult for her to make her “first big decision” instantly. She decides and sings: “I know what my decision is which is not to decide. I’ll just leave him a clue, for example, a shoe. And then, see what he’ll do.” Consequently, she purposely leaves her shoe in order to let the prince find her and to see whether he truly wants to marry her.

The scene of “On the Steps of the Palace” neutralizes the romantic fantasy seen in Disney’s *Cinderella*. For Cinderella in *Into the Woods*, the prince is neither her genuine happiness nor her true love, but one choice in her life. Moreover, “choice” to leave her slipper is an irony of her passivity. Her decision of “not to decide” shows her adroitness, but at the same time it suggests her abandonment of her will in her life. Placing her confession in the Grimms’ traditional plot, this scene reveals the absence of Cinderella’s subjectivity in “her” happy ending which has been traditionally admired.

Therefore, Cinderella in *Into the Woods* questions and

destabilizes the idolized Cinderella images. She is doubtful of her goodness, attractiveness, and uncertain future. This portrait of her is different from Disney's hopeful Cinderella, and Cendrillon and Aschenputtel who quietly accepts their destiny. This Cinderella is also different from the empowered princesses such as Danielle in *Ever After*. She is too weak to defeat her wicked stepfamily and to control her destiny. *Into the Woods* does not treat her as the special heroine but one of the characters. In the interview shown in *Los Angeles Times*' website, the songwriter, Stephen Sondheim says that *Into the Woods* describes "about community responsibility." In the early half of the film, the characters are absorbed in satisfying their own desire. But, in the last half, they have to cooperate toward the common goal to defeat the giant. *Into the Woods* treats Cinderella and the other characters such as Baker and Witch equally; they are not ideal models but show their flaws. This film offers the unique image of Cinderella as a member of the community but not the pivot of the story.

Ever After and *Into the Woods* present the different Cinderella images from the privileged representatives: Perrault's Cendrillon, the Grimms' Aschenputtel, and Disney's Cinderella. *Ever After* and *Into the Woods* doubt the traditional Cinderella's virtues: sweetness and obedience to her wicked stepfamily, fate and environment. Danielle in *Ever After* embodies the resistance to the tradition, arming herself with intelligence and vitality. Cinderella in *Into the Woods* demonstrates the "flaws" of the traditional story, and amends them; she had to know what she truly wants.

2. *Cinderella* (2015): beyond Traditionalism vs. Revisionism

Different from *Ever After* and *Into the Woods*, Kenneth Branagh's *Cinderella* (2015) favorably approaches the Cinderella tradition. Disney's website introduces this film: "[a] live-action feature film inspired by the classic fairy tale, *Cinderella* brings to life the timeless images from Disney's 1950 animated masterpiece." As these words tell, Branagh's adaptation is faithful to Perrault's "Cendrillon" and Disney's *Cinderella*. The heroine, Ella is not aggressive, but sweet and graceful like Perrault's Cendrillon. She friendly looks after the animals, as Disney's *Cinderella* does. This film does not distort the magical assistance, the romantic atmosphere of the ball, and the marriage as the happy ending in the popular stories. As Betsy Sharkey points out in the online *Los Angeles Times*, *Cinderella* has "[n]o sly asides, no double entendres and nary a hint of modern-day gender politics." Branagh's *Cinderella* pays homage to the original versions rather than satirizes them.

The faithfulness gave some critics the impression that this film supports wrong stereotypes of the fairy-tale heroines. In the DVD review in *the Guardian*, Charlie Lyne comments:

Disney traditionalists are sure to find comfort in Kenneth Branagh's live-action *Cinderella* as it glides on to home video this week, because ... this new spin on the glass-slippered classic makes few concessions to contemporary life. ... Ella's absurdly thin waist is scantily more anatomically plausible when placed on an actual

human body, while her quest for a form of liberation defined by marriage to a wealthy, powerful stranger feels retrograde even by Disney standards.

Lynne pays attention to the anti-feminist-like representations of Ella's corseted waist and the prince's rescue of her, and connects these traits to the "traditionalist" and "retrograde" values. However, the film's homage to the tradition does not necessarily mean supporting the conservative female image and social code.

