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Postmoderní vykreslení pohádkových postav v televizním seriálu "Once Upon a Time".

Diplomová práce

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TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF LIBEREC
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The Postmodern Depiction of Fairy Tale Characters in the TV Serial "Once Upon a Time".

Diploma thesis

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Interpretovat postmoderní pojetí pohádky v seriálu Once Upon a Time na příkladu pohádky o Sněhurce.

Popsat vyobrazení vybraných pohádkových postav a jejich osudů a na základě srovnání s klasickou literární předlohou zjistit, zda je v seriálu Once Upon a Time zachován archetyp boje mezi dobrem a zlem. Objasnit, zda a proč současní tvůrci přizpůsobují osudy pohádkových postav životu moderního člověka a jaký psychologický dopad mají případné změny oproti klasické předloze jak na postavy, tak na diváka/čtenáře.

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Anotace

Tato práce se zabývá postmoderní revitalizací mýtu v souvislosti s úlohou pohádkových postav v televizním seriálu *Once Upon a Time*. V porovnání s původním účelem pohádek, přizpůsobení těchto postav potřebám dospělých diváků žijících ve dvacátém prvním století vede k zásadním změnám jak ve vykreslení jejich osobností i vzhledu, tak i v interpretaci jejich činů. Obsah práce je zaměřen především na archetypální rysy Sněhurky a zlé královny a to, jak se projevují v tomto postmoderním seriálu, kde jsou představeny v roli matek. Cílem je ukázat, že archetypální prvky typické pro klasickou verzi této pohádky jsou zachovány i zde, ale jsou přeměněny do podoby, která vytváří nový, moderní mýtus oslovující dospělé diváky. Děj se drží struktury mytické cesty hrdiny, a zároveň odráží okolnosti života v současné konsensuální realitě včetně frustrace, která je výsledkem deziluze moderní společnosti.

Klíčová slova: Once Upon a Time, postmoderní, mýtus, archetypy, život, smrt, pohádka, Sněhurka, zlá královna, protiklady, dospělost, gender, archetyp matky

Annotation

This paper examines the postmodern resurrection of myth in relation to the role of fairy tale characters in the TV series *Once Upon a Time*. In comparison to the original purpose of fairy tales, their adaptation to the needs of adult viewers living in the twenty-first century changes the internal and external depiction of the characters, along with the interpretation of their actions. Specifically, the thesis focuses on the archetypal attributes of Snow White and the Evil Queen and their manifestation as mother figures within the plot of the postmodern TV series. The aim is to demonstrate that the archetypal patterns have not been withdrawn, but rather transformed to create a modern myth that attends to adult audience and is based on the themes known from traditional fairy stories. While following the mythical structure of the hero's journey, the plot reflects the circumstances of life in the contemporary consensus reality, including the frustration as a result of the disenchantment of modern society.

Key words: Once Upon a Time, postmodern, myth, archetypes, life, death, fairy tale, Snow White, Evil Queen, opposites, adulthood, gender, mother archetype

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Introduction

Mythical stories have been fascinating people all around the world for thousands of years. They are stories of great victories and losses that capture the essence of the human life, and they have always played an equally important role in ancient cultures as they do in the contemporary society. Yet, the modern age radically changes the way of life, which also impacts the form, as well as the content of literature in general. The endless number of new scientific disciplines, along with the invention of motion pictures, bring not only more ways of delivering the stories to the audience, but also more themes for new myths to be written.

In 2011, ABC Studios introduced a new TV series called *Once Upon a Time*. This American fantasy drama was written by Edward Kitsis and Adam Horowitz. The opening episode was released in the USA on October 23, 2011, and the show has been running since then. So far, four seasons were broadcast, and it has been officially confirmed that another season is currently in making.

By creating the TV series *Once Upon a Time*, Edward Kitsis and Adam Horowitz have revitalized traditional fairy tales in a very untraditional way. The fundamental difference which disrupts the usual pattern is an encounter of the fairy tale characters with our consensus reality. They actually live in the present-day USA, and experience the troubles and joys of human life in our age. Furthermore, the original purpose of all the well-known fairy tales is put aside, as the series conveys a message of a different kind to a different target audience. While the purpose of traditional fairy tales is to guide children and help them to overcome problems which they are confronted with while growing up, *Once Upon a Time* aims to address adults. It reminds them of the old characters that they used to know as children, and reveals certain events that caused the characters to be in the particular situations.

Unlike the original versions, which are usually read without having to question the initial condition or ask about the cause of the characters' present actions, *Once Upon a Time* challenges its audience to judge the stories after learning about the past struggles related to love, parenthood, and other major social and psychological situations. The stories are thus made more personal, and deal with struggles that the spectators can relate to. As a result, this postmodern depiction may provoke the idea that the traditional perception which is based on the distinction between good and evil might require some re-evaluation.

Such changes could easily hide the archetypal nature and mythical background of the original tales and transform the characters into flat components of a romantic plot with the mere aim of providing an entertaining element that is likely to attract more viewers. I intend to demonstrate, however, that the original meaning of fairy tales is somehow preserved even in this altered version of the plots by analysing the archetypes manifested in the plot of Snow White. With special attention to the mother archetype, I aim to prove that Snow White and the Evil Queen represent two archetypal figures, while one is a shadow of the other. It is only the form and function of the images which is modified, as they are adapted to real-life dramas people experience in adulthood and react to issues connected with life in the contemporary world. Thus, the essential principles of the mythical hero's journey and the typical opposition of good and evil manifest themselves in specific situations during an individual's lifetime.

1. Clash of Two Worlds

1. 1. Fairy Tale: The Archetype of Life

Apart from distinctive attributes which make every human being a unique individual, there are forces in the human mind that operate independently of personal characteristics or cultural background. Even without consideration of the significance of individual conditions, people from all corners of the world are still able to outline a universally applicable set of principles which, when followed, are believed to be *the good* way to live a life. This concept of the ideal personal evolution is manifested in archetypal stories all around the world.

Based on the fact that "cultures widely separated by geography or time still have distinctly similar myths" (Klages 2006, 43) depicting different aspects of human existence, Joseph Campbell described a universal structure of "The Hero's Journey", which he calls *monomyth* (2004). This pattern consists of three main phases that the hero of the journey experiences – Departure, Initiation and Return. These are further divided into more subcategories characterizing the specific turning points.

The initial event that changes the current state is, naturally, "The Call to Adventure". The hero is challenged to abandon his known world, and enter the *unknown*. As they cross the threshold, their transformation begins. At this stage, they need to undergo the road of trials, overcome all obstacles and resist temptations.

After they are tested, they reach the abyss, which could be compared to purgatory. This point of the journey is characteristic of symbolic death followed by rebirth and completion of the transformation. This, of course, happens under the condition that the hero listened to his intuitive knowledge of *the good* way to deal with challenges in life.

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Finally, the hero experiences atonement, and returns to the known world, which, however, will never be the same again.

Myths and fairy tales have been passed on from generation to generation. Since the structure of monomyth mirrors the individuation process of individuals in reality, it is not a coincidence that it is usually the first literary genre that children, who are only starting to understand the ways life can be, are introduced to. Although sometimes considered as unrealistic, they are in fact "marvelous vehicles for gaining insights and learning about ourselves and our basic human tendencies" (Mitchell 2010, 264), for they reflect the life journey, and provide guidance through the process of self-development leading to the ultimate goal of integrity of the ego.

1.1.1. The Means of Universal Understanding

The fact that it is possible to generalize concepts presented in mythical stories "indicates the existence of definite forms in the psyche which seem to be present always and everywhere" (Jung 1981, 42). These forms are ingrained in the human mind, and create a "psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals" (43). Therefore, Jung calls this part of the psyche *the collective unconscious*, and adds that it "does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents" (43).

Consequently, archetypes are basically "the organs of the psyche […] through which we apprehend meaning" (Mitchell 2010, 265, 266), but they cannot be observed directly. "Myths and fairy tales can be viewed as collective or universal dreams that can apply to all of us" (265, 266), and thus manifestations of how people understand the world. In other words, they are a coding system used for the

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conversion of the raw material hidden in the collective unconscious into contents that can be communicated. Their universal structure, the monomyth, reflects the cyclic nature of life and the inevitable, recurrent process of transformation. Although this system of symbols is to a great extent limited, it serves as a frame which shapes meaning so that it becomes communicable and comprehensible.

The world, as people experience it, is often understood and described by means of binary oppositions. There is the feminine principle, and there is the masculine one. There is light, and there is dark. There is the north and the south, the east and the west. There is life, and there is death. Moreover, "in each binary pair one term is favored over the other" (Klages 2006, 43). The distinction and preference of one side, however, is not a result of an endeavour to simplify one's perception of the world. On the contrary, the very fact that life is not static originates this vision. Binary thinking naturally derives from the never ending movement that one can observe around them.

Since the world is constantly turning and development never stops, it is only logical that there are always at least two directions, and possibly many more between those two, for people to identify with. Despite the critique of many objectors "arguing that wherever there are polar oppositions, there is dominance" (Elbow 1993, 51), dichotomous thinking creates a certain imaginary structure of the world enabling people to grasp reality in order to give a meaning to it. The expression is symbolic. It does not mean that the reality is either "A", or "B", but it provides a frame within which it is possible to think and talk about it. Hence, "oppositions are projected from human minds rather than discovered in the world" (Martin 2012, 27).

Additionally, the usage of binary pairs in myths and fairy tales does not deny the significance of any of two opposite expressions, but rather illustrates the presence

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of (and the importance of some balance between) both, for they are "dramatic representations of basic psychological processes" (Mitchell 2010, 267). On realizing that these stories are universally meaningful allegories of "things that we observe and do in our daily lives" (264), it is important to examine the main motives and principles of the life journey, and "the ways in which inherent instincts and wisdom can help us follow our unique paths" (264).

1.1.2. The Life Drive

The structure of archetypal stories is based on the eternal struggle between good and evil, which is analogical to choices people make every day. There is always only one best solution to every problem. One option is better, and the other worse.

To understand a particular person's actions, life choices, their mistakes and achievements, one needs to know what motivated them. To understand the motives, it is necessary to have examined the person's character, temperament, past experiences, desires and fears – their personality. Due to the number of variables one has to consider while drawing conclusions about other people's decisions, or simply trying to understand them in general, there are as many personalities as there are people. Nevertheless, all those personalities constantly fight battles, and the ultimate goal, even if unconsciously, is to find peace.

Therefore, "myths and fairy tales are symbolic dramatizations of what is basic in the human personality" (Mitchell 2010, 268). What is more, "they can serve as portals to understanding the human condition in general, but they also touch each of us individually, and where we are touched opens the door to our self-understanding" (268).

However, whatever the fight is, this ideal state of balance of the ego can only

be reached by making *the good* choices. That is the reality of life that monomyth shows in a *symbolic* way, but the answer to what the distinction between *good* and *bad* actually represents, what generates problems and complicates the life journey, or what affects it the most can be found in closer observation of the contents of the human mind.

According to Sigmund Freud, instinctual drives play a crucial role in development of the ego, and he distinguishes two particular primary forces that influence an individual's life significantly. One of them is the "pleasure principle", which does not involve only the tendency to constantly seek for pleasure in life, but it also "includes the reverse: avoidance of unpleasure" (Dant 2003, 89), where "unpleasure corresponds to an *increase* in the quantity of excitation and pleasure to a *diminution*" (Freud 1959, 2: emphasis is original). It is also referred to as Eros, the drive of life (Dant 2003, 88). However, this principle is subordinate to the second drive, which lies "beyond the pleasure principle", – a compulsion to repetition (Freud 1959). This underlying desire to repeat may represent "a universal attribute of instincts and perhaps of organic life in general" (30). It follows that "*an instinct is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things*" (30: emphasis is original). Ultimately, it is an urge "to return to the inanimate state" (32), or, in other words, a drive towards death (Dant 2003, 90).

As a result, the aim of life is death (Freud 1959, 32). That of course creates a paradoxical situation. While the death drive is a conservative instinct leading to inertia, life is on principle the opposite of stagnation. The life journey requires progress. Without change and development, there would be no journey towards death, and no culture to pass its symbolic representation from generation to generation. Rather, there would be nothing but the "earlier state". It can be assumed,

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then, that the basic premise of experiencing life, and fulfilling one's humanity, is the very awareness of its nature, and the will to live. Thus, a person driven solely by instincts cannot be able to experience life, or at least not as described above.

Therefore, I propose that the archetypes of the collective unconscious function as self-preservation and moderate the death drive to assure that an individual will follow their "own path to death" (Freud 1959, 33), "an initial state from which the living entity has at one time or other departed and to which it is striving to return by the circuitous paths" along which their development leads (32). Archetypes are the source of the will to live, which is dependent on hopes, dreams, and faith in the future, and they are thus essential for people not to be driven by inertia and give up on life.

Consequently, it might not be the pleasure principle, but monomyth, the archetype of life journey reflected in mythical stories, what is the drive of life. While Eros is a drive supporting stagnation by simple avoidance of unpleasure, the archetype of the life journey motivates to follow higher goals, and thus promises a deeper, long-lasting feeling of satisfaction.

1.2. Black and White Vision

As stated above, mental operations are conditioned by knowledge of a language. Through a language, the world can be understood as a system of concepts (although sometimes merely seemingly) opposite in meaning, which work in ways one has to master in order to pass trials of life successfully. Fairy tales, as well as myths, are *archetypal* stories illustrating how these divergent forces *generally* operate in the life of one individual – the hero or heroine of a particular tale. The black and white depiction of different characters and situations is thus not unrealistic,

but rather shows a great variety of elements which human life includes through symbols and images that resonate with the archetypes of the collective unconscious. This way, they can be brought to consciousness and understood, which raises the chances of resolving personal struggles and making decisions in favour of life, since "recognition indicates the possibility of a healing awareness through discovery of processes imaged in the stories" (Mitchell 2010, 267).

1.2.1. Fairy Tale versus Reality

Provided that fairy tales are allegorical manifestations of typical situations that arise during an individual's development, there is no need to compare these archetypal stories, whose plots often deny physical laws of this world, with what people go through in their everyday lives. It is not necessary, or even relevant, to critically analyse the differences. People know that these stories are not supposed to give a faithful picture of what can happen in one's life like, for example, realistic fiction does. As the fairy tale world provides a symbolic depiction of the nature of human life, it does not exist on its own. For instance, the enchanted forest is most likely not an actual place one could visit, and the readers understand that. In *Once Upon a Time*, however, fairy tale characters come to life. They are not just a product of human imagination, but a part of an alternative reality. They have a world of their own. Consequently, the plot is not limited to one specific tale, but includes most of the fairy tale characters that the series' audience is aware of.

Additionally, magic is not a feature of a mythical world view in the TV series. Instead, it is an indispensable attribute of another world which is parallel to ours. The authors of the series basically borrowed the elements of the classical fairy tale reality, but they treat it not as a product of human imagination, but as another world living

by different rules. They brought it to existence, and put it in stark contrast to our reality.

1.2.2. The Curse

The storyline is built on confrontation of the two worlds, and it begins right where the well known fairy tale about Snow White ends. While the princess is getting married to her Prince Charming, the Evil Queen decides to take revenge and cast a powerful curse on the whole enchanted forest. It is this action that brings those two separate worlds together, and thus initiates adventures the viewers learn about later on. The Evil Queen's vengeance consists in the imprisonment of all of the fairy tale characters in the present-day consensus reality and causing them to lose the memory of everything before that point, including their true identity.

Within the first minute of the very first episode of *Once Upon a Time*, the writers give a brief summary describing the nature and purpose of the curse, the cornerstone of the plot: "There was an enchanted forest filled with all the classic characters we know. Or we think we know. One day they found themselves trapped in a place where all their happy endings were stolen. Our World" (Kitsis and Horowitz 2011a, dir. Mylod, S01E01 00:00:07). Hence, the two places are put in opposition to each other. Based on these opening lines, the characterization of "our world" is obviously not very flattering. The choice of words suggests a significant level of darkness present in this world, since there are supposedly no happy endings any more.

The status of the contemporary world is clearly indicated when the Evil Queen interrupts Snow White and Prince Charming's wedding. In her speech foreshadowing what is about to happen, she promises that: "Soon, everything you love, everything

all of you love will be taken from you, forever. And out of your suffering will rise my victory. I shall destroy your happiness, if it is the last thing I do" (S01E01 00:03:41). Although it is not explicitly stated whether the "suffering" is a result of living a life in this particular world, or leaving home, forgetting the past and not recognizing their beloved, all these reasons are connected with the characters' departure from the known world and entering the land without magic, presented as a place with no promise of a better future. It is this world where hopes and dreams are neglected, instead of being nourished as powerful vehicles enabling people to find their own paths towards self-fulfilment and happiness.

1.2.3. Lack of Free Will

It almost seems like the writers attempt to revive the magic in the contemporary world by bringing the fairy tale characters to the consensus reality and making them a part of the 21st century society. They live in a fictional town in the USA called Storybrooke. Each episode begins with the following words: "There is a town in Maine where every storybook character you've ever known is trapped between two worlds" (OUT 2011-2012, season 1). Once the curse is broken and they have realized who they really are, the main plot is about their endeavour to find a way back home. This state might as well be read as an analogy of the crisis modern civilization experiences. In that case, the characters' stories would represent what people actually experience in the modern world, where people get easily detached from their human nature, their deepest needs and fears, under the influence of phenomena negatively affecting contemporary society such as consumerism, which has the potential of limiting their lives to mere survival by promoting the materialistic lifestyle rather than spiritual values.

From this perspective, the series can be understood as a critique of the contemporary society. This message is clearly suggested in the introductory episode, but is not directly referred to in the rest of the series. As individual stories develop, the tragedy of the characters' new lives in our consensus reality may not be that obvious. They contentedly follow their daily routines, and treat Storybrooke, Maine as their home. Nevertheless, the price they pay for the comfort of this small-town life is the collective oblivion and indifference towards what is actually happening to them. The environment is being poisoned by negative influences that are superior to individual characters and pervade more or less all areas of Storybrooke life. The Evil Queen, in the consensus reality referred to mainly as Regina Mills, is an embodiment of this dangerous power. Her character represents the origin of certain socio-pathological and psychopathological phenomena which will be discussed in more detail within the next chapters of this paper.

Consequently, the subversive impulses come from the very core, as it is the town's mayor whose corrupt actions dominate the lives of the residents. As a result, they have no real freedom. They continue to live their lives without much visible hardship or violence, but they only do so because they have no other choice. In the series, their imprisonment is manifested in their inability to physically leave the town. As a part of the dark curse, whenever one of the fairy tale characters tries to cross the border, something unfortunate happens. Therefore, they are de facto stuck in Storybrooke, and it is exactly this lack of free will that makes their situation tragic. Since blind tolerance of evil does not equal happiness, it cannot be claimed they are genuinely happy until they know the truth.

1.3. A Postmodern Spectator

1.3.1. The Human Dimension

Having been modified and extended as the fairy tales in this series are, their role is undoubtedly more complex and can be viewed from different angles. While the original stories serve as fantastic allegories of developmental and psychological struggles that children can relate to, the postmodern TV show attends to adult audience. This has several specific implications that might reveal the intentions behind creating *Once Upon a Time*. One of them is the above suggested interpretation regarding the series as a commentary on the character of life of the modern society, where the concept of fairy tales is used to demonstrate that our world is disenchanted. This message does not only open the first episode. It pretty much constitutes the whole series. It creates the essence of the central plot, and brings all the particular tales within the series together. In other words, it sets out the context.

Nevertheless, there is another level of meaning that is aimed to appeal to adult spectators. After they are introduced to the concept of entering the world of fairy tales yet again, the individual characters' stories start to develop. Thus, the main focus shifts from problems that the society as a whole is facing to particular personal dramas. They make the show suspenseful and intimate, because the spectator can identify with them. Plots of fairy tales are traditionally interpreted as universally applicable, symbolic representations of the human mind in typical developmental situations. Their altered version in *Once Upon a Time*, on the other hand, provides more extensive characterization and explanation of individual characters' actions.

One of the consequences of this modification is that the heroes of the old stories still remain powerful and speak to the audience, even though the viewers are not children any more. When building an opinion about a plot of a certain fairy tale,

adults will probably see more than just the obvious background and the result in form of a happy or tragic ending. They are more likely to take the circumstances that might have an impact on the characters' behaviour into consideration, or even use their previous knowledge and personal experience, and imagine what events might have led to the present state of things depicted in the story. Hence, it may not be enough to present them with an obviously marked distinction between good and evil deprived of more detailed background information, because they are already familiar with this concept. Rather, they might be more likely to be absorbed by a story presented within a context of real life. Unlike children, who have little life experience and therefore have to be provided with clear examples without much ambiguity, they have been through (or witnessed) many of the life crises themselves, and they do not need the act of judging the characters' actions to be done for them. Adults are aware of ambiguity being naturally present in the world. Thus, having already learnt certain patterns of behaviour, they tend to base their understanding of other people's personal struggles on their own experience. Therefore, the series does not leave them with the basic storyline and mere suggestion of what might have preceded it, but it includes specific situations one can encounter in reality, and thus makes the fairy tale plots easier to identify with for adult viewers.