Like *Into the Woods*, and the "revisionist" films such as *Frozen* and *Maleficent*, Branagh's *Cinderella* conveys the fairy-tale power and lesson to the contemporary audience. But, Branagh's version takes the different way of storytelling from these films. The recent films such as *Frozen* replace the traditional frame with the new ones in accord with the modern value of justice. Therefore, their characters and stories greatly look different from the originals or the popular traditional versions. Branagh's *Cinderella* does not deny the traditional versions, but seeks the new meaning in the old structures and representations. Following the familiar plot, the film depicts the characters' backgrounds and complex feeling. Thus, it is successful in the creation of the contemporary Cinderella story that bridges between the modern sense of value and the traditional narrative.

2.1. Grace and Kindness in the Modern World

Cinderella treats Cinderella's kindness as her precious and essential trait. In *E! Online's* interview, Branagh says that the film's

Cinderella called Ella needed to be “crucially kind.” In the film, Ella is described as a girl who “have [has] more kindness in your [her] little finger than most people possess in their whole body” in her mother’s words. “Have courage and be kind” is a wisdom given to Ella from her mother, and also the film’s important theme shown in the beginning of the trailer.

Ella’s courage and kindness mean her tolerance for malice against her. Her stepfamily’s treatment of her is terrible and spiteful. After Ella’s father left, her stepmother and stepsisters do not treat Ella as their company but the humble housemaid. They exclude Ella from the comfortable places, and drive her into the cold and dusty attic and the kitchen. As the sisters in the tales of Perrault and of the Grimms do, her stepsisters give Ella the nickname “Cinderella (Cinder-Ella),” mocking Ella covered with cinders of the hearth. In spite of these unkind treatments, Ella is not revengeful; she does not pull the sisters’ hair nor tries to strike them. Instead, she tries to smile and to be gentle with her stepfamily. Her attitude of tolerance is shown in her words: “they [the stepfamily] treat me as well as they’re able.”

In his statement, Branagh admitted the connection between “have courage and be kind” and the tolerance. When *Cinderella* first appeared in Berlin International Film Festival, in *the Guardian*, Kate Connolly reported Branagh’s comment:

‘Have courage and be kind’ ... I was reminding them of King Lear when Edgar says ‘Have patience and endure’ at the point he’s being put in the stocks and mocked.

Patience to me equates to compassion, and endurance is a form of courage[.]

Therefore, the film's important idea, "have courage and be kind" must be close to "patience" and "endurance," and Ella follows the principle.

The goodness as the tolerance is the quality of Cendrillon, Aschenputtel, and Disney's Cinderella; they perfectly play the role of their stepfamily's obedient servant. Therefore, the endurance can be identified with the old-fashioned passivity, but the film tries to define it the strength. In *E! Online*'s interview, Branagh says "[t]here was talk way back about redefining goodness as a superpower and kindness in the same way. I think it can be very active and charismatic and compelling." In the movie, this idea appears in the words of Ella's mother: she thinks courage and kindness as "a great secret that will see you through all the trials that life can offer." Lily James, who played the role of Ella also says "[s]he's not armed with swords or weapons to be strong. It's from within" in the interview shown in the website of *New York Times*.

2.2. Kindness as Resolution and Resistance

Ella looks simply submissive, but her words and actions indicate her strong will and resistance to her stepfamily. Her quiet attitude does not suggest that traditional Cinderella's obedient image always means her powerlessness. In the film, her friend asks why she does not leave the house dominated by the malicious stepfamily. Ella answers:

I made my mother and father a promise to cherish the

place we were so happy. They loved our house, and now that they're gone, I love it for them. It's my home.

These words show her resolution and mental independence from her stepfamily; she is confident in herself as the guardian and the mistress of her house. She has the same mentality as Danielle in *Ever After*. Ella's words "It's my home" are equivalent to Danielle's words to her servants: "This is our home, and I will not see it fall apart." Ella's quiet independence evokes Marina Warner's words "[m]unity can be conveyed in silence" (Warner, *From* 395). Also, "have courage and be kind" is sort of "mutism of fairytale heroines" as "a defensive strategy" (Warner, *From* 395). Thus, Ella's tolerance can mean her silent resistance and also the wisdom to survive in her difficult circumstance. Actually, Kathryn Shattuck's article in New York Times reveals the association between Ella's silence and her resistance. When Shattuck interviewed Branagh, he "likened it ["have courage and be kind"] to the nonviolent resistance of Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi." For Ella, it is important to protect the inheritance from her parents; therefore showing her rage does not make sense for her.