1.3.2. Postmodern Renaissance

All in all, these alterations of the original fairy tales, which are the essence of the TV series *Once Upon a Time*, reflect the postmodern approach to revitalize traditional and archetypal stories. According to Jaroslav Kušnír, the aims of postmodern literature are:

to give critique of the traditional 'objective', unitary vision of reality mediated by traditional narrative techniques, used mostly in popular genres, which evoke a make-believe, mimetic representation of reality. In addition, another aim of postmodernist literature is to give a critique of popular culture as a product of consumerism; and last, but not least, through the use of intertextual and metafictional strategies it aims to point out a sensibility of contemporary postmodernist culture influenced by visual and popular culture. (2004, 34-35)

Along with the intentions behind reusing old literary works and giving them a new meaning, he describes the phenomenon as follows:

In postmodernist literary work, various narrative strategies, conventions, and myths are reconsidered, transformed, or recycled to show the connection between cultural products (including popular culture), social reality and cultural codes representing particular cultures. Such a strategy breaks the illusion of newness; reality is perceived and understood as a copy, as a collection of images which had already been used in the past. […] These images, copies, and reproductions are mostly conveyed through mass media and popular cultural forms. They distort people's vision of reality and relativize the difference between fact and fiction, between morality and immorality. (35-36)

Postmodern adaptations thus display the invariables that pervade our culture and lay the foundations of universally accepted values, and challenge the ways conventional

perception of reality is manifested in the traditional literary work.

1.3.2.1. Snow White and Gender

Cristina Bacchilega discusses the issue of gender and proposes that the purpose of the Queen's mirror, as well as other mimetic strategies used in the fairy tale of Snow White is partly ideological, since its judgement is presented as "unquestionably authoritative" (1999, 33). The mimesis, she says, "is no value-free or essential distillation of human destiny, but a 'special effect' of ideological expectations and unspoken norms". What is more, in some version of the story, "the patriarchal frame becomes visible" (29, 33). Later on, Bacchilega states that postmodern re-visions of this fairy tale challenge the ideological nature of this metaphor, and states that: "If the fairy tale symbolically seeks to represent some unquestionable natural state of being, postmodern fairy tales seek to expose this state's generic and gendered "lie" or artifice" (1999, 35).

Bacchilega adds: "Assuming that a frame always selects, shapes, (dis)places, limits, and (de)centers the image in the mirror, postmodern retellings focus precisely on this frame to unmake the mimetic fiction" (35-36). Narrative strategies used in *Once Upon a Time* correspond with this characteristic. The inclusion of the extra information about the characters' past actions, motives, and their attitude towards the current state of things provokes questions about reliability of the "unquestionable natural state of being" (35). By personalizing the individual stories, even the magic mirror gains specific human characteristics, which breaks the original impression of its objective authority. Instead of regarding the mirror as the ultimate judge without questioning the source of its power, the TV series offers a more realistic depiction of human nature. It reveals the previous life of the man behind the frame, formerly

addressed as the Genie of Agrabah, and the circumstances of his current role. In Bacchilega's reading of the traditional version of Show White, the mirror is one of the mimetic strategies "that works hard at, among other things, re-producing "Woman" as the mirror image of masculine desire" (29). In the series, however, he is presented as a victim of his own desire. The queen used the Genie's devotion, and took his freedom away from him. The frame thus does not only give the viewers information about the queen, or women in general, but represents the mirror's own imprisonment. His life is limited as a result of his blind affection. The mirror's dependence on the Evil Queen's will manifests itself in his status in our consensus reality. As Sidney Glass, which is his Storybrooke name, he represents a reporter for a local newspaper called *The Daily Mirror*, and thus basically continues to serve as a spy for Regina Mills, the town's mayor.

Also, the revelation of particular characters' personal plights and different perspectives disrupts the "powerful narrative strategy that stands as one of the narrative rules for fairy-tale production: an external or impersonal narrator whose straightforward statements carry no explicit mark of human perspective – gender, class, or individuality". "[…] rejecting the external, invisible narrator, the strategy that sustains the mirror's authority" is, according to Bacchilega, another feature of postmodern rewritings of fairy tales (34, 38). In *Once Upon a Time*, the tales are told from the point of view of the central figure who changes based on which character's story individual episodes focus on. No matter if their role in the original fairy tales is as important as that of Snow White, or whether their part is marginal, they are the main characters of their own stories.

1.3.3. Awakening the Soul

The TV series' screenwriters somewhat liberated the fairy tale characters as well as the audience. They are freed from the chains of the prescribed scripts, strict guidance in the form of some predetermined ways of interpretation, and possibly from the underlying enforcement of social conventions and ideological expectations. In a way, postmodern authors have adopted a more humanistic approach. As a result, these modifications add a more realistic dimension to the fantastic stories. Or, in Simona Gruian's words, the postmodern resurrection of mythical stories is characterized by the transformation "from the fabulous to human hero" (2011, 115).

Adapting fairy tale characters in this manner, however, has the potential to eliminate not only the problematic stereotypes recognizable in the plots, but also typical characteristics essential to who these characters actually are and what they are supposed to represent. Therefore, the question is whether their depiction in this particular TV series follows the original archetypal patterns of behaviour, or if they have been just transformed into members of the contemporary society, while the only thing that distinguishes their personalities from the rest of the population living in our consensus reality are their storybook names.

In spite of the ambiguity and a considerable dose of realism, the fundamental function and the nature of the fabulous stories used in *Once Upon a Time* seem to have remained unchanged. The archetypes have been burdened with earthly matters, and modified so that they suit specific examples of situations in lives of adult spectators. That notwithstanding, the characters and their stories still fulfil the purpose of providing archetypes of human behaviour. The two main female characters, formerly known as Snow White and the Evil Queen, deserve special attention in this respect. Although their individual journeys are more complicated and

their correlation is manifested more than in the traditional versions of the fairy tale, the typical features have not been withdrawn.

On the contrary, the typical characteristics that these two women represent have been stressed in their new, unconventional portrayal, freed from the influence of certain social norms, e.g. the superiority of patriarchal authority and other cases of restriction leading to imbalance in society. "When the Grimms first published the tales", for instance, "they altered the female characters so they would convey conventional gender ideals" (Tautz 2008, 169). In this respect, Gilbert and Gubar describes this model in their analysis of the traditional fairy tale as "submissive femininity", where Snow White learns "essential lessons of service, of selflessness, of domesticity" (1984, 40). Such characteristic conceals the true nature of the human life, because "the masculine and feminine principles exist in all of us, both men and women", and, moreover, "the two cannot be found separate in nature" (Mitchell 2010, 274, 275).

1.3.4. *Once Upon a Time*: The Present Past

To better understand and summarize the main characteristic features of postmodern rewritings of traditional fairy tales and their relation to the currently popular TV series *Once Upon a Time*, it may be useful to examine Gruian's description. She concludes that: "The postmodern prose is nothing else but an attempt of bringing into modernity the past world" (Gruian 2011, 114). Indeed, the opening and the main theme that brings all the characters in the TV show together does suggest this. The encounter of the mythical with the contemporary world unifies the individual episodes dealing with different stories. In fact, the purpose of the characters' mission within the central plot and of the possible message that is being

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delivered to the audience are identical: both the writers' and their fictional characters' aim is to bring magic back.

This magic-seeking reflects the state of contemporary Western society and its spiritual needs that are not being met due to the general tendency to enforce some unitary standards or universally accepted modes of behaviour for people to follow regardless of their true nature. As Bacchilega mentions, "within modernity, the cause-and-effect logic of science and rationalism was expected to explain away the unexpected or astounding, replacing it with its human-made wonders" (2013, 194). Furthermore, "clear, rational thinking is the mark of science, while totemism (involving metaphor, confusion, and thinking by association) is the mark of religion" (Martin 2012, 28). This only proves the existence and indicates the significance of the another way of thinking, different to rationalism – a tendency that dogmatically insists on doubting everything that is not tangible. Furthermore, "our very distinction between societies that have totems and our society (which, by contrast, is scientific) is itself totemic", and, consequently, "the marks of science and religion are merely totems, and projected ones at that" (27, 28). In other words, it can be concluded that science and myth, when seen as contradictory concepts, are yet another example of the tendency to use language to create binary oppositions, and thus simplify communication. With discrimination of one of the elements, however, the imbalance inevitably leads to frustration.

When Jung discusses this issue, he says:

> The idea of an all-powerful divine Being is present everywhere, unconsciously if not consciously, because it is an archetype. There is in the psyche some superior power, and if it is not consciously a god, it is

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the "belly" at least, in St. Paul's words. I therefore consider it wiser to acknowledge the idea of God consciously, for, if we do not, something else is made God, usually something quite inappropriate and stupid such as only an "enlightened" intellect could hatch forth. (1966, 71)

The cause-and-effect logic of science can then easily fail to explain unconscious processes in the psyche, which are highly individualized, and not even directly observable. Mythical thinking, on the other hand, can be viewed as a symbolical expression of the human nature in a collective sense, while it also mirrors the significance of individual development of different people's innate natures.

Therefore, the modern trend described above neglects some phenomena that create an indispensable part of the human life and must be acknowledged. Relying on something external cannot lead to self-fulfilment or satisfaction of one's spiritual needs, because it does not originate within oneself. Hence, the external authorities can never compete with one's awareness of the inner truth, which lies in one's own realization of who they are and what they need. Modernity as a world view generating a specific lifestyle which is characteristic of the insistence on rational justification of one's actions ignores the importance of intuition, and creates dis-ease in society. An objective perspective cannot be used in relation to individual lives, which are subjective in principle.

Under the influence of such detached, science-centred mindset, people are often challenged to repress their inherent identities, and thus deny the truth about themselves. Lyotard says: "Modernity, whenever it appears, does not occur without a shattering of belief, without a discovery of the lack of reality in reality – a discovery linked to the invention of other realities" (1993, 9). The frustration then naturally

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awakens an interest in, or even fascination with ideas and concepts that are in harmony with the nature of the Self, and that encourage an individual to find their purpose and follow their own unique paths. Fantastic stories, and fairy tales in particular, inspire people to listen to the inner voice and pay attention to their dreams. By using the powerful images that have the capacity to capture the essence of the human life, they give people hope that those dreams might, under the right conditions, come true.

Therefore, not the objective application of logic, but the logic derived from one's individual condition can serve as a proof of people's dreams and hopes being as realistic as anything else present in this world – even if they do not have materialistic existence and are not perceivable through the five human senses. For no matter how naive or irrational it may seem in the eyes of a sceptic, dreams reflect one's true nature.

The allure of fairy tales, in fact, lies in exposing the truth. It is not a coincidence that the main plot, often presented in the form of a quest an individual needs to accomplish, is usually centred on fighting deception and injustice, and celebrates such qualities as loyalty, fair behaviour and, above all, honesty. As these stories were originally written specifically for children, they create a new, more specialized type of this universal phenomenon. What all the versions of the archetypal hero's journey have in common is that they have always been "the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared out of the activities of the human body and mind". Campbell continues the characterization as follows: "Religions, philosophies, arts, the social forms of primitive and historic man, prime discoveries in science and technology, the very dreams that blister sleep, boil up from the basic, magic ring of myth" (2004, 3).

People recognize their own struggles, losses and victories in these tales, and they bask in the heroes' stamina and determination. Whether knowingly or subconsciously, they want to become them in this respect. As Campbell says, "they will resurrect the 'lost stories' in new ways that restore their depth and surprise – that are capable of uplifting, testing, and altering the psyche" (4). After all, even the mere act of observing and identifying with the characters can be empowering enough to inspire the viewers to fight for the truth despite all obstacles and doubts that get in the way. Thus, the stories endorse one's own desires and dreams, which are not laden with other people's expectations, whether it is personal beliefs of another individual or social stereotypes.

Once Upon a Time manages to do exactly that. It is one of many postmodern adaptations of fabulous stories that revitalize the ancient symbols of mythology, which Campbell also refers to as "spontaneous productions of the psyche" (3), and bring them to life within the context of contemporary consensus reality. What is more, this happens on two different levels. On one hand, the necessary co-existence of these two worlds, or rather, the presence of the past world in the present one is demonstrated directly in the plot – by putting fairy tale characters in real-life drama situations that a contemporary man can actually experience. On the other hand, it is the act of delivering a show about fairy tale characters to adult audience is a result of this postmodern tendency. Based on the assumption that this idea was the primary impulse that constitutes the series both explicitly and implicitly, Gruian's statement seems to be adequate.

However, it is not just "an attempt of bringing into modernity the past world" (Gruian 2011, 114) what defines postmodernism, and this particular piece of work. The story of Storybrooke characters in *Once Upon a Time* indicates that the show is

also about bringing modernity into the past world. By eliminating the stiff social stereotypes, it provides a new perspective on the conventional way of depicting the archetypal characters, their stories, and life itself.

In fact, the contemporary world is not exclusive of the mythical. The mythical is ever-present, as it is derived from the concepts stored in the human mind, which Carl Gustav Jung calls the collective unconscious. The plot of the series then just reminds the viewers of its existence, fights against its repression, and consolidates the timeless images with the circumstances of the present-day life.

After all, once the fairy tale characters have realized who they really are, the central storyline revolves around their endeavour to find a way back home – the fairy tale land. Their journey, however, requires the two seemingly separate worlds to cooperate. This only stresses the interconnectedness of our consensus reality and the mythical – not only within the TV show, but also in reality, as it could be a figurative expression of its inevitability. The intentionality of presenting the fairy tale land not as an imaginary place, but a different reality that is necessary to be taken seriously, is obvious. In order to restore balance, the two worlds need to acknowledge one another and work together. They are present in each other, and dependent on each other.

Analogously, there is no mythical world without people, because the images can only arise from the human mind. The concept itself represents a way of thinking. The individual stories where this mode of perception and reflection manifests itself then illustrates a variety of typical human experiences. By contrasting the archetypal adventures with the contemporary way of living, the plot of *Once Upon a Time* demonstrates how a touch of enchantment can help people remember what is truly important in their lives, and prevent them from getting detached from their human nature. All things considered, I regard the series as a reflection on psychological and

social struggles people encounter in adulthood and the negative aspects of modern life.

1.4. A Magical Guide Through Adulthood

1.4.1. The Fairy Tale Reality

In fiction, a narrative traditionally demonstrates how different characters cope with their own lives determined by individual attributes, which include past experiences, personality characteristics etc. This precondition itself may already reflect mistakes in development of the ego caused by past conflicts between forces operating in the psyche that were not managed well, or left unresolved. As a result, all characters have their own unique stories to tell. The main plot follows their effort to make the best decisions due to their individual situations and take the right turns in life, but the essence of their inner struggles and motives of their actions do not have to be obvious to the reader, or spectator.

The distinction between "good" and "evil" occurring in fairy tales symbolizes the danger of making a wrong move in critical phases of life by misinterpreting the temptation to listen to some urges more, and others less in ways that are harmful to psychic harmony and that do not lead to the necessary progress in personality development. It does not imply actual existence of entities making purely good, or purely bad choices – quite the contrary. While hearing a fairy tale, one can feel the injustice of curses and other practices used by the "dark side", inevitably having a major impact on the good and absolutely innocent characters, who did not deserve any of that hardship. The fact is that the everlasting opposition of good and evil forces is not the truth of the external world, but the truth of the inner condition within an individual. It follows that the goal of the individuation process is to achieve "the

wholeness or totality that transcends opposites" (Mitchell 2010, 272). Mistakes people make in real life arise from their inability to reach balance by making the opposites work together.

Consequently, "if we think of the personality as comprised of a very large set of definable parts or principles, which can be represented by images, then fairy tales can be viewed as dramatic and dynamic interactions among combinations of those personality parts or components" (267). A fairy tale is an archetype of a particular spiritual journey, and that is where the truth, although depicted in miraculous ways, lies. There is no need to wonder, for example, why is the villain determined to remain so wicked, and what it is exactly that makes the hero so unquestionably pure. The story is told from the hero's, or heroine's, perspective. That is to say, from *human* perspective. They are always in the centre, and other characters somewhat rotate around them. At the same time, each component of the plot represents an inseparable part of the life journey, and plays its role in the individual struggle.

Meredith B. Mitchell concludes:

> To analyze a fairy tale, I consider the setting of the story as an indication of an initial condition of the personality – a condition that can be transformed. The story's exposition speaks of the process of transformation leading to a new – generally more conscious – condition. A story then reaches its climax, following which is the lysis or outcome, which usually (but not always) indicates a more conscious condition. A few stories depict regression. (277)

All aspects of a specific human condition manifested in the structure of a fairy tale are transformed into images. These images then refer to the ability to interpret the truth hidden in the unconscious so that it can be decoded and brought to light. I

consider this unconscious material which carries the basic truths about life to be the life drive originating in the collective unconscious.

On the whole, "telling a fairy tale is, in essence, verbalizing an allegorical story, the representational process of which is drawn from a vast list of human conditions and experiences" (Mitchell 2010, 269). What unites them is the perpetual struggle for life, and the permanent threat of death. Whatever the individual condition is, happy ending, the ultimate aim of all experiences in life, thus requires reaching a balanced state of being, for life, by its very nature, is not one-sided. It has two direction, and death is a natural part of it. Life has to be accepted as it it – full of contradictions, where one defines and is dependent on the other. In order to follow one's own path to the end, conflicts need to be overcome instead of making them destructive by giving in to dark forces which work against personality development and prevent the ego from achieving stability.

In every phase of human life, there is a conflict, a doubt, an obstacle one has to overcome. Allegorically depicted struggles of different heroes and heroines in fairy tales reflect what it is that complicates one's desire to live happily ever after. An example of self-destructive behaviour in contrast with the ideal process of self-development is Snow White's story, which is the main focus of the following chapters.

1.4.2. The Leading Women of Storybrooke

Once Upon a Time presents a great number of heroes and heroines. Within the central storyline, however, the writers pay special attention to one particular fairy tale. Snow White has a major part in the series, and the main plot revolves around her story. There are more possible ways to explain the choice of this particular fairy tale,

whether it is the notoriously archetypal ending, or the contrast between the good princess and the vicious queen. The concept is used as a tool – an imaginary frame, one might say – to convey a specific message within the postmodern series to the adult audience. In the end, it all comes down to what the story, and individual components of the story, represent.

I regard Snow White and the Evil Queen as two different versions of one woman driven by opposing forces operate in the human mind. Namely, I consider these forces to be equivalent to the progress-oriented energy that encourages individuation, which Jung also referred to as "some superior power" (1966, 71), and death-oriented instincts that, if not integrated, may cause regression. In ideal case, these contents of the psyche would be consolidated and moderated in order to work in harmony, and thus become constructive rather than destructive. Therefore, it is mainly the characters' motivation what determines the nature of their individual journeys. The choices they make reflect what drives are dominant in each of the two psyches. Due to the archetypal characterization, Snow White tries to make the right decisions, humbly accepts all challenges to be transformed and to elevate her state of being. The queen, on the other hand, is only obsessed with herself. In terms of Freud's theory concerning the development of the ego, she chooses stagnation over progress, as she lets the death drive to be in control of her decisions. Hence, "the central action of the tale – indeed, its only real action – arises from the relationship between these two women". This interpretation thus becomes similar to Gilbert and Gubar's description of the characters as "the angel-woman and the monster-woman" (1984, 36). In other words, they embody two contradictory personalities, whose distinction depends mainly on the origins of the forces that they let have the biggest impact on their actions. As a result, the princess finds happiness, while the queen is

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stuck in a permanent state of desperation. That is to say, Snow White is rewarded for being *good*, and the queen is punished for being *evil*.

Ultimately, this division reflects the black-and-white depiction of the characters. As a typical feature of archetypal stories, it has a specific function and its meaning is allegorical. The characters represent duality, and the concept thus captures the true nature of an individual personality, as well as the nature of life in general. After all, "archetypes in general are somewhat artificially separated for purposes of discussion and examination, for *child* and *parent* go together, as do *mother* and *father* and all positive and negative aspects of the psychological principles" (Mitchell 2010, 275: emphasis is original). Since the goal of the life journey, which can be identified with Jung's "individuation process", is an integrated personality, the duality must be overcome. In respect to the universal concept of the hero's journey, Campbell writes the following: "This question at the beginning of a story – or at any point along one's own life line – grants the seeker a bar to measure against, to see then what directions to take most profitably in order to find one's own answers. The transformative question grants a scale on which to weight which portion of each learning one might most fruitfully keep, and which parts or pieces can be bypassed or left behind ballast, as one continues on the quest" (2004, 12). Accordingly, the plot exposes the inevitable presence of opposites, and implies how to work with them successfully in order to reach and sustain balance. In case of Snow White and the Evil Queen, it is a story of two personalities where the former is an example of a successful transformation, while the latter represents regression, which is a result of the psyche's failure to adapt.

As a consequence of the above described characterization, Snow White and the Evil Queen can be understood as a personification of two essentially different life

choices that make the princess play the role of the protagonist and the queen that of the villain. Yet, their parts in the story are equally significant. Whereas, for example, in Bruno Bettelheim's reading of the original fairy tale, Snow White's story "tells how a parent – the queen – gets destroyed by jealousy of her child who, in growing up, surpasses her" (1976, 195), the plot has, in fact, a much deeper agenda. Bettelheim's statement presumes the objective authority of a male perspective, as he claims that the relationship between the two women is determined by "the voice of the looking glass", which "sets them against each other" (Gilbert and Gubar 1984, 38). The interpretation based on the Jungian understanding of the human mind and its development, which I present in this paper, is much broader. From this perspective, the way the queen represents a character that is evil by nature, and her role lies essentially in being the princess's natural opponent. Consequently, the Evil Queen relationship with Snow White is not determined by her jealousy, but her repression of her own shadow.