2.3. The Parents' Legacy

The film thoughtfully depicts that her parents' legacy is part of Ella's humanity, and carries great weight of her life. For her, the legacy does not mean substances, but the parents' spirits: her memory with them and sense of goodness. She cherishes her house because it is "the

place we [she and her parents] were so happy.” Her mother’s dress also symbolizes Ella’s affection for her mother even though it is spoiled by the stepmother in the similar way of Disney’s animation. When the fairy godmother offers Ella to give her a completely new dress, Ella refuses it. She explains the reason: “this was my mother’s. And I’d like to wear it when I go to the palace. It’s almost like taking her with me.” The fairy godmother understands her feeling, and turns the pink dress into the blue one. Thanks to this conversation, Ella’s blue gown at the ball is the same one as her mother’s pink dress.

It is interesting that the dress looks to be completely changed, but it is not changed in essence. This fact must reflect the value that Ella inherits from her parents, and the film emphasizes. The dress of Ella and her mother symbolizes that they believe what is goodness: trying to watch, to listen to, and to believe what is hard to catch. In the film, as the fairy godmother says, Ella “saw the world not always as it was, but as perhaps it could be.” She listens to the animal’s voice that the stepsisters cannot hear, and also believes the power of courage, kindness, and magic.

The scene of Ella’s childhood shows that Ella formed her unique view through the conversation with her mother. The mother says “I believe that animals listen and speak to us if only have the ear for it. That’s how we learn to look after them.” Her words are exactly reflected in Ella’s attitude toward the animals. She is the mice’s warm-hearted friend and guardian that protects them from the cat. Furthermore, when she saves a stag from the prince’s hunting, she says

to him “I looked into his [the stag’s] eyes, and he looked into mine, and I just felt he had a great deal left to do with his life.” These words indicate that she practices her mother’s kindness to the animals.

2.4. Idealism and Practical Choices

Therefore, in the film, Ella embodies the value of nonmaterial things such as the beautiful memory, the inner voice, and the goodness. On the contrary, her stepfamily follows practical and materialistic principle. This opposition is very similar to the contrast between Cendrillon’s graceful charm and her stepsisters’ artificial beauty. In *Cinderella*, the stepsisters are surrounded by a lot of vivid-colored things, and repeatedly change the clothes. Their gorgeous lifestyle contrasts with Ella’s dusty clothes and humble life in the dim kitchen and the garret. Moreover, the sisters are not interested in the prince’s humanity but his wealth, and Ella cannot approve their money-oriented motive of trying to marry him. Ella’s despair at their humanity is shown in the narration: “Ella actually felt pity for these schemers who could be every bit as ugly within as they were fair without.”

The confrontation between Ella and her stepmother in the attic is a remarkable scene because it directly sets Ella’s idealistic goodness against the stepmother’s practical principle. After the ball, the stepmother finds Ella’s glass slipper, and asks: “Did you steal it?” Ella tells her that the slipper was “given” to her. But the stepmother denies Ella’s word “given”: “Given to you? Nothing is ever given. For everything we must pay and pay.” She also denies the words of Ella’s

belief, “Kindness is free. Love is free.” The stepmother proposes arranging the marriage between Ella and the prince. In return for it, she demands Ella to make her live in the palace and to arrange the marriages between her daughters and great lords.

In the scene, Ella’s glass slipper effectively symbolizes their opposite values. Her words “for everything, we must pay” shows that the stepmother deals with everything in her life as the transaction. Knowing the prince wants to see the owner of the slipper, she treats it as the means to get her happiness and better life. When her threatening proposal is refused, she breaks the slipper. The slipper as the bargaining chip loses the worth when the dealing is failed. Thus, the glass slipper is successful in revealing the stepmother’s practical value.