The narrative strategies in *Once Upon a Time* only reinforce this scheme, and thus prove its validity. Without regard to the idea that the war between Snow White and the Evil queen is a reflection of oedipal tendencies and jealousy, Bettelheim's observation related to the ultimate goal and purpose of the story is relevant, and the concise formulation goes as follows: "The fairy tale views the world and what happens in it not objectively, but from the perspective of the hero, who is always a person in development" (203), where fairy tales generally "deal imaginatively with the most important developmental issues in all our lives" (194). Then, however, he concludes that: "Since the hearer identifies with Snow White, he sees all events through her eyes, and not through those of the queen" (203). This is not true in the TV series. It does not only allow the audience to see the events from the villain's

point of view, but, what is even more important, shows the queen as a person in development, as well. Hence, Snow White's journey and the queen's journey are two separate stories, which are, however, closely linked, and the relationship between them is much more intimate than it might seem in Bettelheim's one-sided analysis of the original fairy tale. In the series, the detailed characterization shows two contrasting versions of personality development, that is, two examples of the hero's journey with diametrically different outcomes, and thus maintains the mythical features. The TV show's effort to depict the characters without discriminating the antagonists in terms of paying enough attention to their stories does not change their nature and what their actions symbolize. It is not the act of development that makes someone a hero, but its process and the final result. So, despite the postmodern depiction, the Evil Queen is still not portrayed as a protagonist, because of her inability to take a step forward. As a consequence of specific circumstances that negatively influence her life, she took the wrong turns and failed.

Obviously, the way Kitsis and Horowitz use the narration suggests that the whole project is far from what defines fairy tales in the traditional sense. Due to adapting the TV series' characters for a specific role that requires them dealing with the contemporary life, the depiction of their archetypal nature moves to another level – one that is even further from the sheer forms described by Jung. Their integration into the extensively revised stories based on the popular fairy tales, which resemble realistic fiction, makes the expression of these images much more subtle. In comparison to the traditional fairy stories, their manifestation within the narrative is less obvious.

This, nevertheless, does not contradict the archetypal nature of the series. After all, Campbell describes how various archetypal stories can differ in terms of the

target audience, the nature of the quest and its significance: "Typically, the hero of the fairy tale achieves a domestic, microcosmic triumph, and the hero of myth a world-historical, macrocosmic triumph. Whereas the former—the youngest or despised child who becomes the master of extraordinary powers—prevails over his personal oppressors, the latter brings back from his adventure the means for the regeneration of his society as a whole" (2004, 35). Similarly, the meaning and purpose of the stories included in the TV show shifts to a different level. That is to say, instead of following one particular character's journey that is analogical to a specific situation in the life of an individual child, the protagonist(s) of the central plot have to face a threat of a collective manner, and pursue a quest that is universally beneficial. Therefore, it could be considered as a kind of a contemporary myth which resonates with a postmodern spectator's troubles and spiritual needs. At the same time, the postmodern spectator is represented by a character named Emma Swan. Although she is Snow White's daughter, she has lived in the present-day consensus reality basically since she was born. In spite of her initial scepticism, she becomes a heroine of the central plot. Her detachment from the fairy tale land and her journey back to realization of her origin and destiny may thus symbolize the condition of the contemporary world. In regard to to negative aspects of modern life, Campbell marks that "the lines of communication between the conscious and the unconscious zones of the human psyche have all been cut, and we have been split in two" (359). Emma's role then lies in the effort to overcome this abyss. Although Bettelheim's view of the inner contradiction is reduced to the Freudian struggle between the id and the superego, his description of the inner condition within an individual psyche is valid, regardless of the particular components' origin. It goes as follows: "Complex as we all are – conflicted, ambivalent, full of contradictions – the human personality is

indivisible" (1976, 118). Since her mission in the first season is primarily to break the queen's curse, Emma needs to open her mind and start believing that there are forces of which she may not be consciously aware.

Although the modern age comes with modern possibilities and different problems, but the nature of myth stays untouched. When it appears projected on to the life in the twenty-first century the way it does in *Once Upon a Time*, it is just one of its many forms. As Campbell explains:

> Whether the hero be ridiculous or sublime, Greek or barbarian, gentile or Jew, his journey varies little in essential plan. Popular tales represent the heroic action as physical; the higher religions show the deed to be moral; nevertheless, there will be found astonishingly little variation in the morphology of the adventure, the character roles involved, the victories gained. If one or another of the basic elements of the archetypal pattern is omitted from a given fairy tale, legend, ritual, or myth, it is bound to be somehow or other implied – and the omission itself can speak volumes for the history and pathology of the example […]. (35–36)

Thus, if the usual depiction of the particular characters seems to be disturbed by, for instance, letting the audience see the events through a villain's eyes, the very act of providing this new perspective may serve to demonstrate or specify what kind of behaviour led the antagonist astray. In the case of *Once Upon a Time*, the fairy tale characters do not set an example to children to help them find their way out of the typical developmental crises. The series provides a look into the characters' private lives with little or no censorship. In addition, the purpose is to demonstrate how the

two archetypal concepts – good versus evil – manifest themselves in the life of an adult individual with regard to issues that are relevant to contemporary society.

The original fairy tale featuring two contrasting, archetypal female figures serves as a source of inspiration, or a means of communication that enables the writers to express their message in an engaging way that people universally respond to. Even though their characterization may not reflect the original sharp differentiation between good and evil, the mythical concept of the life journey is evident. Snow White is an example of a fairy tale where the plot follows the structure of the hero's journey and captures the crucial stages, together with their sequence, accurately. Therefore, there is a lot of potential in terms of its use within various contexts. The adaptation of the characters in the series then concerns primarily the endeavour to demonstrate their relevance outside the context of fairy stories for children, and to apply the connotation of these personified symbols in association with the adult life in the present-day society. Since "in the products of fantasy primordial images are made visible, and it is here that the concept of the archetype finds its specific application" (Jung 2003, 11), the aim of this transformation is to awaken people's awareness of the mythical concepts and their intuitive recognition of the life-sustaining, progress-oriented forces in comparison to influences causing the development to be pathological.

2. The Conflicted Heroine

2.1. Three Mothers

The postmodern modifications that change the viewers' perception of the fairy tale characters in the TV series impact their internal as well as external characterization. The latter basically refers to the obvious – in other words, what the spectator can see and hear, along with the conclusions they can draw based on these attributes. In this respect, it is the characters' appearance, and the setting of the story what the audience are not used to from the original fairy tales. Therefore, these alterations in *Once Upon a Time* concern primarily the characters' presentation in Storybrooke. In comparison to their natural environment, their new home in Maine requires the characters to change their dresses, their behaviour and lifestyles in general. Nevertheless, together with their gestures, posture etc., these adjustments indicate their status in the plot which is in accordance with their original purpose in the traditional stories. Hence, not only do they fulfil their archetypal role in the fairy tale land, but their characteristic features show in the contemporary consensus reality too, despite the fact that they are not even aware of their fairy tale identities, or at least not from the beginning. Yet, their integration into the present-day society naturally brings even more roles for them to adopt.

2.1.1. The Challenges of Adulthood

As Joseph Campbell's monomyth represents a universal structure of the life journey shared by archetypal stories all around the world, it applies to plights of heroes and heroines experiencing a variety of situations which are typical and crucial for human life. It is a pattern unifying human conditions, and, in doing so, it defines humanity. Different phases of life, however, come with different challenges and

dilemmas to be resolved. Since an individual's journey through life is a long process and consists of numerous struggles, there are many dimensions of ego development. Due to the multiplicity of individual stories and topics *Once Upon a Time* includes, it becomes an extensive portrayal of the human condition.

Spiritual growth depends on cultivating particular skills, and happens gradually. In his model of the life cycle, Erik Erikson formulates eight stages of development, each of which is characteristic of a specific psychosocial crisis. The two poles of experiencing life as a human being – a positive one, and a negative one – vary, depending on the stage one is currently going through (Capps 2012, 270).

"There are as many archetypes as there are typical situations in life" (Jung 1981, 48). Erikson's psychosocial crises represent more specifically defined dilemmas one experiences in life, but they are universally relevant. "Endless repetition has engraved these experiences into our psychic constitution, not in the form of images filled with content, but at first only as *forms without content*" (Jung 1981, 48: emphasis is original). Fairy tales then provide concrete images as a way of articulation of different forms associated with typical human situations, while following the general structure of mythical stories described by Campbell. With respect to the TV series version of Snow White, the two characters, Snow White and the Evil Queen, do not refer to the same situation in the human life which they represent in the original fairy tale any more. Generally, Snow White's character, as depicted in *Once Upon a Time*, somewhat grows up and moves on to a new phase in her life. Her adventures are no longer a story of a young girl who only becomes familiar with the concept of maturity. She is confronted with new challenges that are connected with the next stage of the adult life. She overcame the crisis identified with *adolescence*, that is *identity* versus *identity confusion*, and perhaps even the

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dilemma between *intimacy* and *isolation* that is connected with *young adulthood*. Now, she performs the role of a mother figure, as well. In reference to Erikson's perspective on adulthood, in the series experienced by both Snow White and the Evil Queen, is characterized by the conflict between *generativity* and *stagnation*. In order to successfully resolve this struggle, it is necessary to develop the ability to *care*, which refers to "the widening concern for what has been generated by love, necessity, or accident; it overcomes the ambivalence adhering to irreversible obligation" (Capps 2012, 270, 273).

Snow White's character in Storybrooke is presented as Mary Margaret Blanchard. Her new name seems to be just as symbolical as the traditional one. Her first name evokes virgin Mary, a character known from one of the most popular myths in the world. The biblical connotation could be based on at least two possible motives. Referring to a woman who conceived a child while staying a virgin, the association implies Mary Margaret's innocence. Another purpose of this comparison could be recognition of her character as a mother of the saviour. In addition, her surname – Blanchard – also denotes her original identity, as it is most likely derived from the French expression of the adjective "white", which usually signifies purity. Her former status in the fairy tale land, where she was a princess, changes. In Maine, her occupation is teaching young children.

Unlike Snow White (and a majority of the characters), The Evil Queen remembers her history, and she basically kept her name from the time before her transformation into the evil character she represent in the traditional tale. In Storybrooke, she is known as Regina Mills. "Regina" is her real first name that she was given when she was born, and her surname refers to her mother origin, as she was a miller's daughter. Along with using her old name, Regina continues to

accumulate power and use it to her own benefit, and so she makes herself a mayor of the town. Thus, so long as the other characters remain passive and oblivious of this situation, she is in charge of their lives.

The archetypal attributes of the two female figures, as described in the previous chapter, *The Leading Women of Storybrooke*, echo in their Storybrooke identities. At the same time, as Mary Margaret and Regina Mills, their characters correspond with Jung's concept of "the mother archetype" (Jung 2003, 14). As Jung states, "mythology offers many variations of the mother archetype", and its symbols "can have a positive, favourable meaning or a negative, evil meaning" (14, 15). He then mentions "the witch" as one of the examples of evil symbols. He further defines this archetype as follows:

> The qualities associated with it are maternal solicitude and sympathy; the magic authority of the female; the wisdom and spiritual exaltation that transcend reason; any helpful instinct or impulse; all that is benign, all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility. The place of magic transformation and rebirth, together with the underworld and its inhabitants, are presided over by the mother. On the negative side the mother archetype may connote anything secret, hidden, dark; the abyss, the world of the dead, anything that devours, seduces, and poisons, that is terrifying and inescapable like fate. (2003, 15)

Both of the characters represent influential women with great responsibility to other people. With regard to Jung's characteristic, however, Mary Margaret could be associated with the positive aspect, while Regina's character resembles the negative

aspect of the mother archetype. In fact, both of them happen to perform maternal role, but their attitudes toward this obligation are very different.

Developing the ability to care means transcending one's own interests and investing energy into creating something bigger that could contribute to well-being of others or be beneficial to humanity in general. After establishing one's own identity, securing the ego in puberty, and learning to have deep feelings for other people, it is time to surpass boundaries of the ego and use its unique qualities productively – for example by helping others find their own paths. Mary Margaret's (or Snow White's) adult life could serve as an archetypal allegory of this development. When she grows up, she is almost immediately confronted with death. As she passes the trials and finds true love, she overcomes the abyss between life and death. Her adulthood begins with a symbolical rebirth. Her reunion with Prince Charming is then followed by her giving a birth to her daughter, Emma. This new life represents the creative forces and simultaneously a new hope for all the fairy tale characters living in Storybrooke.

Due to the Evil Queen's revenge, however, Snow White was forced to abandon her child, as she had been said to be the only hope for the future of the whole enchanted forest. As difficult as it was for Snow White, she decided to make this sacrifice, as she explained to her husband: "We have to believe that she'll come back for us. We have to give her her best chance" (Kitsis and Horowitz 2011a, dir. Mylod, S01E01 00:31:28). Consequently, Emma was raised in the contemporary consensus reality in the USA, far away from her mother.

In Storybrooke, the archetypal characteristics of both of the fairy tale female characters are indicated quite clearly verbally, as well as visually. The first episode invites the audience to get oriented in the initial situation, and marks the distinction

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between good and evil so that is it very obvious what roles the characters play and what they specifically refer to. The honest and thoughtful character of Mary Margaret, dressed in light colours, contrasts with deceitful Regina, who typically wears dark clothes. Furthermore, while Mary Margaret lives in a humble apartment, Regina owns a big house with a beautiful garden. Apart from the obvious symbol in form of an apple tree, which Regina cherishes, the concept of a garden itself could be an allegory related to the mother aspect, as "the archetype is often associated with things and places standing for fertility and fruitfulness: the cornucopia, a ploughed field, a garden. It can be attached to a rock, a cave, a tree, a spring, a deep well, or to various vessels such as the baptismal font, or to vessel-shaped flowers like the rose or the lotus" (Jung 2003, 15). Although this symbol is typically evokes the vital forces, its connection with the character of the Evil Queen is not contradictory. There are other examples of mythical stories, the Bible being one of them, where this archetype occurs in association with the trickster figure, who initiates the hero's transformation.

Moreover, though equally important, their occupations, or rather the ways they perform them, are essentially different. Whereas Regina assigned herself the post of the town's mayor, Mary Margaret works as a primary school teacher. Thus, she actually fulfils her maternal role, despite her earlier separation from her own child. Even in adulthood, her character is an example of the positive personality development and determination. The very message of the TV series is articulated when she explains to Emma the significance of fairy tales, together with the reason why she gave Henry, one of Mary Margaret's students who is also Emma's biological child, a story book to read: "What do you think stories are for? These stories are classics. There's a reason we all know them. They're a way for us to deal with our

world. A world that doesn't always make sense. See, Henry hasn't had the easiest life" (Kitsis and Horowitz 2011a, dir. Mylod, S01E01 00:28:55). Later on, she gives a conclusion that is self-explanatory: "Look, I gave the book to him because I wanted Henry to have the most important thing anyone can have. Hope. Believing in even the possibility of a happy ending is a very powerful thing" (S01E01 00:29:33). Her speech correlates with Campbell's words when he states that "one fine way parents, teachers, and others who cherish the minds of the young can rebalance and educate modern children's psyches is to tell them, show them, and involve them in deeper stories, on a regular basis" (2004, 3). Hence, Mary Margaret embraces her new role as an adult, and passes on the ancient truths about humanity in the form of a storybook, as well as her own actions.

Regina's activities, on the other hand, represent everything Mary Margaret fights against. As a mayor, she still controls people around her. She abuses her power to manipulate others, so that she reaches her selfish goals. Although the Storybrooke residents do not particularly respect her authority, no one really questions it either. This situation is discussed between Emma and Mary Margaret, as Emma wonders what makes the people want Regina in the office:

Emma: What is her deal? She's not a great people-person, how did she get elected?
Mary Margaret: She's been a mayor as long as I can remember. No one's every been brave to enough to run against her. She inspires quite a bit of... Well, fear.
(Kitsis and Horowitz 2011b, dir. Beeman, S01E02 00:05:30)

That exposes the existence and consequences of injustice connected with corruption in politics not just in Storybrooke, but it might as well be analogical to issues that

currently provoke discussion in the society beyond the fictional town.

2.1.2. Emma's Cross

In the series, Emma Swan represents a rather ambiguous female character with a complicated history. She finds herself on a crossroad in her life, and the most significant journey in her life is yet to come. As Snow White's daughter and the potential saviour of the fairy tale land, she proves to have a strong sense of justice, and inclines to serving the good side. Moreover, apart from the common personality qualities, she was born with a special power, which manifests itself as the ability to recognize with absolute certainty whether people are telling the truth or not. Yet, some negative consequences of the separation from her mother are reflected in the depiction of her character as a very independent, but socially and emotionally deprived woman, having abandoned her own child herself when she was younger.

After Emma renounced her role as a mother and gave her son up for adoption, Regina accepted the responsibility instead. She seized her chance to prove her capability of unconditional love and experience motherhood while raising Henry. Although his upbringing is rather comfortable in terms of materialistic provision, Regina's capacity to let go of *her* interests and give Henry the love and support a child deserves while paying attention to his spiritual needs and fears is still in question. According to Bettelheim, the character of the Evil Queen in the original Snow White warns against narcissism, and he notes that children "must gradually learn to transcend this dangerous form of self-involvement" (1976, 203). Based on her overall behaviour, is seems that Regina continues to struggle with this pathological condition in the TV series. It is not only her treatment of other people that shows a considerable degree of bitterness and lack of compassion. She also

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appears to have adopted Henry for selfish reasons, mainly to compensate her loneliness, since she constantly tries to control his life without taking his own feelings, ideas and his character in general into consideration. Snow White, on the other hand, would have been a loving mother to her child, but unselfishly gave her up for the greater good.

Emma is challenged not only to face her role as a mother, but was also predestined to be a saviour – not just to save Henry from Regina's influence, but to rescue the whole society in Storybrooke, as she is the one who has the power to break Regina's curse. In order for that to happen, she has to decide to leave her self-preservative distance and sceptical perspective behind, and believe the seemingly impossible. In the end, it is her son who helps her overcome her deprivation, as he makes her return to her real family and tries to make her believe that fairy tales are not just imaginary stories, but they are actually true. As conflicted as her character is at the beginning of the series, Emma tells him: "Just because you believe something doesn't make it true" (Kitsis and Horowitz 2011a, dir. Mylod, S01E01 00:11:58), to which Henry replies: "That's exactly what makes it true. You should know more than anyone" (S01E01 00:12:01). Consequently, Henry's reaching to Emma and making her come to Storybrooke represents the initiation of her journey as a heroine.

Hence, her journey is not a tale of one woman's development. Being a representative of our consensus reality, she symbolizes the need to remember unresolved conflicts, realize one's true, individual identity and fight to restore balance, since "it is not society that is to guide and save the creative hero, but precisely the reverse. And so every one of us shares the supreme ordeal – carries the cross of the redeemer – not in the bright moments of his tribe's great victories, but in the silences of his personal despair" (Campbell 2004, 362). Emma's task is to turn

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this despair into victory. Eventually, she decides to follow her intuition and accepts the quest. This is demonstrated during Emma's dramatic conversation with Regina when she states: "I don't care what happens to you. I don't care what happens to me. All I care about is what happens to my kid" (Espenson 2012, dir. Edwards, S01E19 00:41:47). Then, she adds: "You're a sociopath, lady. You tried to take away someone that I love. And now… I'm going to take away someone you love. I am taking back my son" (S01E19 00:42:00).

However, the outcome of her journey is still uncertain and depends solely on her actions. Despite being Snow White daughter, her intentions are not always as pure. Thus, she somewhat creates a bridge between Mary Margaret and Regina, and is yet to choose her path. This, among other signs, is symbolized by her status once she decides to stay in Storybrooke. As she becomes a sheriff of the town, her position and responsibility reflect her dual nature. On the one hand, she fights injustice and catches criminals. On the other hand, she basically works for Regina, whose actions are far from moral. Emma, therefore, still needs to pass the trials of adulthood and transcend the conflict between generativity and stagnation. By developing the ability of unconditional love and controlling the selfish tendencies, she can compensate the unjust loss of her family that she suffered while turning it into a progress-oriented drive, similar to Snow White's upbringing without her mother. The absence of maternal love is, in fact, a connective feature common to the history of each of the three women's lives. The consequences in the form of the destructive tendencies observable in Regina's behaviour are, however, not unavoidable. Not Snow White, but Emma is the heroine who needs to awake, take responsibility for development and fulfil her purpose.

2.2. From Darkness to Light

As a consequence of the changes in the internal characterization, the main focus is on the characters rather than the mythical nature of their journeys as they are depicted in the original fairy tales (Naoreen 2011, 42). The adaptation consists in the extension of their personal experiences, which adds to the complexity of their personalities, and displays them with all their human traits, desires and fears. Individual episodes of *Once Upon a Time* gradually unveil what happened earlier in the characters' lives, and the audience learns what events brought them in the situations they were formerly known for. In other words, spectators are given an insight into the characters' individual struggles, which resemble real-life situations that they can identify with. Thus, different personal experiences somewhat clarify, if not justify, the characters' behaviour in the present, whether it is the heroes', or the villains' actions.