For Ella’s part, the slipper means the different value because the glass slipper is tied to her unforgettable experience: her fairy godmother’s favor and the lovely time with the prince Kit. In the sense, her glass slipper is equivalent to her home and her mother’s dress because it reminds her of happiness and her beautiful memory. When her stepmother breaks her slipper, she is so shocked that she expresses her restrained feelings: “Why are you so cruel? ... I’ve been tried to be kind to you.” The glass slipper is resonant with the goodness in her world; therefore her stepmother’s deed symbolizes that she tramples Ella’s faith in the goodness.

Therefore, the film contrasts Ella’s idealistic view of goodness with the practical stepmother. The opposition reflects the antagonism between dreaming Cinderella and her scheming stepmother in Disney’s

animated film. But, Branagh's version glorifies the supremacy of Cinderella's ideal over her stepmother less than Disney's classic. Branagh's version depicts the stepmother's story and her difficult state of mind. Her beloved husband left her and her daughters, and her next husband is attached to the memory with his daughter and dead wife. She also lost him, and has to survive with her own daughter and stepdaughter. Like the stepmother in *Ever After*, she is represented as the woman in the undesirable place for her. The depictions of the stepmother's background are successful in responding to the contemporary sense of value. Some critics do not approve the film's traditional elements, but sympathize with the stepmother's motive of her cruelty toward Ella. For example, Rex Reed's review in *the Observer* says "she's disillusioned – widowed by two husbands while still young and left to raise a pair of dumb daughters she doesn't even like, her resentment of Ella's beauty and sweetness is only natural."

Interestingly, the stepmother's story told Ella suggests that they could understand each other because the stepmother experienced the situation that Ella knows. The stepmother once "married for love," and had a happy family like Ella's family. She also lost her beloved husband as Ella lost her parents. However, they cannot compromise, and Ella resolutely parts from her stepmother because of their different senses of value. In this way, the film inserts bitterness of the realism in the idealistic frame of the classical fairy tale. In the sense, this movie is not completely the "perky, pretty cupcake of a fairytale adaptation" called in Guy Lodge's review in *the Guardian*.

Finally, the film ends with the triumph of Ella's idealism. She maintains her belief of goodness, saying to her stepmother "I forgive you." Different from "Cendrillon," the stepfamily is separated from Ella's sphere; the stepmother and stepsisters disappear from the kingdom. Ella marries with Kit who shares her spirit of "have courage and be kind," and "they were continued to be the fairest and kindest rules the kingdom had known."

Therefore, Kenneth Branagh's *Cinderella* is the intertwinement of the various images seen in Cinderella's tradition. It is easy but shallow to discuss this film in the opposition between the traditionalism and the revisionism. Kate Connolly's article in *the Guardian* reports the director's words: "'Have courage and be kind' ... it reminded me that these basic, human and fundamental situations get seized on by great storytellers." Consequently, the repeated goodness is based on the filmmakers' interest and insight into the timeless humanity. The argument whether this film belongs to the traditionalism reveals "warrior women" as the "new stereotype" that Maria Tatar points out (Tatar, *Female* 39). In the contemporary current, *Cinderella* does not suggest that it is wrong to choose the goodness inherited from the old Cinderellas.

Conclusion

Reflecting the different values, Cinderella's story and image have been inherited through the various media. Even the globally famous ancestors of the today's good Cinderella originally belonged to the specific community. Perrault's Cendrillon was the ideal lady of the French court of Louis XIV, and Disney's Cinderella appeared as the housewife of the dream for the Americans after World War II. The contemporary Cinderella films such as *Ever After*, *Into the Woods*, and *Cinderella* pick up the images from the tradition, and convey them to the next generation. In this way, the specific images are connected to the tradition.

The "new" representations in the modern fairy-tale movies such as *Frozen* and *Maleficent* contribute to the diversity of the image of the fairy tales. The emotional and spirited heroines are now frequently seen in the films based on the fairy tales. The fairy-tale movies without the villains have also become standardized. These films are considered as the separation from the traditional stories. But, it cannot be denied that they are completely independent from the fairy-tale tradition, and the newness will become oldness.

In the modern world, Kenneth Branagh's *Cinderella* is a significant film that offers the generosity to the forms and the styles of the fairy tales. It exemplifies that the tradition can be reconciled with the contemporary sense, seeing the good points in each part. Like the Ella's story, the film is given the legacy from the old time, and conveys

the value in its way. “Cinderella’s story” continues.

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