Although partly hidden behind the real-life drama, the archetypal motives in the plot as well as in the individual characters are still recognizable. What is more, the ambiguous aspect of the story only underlines what is typical about human nature, and the similarities between Snow White's and the Evil Queen's lives actually strengthen their archetypal features. Assuming that the two characters represent two essentially different life choices, the TV series preserves this depiction and further develops the concept of good and evil by providing examples of the way it manifests itself in personal lives of individuals. Though presented as two women with equal potential, Snow White follows the right path, while the Evil Queen chooses the dark side. This division demonstrates the significance of the individual characters' own responsibility for their actions and consequences of those actions.

2.2.1. The Queen as a Victim

As mentioned above, even though the plot of *Once Upon a Time* is not limited to one particular fairy tale, Snow White, and the relationship between the two main female characters, is the keystone of the collective journey that all the fairy tale heroes and heroines have to undergo together. The clarification of the past events, which caused Snow White and Regina to be enemies, and initiated the queen's revenge, is therefore crucial for understanding the central plot. The audience is provided with information from the past which can change their perception of the characters' personalities. The more complex characterization requires a more thorough reflection on the events in order to see whether the archetypal depiction of the story has been preserved in this new interpretation. One of the most significant moments when the traditional view of the two female characters is disrupted comes with the revelation of the story of young Regina's life before her marriage to the king.

Regina is presented as an intelligent, loving and kind woman, who is also very beautiful. Her life is, however, still very complicated, because she has a hard time coping with her parents. The young woman, the only daughter of prince Henry and princess Cora, strives for their acceptance and struggles with their expectations. Although Henry is a loving father, his opinions do not play an important role, as it is Cora, also known as the Queen of Hearts, who dominates in the family and Regina's life.

Looking at her former status and the background of her adventurous life, Regina has got everything a heroine of a great story needs. One could almost compare her to Snow White as the protagonist of her own fairy tale. She is innocent, she is likeable, and she has got a villain to fight. The question thus is how a person

generally known to be *evil* can be perceived as the *innocent* one, and what went wrong.

One thing the audience is constantly reminded of not only in *Once Upon a Time* but in other versions of fairy tales is that it is one's ability to truly love and be loved what makes them human, and allows them to fulfil their humanity. It might very well be exactly this principle what changes viewers' perception of Regina's character before and after she becomes the queen. Despite the malicious and heartless antagonist her character represents in the traditional fairy tale, the TV show reveals that she once cared about a man with whom she was romantically involved.

Earlier in her life, Regina was in love with Daniel, a stable boy working for her family. While she was still living in her parents' palace, young Regina and Daniel were having an affair. However, Regina's mother would never approve of their relationship, and they had to keep it a secret. At the beginning of an episode dedicated to the story of her past life (Kitsis and Horowitz 2012, dir. White, S01E18), Regina is presented as a heroine who is determined to fight for her love. Moreover, she even shows her capacity to care about people who are complete strangers to her. Regina saves Snow White's life after her horse gets startled, and their very first encounter ends with Snow White's expressing her gratitude:

Regina: It's okay, dear. You're safe.

Snow White: You saved my life.

Regina: Are you alright?

Snow White: Yes. But I'll never ride again.

(Kitsis and Horowitz 2012, dir. White, S01E18 00:09:20)

At the same time, Regina's response again demonstrates the contradiction between her character as depicted in the traditional fairy tale, and the impression she makes due to the addition of the information about the history of her personal life in the TV series. Her wise words perfectly express the basic principle of the life journey – one that she soon fails to abide by herself. Since little Snow White feels discouraged by her frightening experience, Regina tells her: "Nonsense. The only way to overcome fear is to face it. To get back on that horse as soon as possible" (S01E18 00:09:33). Despite the accuracy of the statement and the spontaneity of Regina's way of saying it, she did not really try to solve her own struggle by facing her mother. While discussing the issue with Daniel, he tries to encourage Regina to be brave enough to deal with the situation:

Daniel: Regina, tell her. She'll get over it. What can she do?

Regina: Have you not seen her magic? The real question is, what can't she do?

Daniel: Who cares about magic? True love is the most powerful magic of all. It can overcome anything.

(S01E18 00:08:25)

As Regina shows her fear of her mother's power, the nature of her love for Daniel, or her ability to truly love in general, becomes uncertain. Cora's strong influence on Regina's personality could have some serious, negative consequences.

Cora embodies everything that contradicts the ideal mother figure. In respect to her lack of empathy, Cora is a manipulative and controlling woman, who does not show consideration for anyone else but herself. As such, she could never really accept her maternal role, which would require her unconditional love. Ultimately, her

relationships with other people are based on her desire to gain more power. She demands perfection of others in terms of meeting her own expectations, and this is particularly true in relation to her daughter. In fact, Cora projects her own ambitions onto Regina, and never shows any compassion. When she comments on Regina's riding, for example, she says:

Cora: You ride like a man. A lady should be graceful. You should use a saddle.

Regina: I was just having fun.

Cora: Well, you're getting a little old for fun. Who's going to want to marry you when you behave like a commoner?

(S01E18 00:03:13)

Shortly after Cora expresses her displeasure with her daughter's behaviour, Regina tries to fight back, and starts arguing:

Regina: Why do you always have to criticize me?

Cora: I'm not criticizing you – I'm helping you.

(Regina goes to leave.)

Cora: Don't you walk away from me.

(Cora uses her magic to lift Regina off of the ground and bring her closer.)

Regina: Mother! You know I don't like it when you use magic.

Cora: And I don't like insolence. I'll stop using magic, when you start being an obedient daughter.

Regina: Why can't I just be myself?

Cora: Oh, because you can be so much more. If you'd just let me help you…

(S01E18 00:04:00)

With regard to her justification, Cora is convinced that her merciless treatment is absolutely appropriate, and her authority should never be questioned. Her pathological arrogance escalates when she intervenes in Regina's romantic relationship in order to make her marry the king, and takes Daniel's life.

Naturally, Regina is destroyed by her lover's death, and her grief can be understood as a necessary part of the healing process. Then, however, she lets her anger take control of her life. She is not able to move on, as she starts blaming everyone else for her misfortune. She does not only reject her mother once and for all. When she realizes that it was the little princess who told Cora about her intention to marry Daniel, Regina turns against Snow White as well. Thus, Regina's confrontation with this fatal incident casts a new light on her character. It becomes apparent that she is not capable of forgiveness. Moreover, her spite reveals her inclination to trickery. Regardless of her maintaining disdain for Snow White, she decides to fake sympathy with the purpose of being able to increase her power, and get her revenge one day. Cora, having observed Regina pretending kindness and feelings of love for Snow White's family, pronounces words of appreciation: "Well played, dear. You're learning" (Kitsis and Horowitz 2012, dir. White, S01E18 00:38:53). Consequently, Regina's character at the end of her story becomes more and more sinister, as her statement referring to her first encounter with Snow White clearly demonstrates. She says: "I should have let her die on that horse" (S01E18 00:39:39). She has no mercy any more. Thus, she basically follows in her mother's footsteps, despite the fact that Cora was a person Regina would never want to become.

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As a consequence, Regina starts being cold and distant. She becomes a prisoner of her own past, as she closes her heart to everyone except for her lover, who is already dead. However, her inability to accept Daniel's death only makes her deprive herself of living. She eventually gives in to dark magic. It becomes her addiction analogous to a drug that she uses as a way of escaping the reality of her situation. She refuses to take responsibility and admit her having failed to handle amorous affair with Daniel – which also raises the question of the real nature of her feelings for him – whether it was the true love Daniel himself referred to, or rather her fleeting infatuation. In all, she is constantly trying to avoid her problems instead of facing them, which prevents further development of her personality. Thus, she chooses stagnation over progress.

In reference to the classical fairy tale, Bettelheim claims: "We do not know why the queen in "Snow White" cannot age gracefully and gain satisfaction from vicariously enjoying her daughter's blooming into a lovely girl, but something must have happened in her past to make her vulnerable so that she hates the child she should love" (Bettelheim 1976, 195). By unveiling the background of the Evil Queen's life, the TV series somewhat clarifies the enigmas surrounding her character as Bettelheim describes them. Her need to reassure herself of her youthful appearance signifies her stagnation, which is paradoxically a result of her fear of death. Focusing on the origin of her bitterness and the cause of her hostility towards Snow White, however, is not necessary.

The question is to what extent, if at all, it is Snow White's fault, and how much has Cora influenced Regina's (in)ability to deal with obstacles in her life, and ultimately her inevitable mental disintegration. Cora has failed to adopt the

responsibility that naturally arises from every encounter with another human being –
mutual respect.

In a way, Regina is a victim of her mother's heartless treatment. Yet, no matter
how difficult and, in terms of emotional support, insufficient her upbringing was, she
has the power to transform this deficiency into a productive force that helps to repair
the damage. Therefore, she is in fact a victim of her own actions. She is the one who
decides whether the failure to fight the dangerous form of self-centredness, and treat
other people with sincere love and care, which go far beyond maternal duty, is passed
on to her, or whether she breaks the chain. For "there is no change from darkness to
light or from inertia to movement without emotion" (Jung 2003, 33).

2.2.2. Snow White's Atonement

The revelation of Snow White's involvement in the tragedy that contributed to
Regina's transformation into the Evil Queen can complicate the spectators' perception
of her as an archetypal protagonist. In fact, the theme markedly resembles the plot of
a novel by Ian McEwan, *Atonement* (2002), which belongs to the category realistic
fiction books. It is a story of a thirteen-year-old girl, Briony Tallis, whose
misconception of her sister's love affair dramatically changes lives of everyone
involved – an error eventually resulting in fatal consequences for both lovers.

Both characters, Snow White and Briony, thus somehow complicated other
people's chances to get their happy endings because of their engagement in matters
which they as children did not fully comprehend. In Snow White's case, however, it
was a misjudgement of Cora's character, because she believed her to be a good and
loving mother. Therefore, the fault was not really Snow White's. Briony, on the other
hand, recklessly used her imagination to create a plot of other people's story.

In *Once Upon a Time*, Snow White comes to the stable at night, and sees Regina and Daniel kissing (Kitsis and Horowitz 2012, dir. White, S01E18 00:17:20). Similarly to Briony's reaction, she gets confused and upset, and runs away. However, Regina runs after her, and stops her so that she can explain the situation:

Regina: Your father, King Leopold, he's a kind and fair man… But I don't love him.

Snow White: I don't understand. Why not?

Regina: Love doesn't work that way. Love, true love, is magic. And not just any magic – the most powerful magic of all. It creates happiness.

Snow White: And that man in the stables… You love him?

Regina: With all my heart.

(Kitsis and Horowitz 2012, dir. White, S01E18 00:18:17)

Although Snow White's inquiry is rather naive at first, then she expresses surprising understanding. Still, Regina worries about the consequences of her secret being revealed. More then anything, she is terrified of her mother's reaction to her relationship with Daniel, and thus tries to assure that it will not happen:

Regina: I need you to be certain. You can never speak of this. And, above all, you mustn't tell my mother. Will you do that for me?

Snow White: Yes, I promise.

(S01E18 00:19:59)

While she broke her promise, Snow White was defending Regina and Daniel's love, hoping that her clarification could help to make them happy. She only told the

truth which Regina had been trying to hide, and thus intended to make things right. She did not interpret what she had seen wrongly, and if she did, then it was not a result of the power of her wild imagination. She was not left to create a theory about what had happened on her own – Regina was there to explain the situation. Thus, when Snow White spoke to Cora, she did not find it necessary to be concerned with particular details of what she had been able to see with her eyes. Rather, she tried to see beyond that, and get to the core of the affair, which, as Regina had explicitly said to Snow White, were the feelings between the two lovers.

Snow White's good intentions, as well as Cora's intrigue, are obvious in their conversation:

Cora: I'd do anything to make her happy.

Snow White: You'd do anything?

Cora: Of course, dear. You know, I talked to the King about your mother. He told me how much she loved you. Losing her must've been so hard.

Snow White: It was.

Cora: Hearing him, I realized he might as well have been talking about me and Regina. I don't want us to lose each other. If only I could show her how I feel. That, no matter what, all I want is her happiness.

Snow White: Then, don't make her get married.

Cora: I'm sorry?

Snow White: She doesn't love my father. She loves someone else. She made me promise not to tell… But she'll lose you. She can't lose her mother. No one should.

Cora: Oh, sweet Snow. It's alright. She won't lose me. You can tell me. You must tell me.

(Kitsis and Horowitz 2012, dir. White, S01E18 00:25:28)

Snow White's inability to keep the secret was solely an outcome of her effort to end the unbearable frustration of hiding the truth. If, therefore, there was some falsehood that led to the tragedy, it was Regina's.

Yet, shortly before she forces Snow White to eat the poisoned apple years later, Regina assuredly declares: "he died because of you" (Espenson and Goodman 2012, dir. Cheylov, S01E21 00:31:06). Her continuous delusion is a result of her failure to take responsibility for her actions, learn from her mistakes, and thus find a way to live a fulfilled life. Even though both women have suffered a loss of their beloved, they deal with trials and obstacles very differently. While Snow White accepts change as a natural part of life and uses her pain to fuel her life drive, whether it results in her discovery of true love or her endeavour to help other people find it, Regina tries to take it away from them. That, of course, cannot generate happiness in any way, not even hers.

Actually, the archetypal manifestation of Snow White's positive development is her death, which is not permanent, but rather signifies a transition. In *Once Upon a Time*, the circumstances of this part of the story are slightly modified, and the act is preceded by a dialogue between the two crucial characters, who reach the following resolution:

Regina: Did you know that apples stand for health and wisdom?

Snow White: So, why do I get the feeling that one might kill me?

Regina: It won't kill you. No, what it will do is far worse. Your body will be your tomb, and you'll be in there with nothing but dreams formed of your own regrets.

Snow White: And you're going to force me to eat it.

Regina: Of course not. It wouldn't work anyway. The choice is yours. It must be taken willingly.

Snow White: And why would I do that?

Regina: Because, if you refuse the apple, your Prince, your Charming, will be killed. (Espenson and Goodman 2012, dir. Cheylov, S01E21 00:31:52)

This negotiation clearly reflects the true nature of each of the two characters and their symbolically divergent parts in the plot. Despite the drama complicating their relationship and the complexity of the plot in general, their typical characteristics are manifested in the ways they deal with obstacles. The queen's viciousness is a result of her desperate effort to compensate Daniel's death. Instead of forgiveness and acceptance, she chooses revenge. Furthermore, rather than showing respect for other people and their personal freedom, she uses blackmail to get what she wants. In contrast to Regina's inability to move on to the next stage in her life, Snow White's acceptance of death demonstrates her ability to *face* her fear and master the virtues that allow her to become an adult woman. Hence, their attitudes towards crucial situations in life show their essentially different capacity for personality development that leads to integrity, which Erikson considers to be in opposition to the state of despair (Capps 2011, 270).

Due to the symbolical function of her character, Regina's presence, together with the impact of her actions, is crucially important in the story. This particular scene serves as an allegorical depiction of the abyss in the hero's journey, which signifies a critical point preceding their transformation. The queen gives Snow White the apple, which is going to be one of the biggest challenges testing the true nature of

her relationship with Prince Charming. The concept is similar to the connotation of the fruit from the tree in the Garden of Eden. Along with the villain's trickery comes the moment of revelation, when the truth must be exposed. Regina confronts Snow White with her regrets, and threatens to kill her beloved if she refuses to eat the apple. When reading this situation as a universally applicable analogy to the human condition, the trickster figure simply figuratively articulates the truth about the human life saying that if Snow White refuses to take responsibility, her dreams (or true love) will die. Moreover, the Evil Queen states that "apples stand for health and wisdom" (S01E21 00:31:52) – a virtue Snow White needs to have adopted not only to transcend the interests of her own ego, but also to regard death as a part of life. As she willingly eats the apple, well aware of the consequences, and thus sacrifices herself for another person, she proves her ability to face regrets and repent.

In the end, the decision to act morally requires bravery, meaning generally the will to fight one's fear. This also appears to be one the main themes of Snow White's and the Evil Queens' stories in *Once Upon a Time*, as well as the original versions of the fairy tale. In the original *Snow-white* by the Grimm brothers, for instance, "when the poor child found herself quite alone in the wild woods, she felt full of terror, even of the very leaves on the trees, and she did not know what to do for fright. Then she began to run over the sharp stones and through the thorn bushes, and the wild beasts after her, but they did her no harm" (Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm 1882, 214). In Walt Disney's animated variation of the fairy tale, then, exhausted after her journey through the dark forest, Snow White finds herself lying on the ground and crying. Suddenly, she is surrounded by wild animals, who get scared of her, and she explains: „Please, don't run away. I won't hurt you. I'm awfully sorry. I didn't mean to frighten you. But you don't know what I've been through. And all because I was

afraid. I'm so ashamed of the fuss I've made" (Hand 1937, 00:07:50). All these examples present fear as a deadly force, while the courage to face is an essential part of the will to live, which enables the heroine to move forward. As a consequence, Snow White's death does not actually represent the end of her life, but it is a symbol of her development, signifying a new beginning.

2.2.3. Death, Rebirth and the Self

As fairy tales are traditionally connected with a specific stage of personality development, they basically depict the typical psychosocial crises described by Erikson. The adventures of the fairy tale heroes then reflect the necessity to overcome these conflicts, where dismissal of the negative aspects and identification with the positive ones is achieved by developing specific human strengths or virtues. Among these, Erikson lists the following: hope, will, purpose, competence, fidelity, love, care, and wisdom. They unfold chronologically in this exact order, and one is contingent on the other. Capps expresses their significance in human life by stating that "the human strengths that develop in childhood are the basis, collectively, for the formation of what I am calling *the resourceful self*" (Capps 2011, 279: emphasis is original). Among various selves we possess, "the *resourceful self* is critical not only for personal survival but also for the sense that one's life has meaning and purpose"(269: emphasis is original). To put this concept of "the resourceful self" into the context of the collective unconscious, archetypes could be seen as the original source that generates the strengths or virtues which stimulate one's humanity and enable an individual to act in accordance with the collective pre-knowledge of what is good, and what is wrong. Thus, the stories serve "to demonstrate how they speak not only of what goes on within the human psyche, but how transformations can take

place so that we can lead more fulfilling lives, true to the promptings of the Self and soul" (Mitchell 2010, 279).

The fairy tale about Snow White is originally an allegory of the transition from childhood to adulthood, which is marked by the heroine's rebirth. In the TV series, her symbolical death is equally archetypal, but her story is not limited to one phase of a young girl's life. Both the traditional version and the TV one display her ability to love, which is the human strength that must be acquired in order to enter the stage of young adulthood. This transformation is explicitly illustrated by the moment when Prince Charming kisses her, and she is reborn. Thus, she literally awakens into adulthood. The reference to the power of love is a commonly used metaphor, as "finding true love quite literally means resurrection" (Tautz 2008, 171).

Among four different forms of manifestation of the archetype concerning rebirth, Jung presents this phenomenon as a commonly occurring symbol representing a positive transformation within an individual's personality development:

> The fourth form concerns rebirth in the strict sense; that is to say, rebirth within the span of individual life. The English word rebirth is the exact equivalent of the German *Wiedergeburt*, but the French language seems to lack a term having the peculiar meaning of "rebirth." This word has a special flavour; its whole atmosphere suggests the idea of *renovatio*, renewal, or even of improvement brought about by magical means. Rebirth may be a renewal without any change of being, inasmuch as the personality which is renewed is not changed in its essential nature, but only its functions, or parts of the personality, are subjected to healing,

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strengthening, or improvement. Thus even bodily ills may be healed

through rebirth ceremonies. (2003, 54-55)

In other words, rebirth symbolizes a step forward in developing the "resourceful self". Jung states that: "Nothing can exist without its opposite; the two were one in the beginning and will be one again in the end. Consciousness can only exist through continual recognition of the unconscious, just as everything that lives must pass through many deaths" (2003, 33). In the series, Snow White has overcome the contradiction between life and death, isolation and intimacy, and enters the next stage of the human life.

Therefore, the depiction of the Evil Queen and Show White in *Once Upon a Time* provides a more comprehensive reflection on an individual's spiritual growth, while focusing on the characters' adulthood. It portraits their personalities at that point in their lives when the typical personal dilemmas, along with the human strengths that need to be mastered, move to another level. Thus, the series follows both women's gradual transformation towards integrity, and the audience can see how successful each of them is in achieving the ultimate goal of the life journey, where the completion of the resourceful self requires "wisdom", described as "detached concern with life itself, in the face of death itself" (Capps 2011, 273). The characters continue to follow two different paths, one of which represents progress and leads to happiness, while the other is an example of regression. At the same time, the series emphasises the ambivalent nature of life and the role of choice in the characters movement from darkness to light. In the end, everyone has the capacity to be both good and evil. Conflict represents the essence of the hero's journey, and the characters' archetypal behaviour depends on their ability to resolve each struggle by

controlling the conflicting forces and restoring balance. The original depiction of Snow White also includes this aspect, using a more metaphorical expression while focusing on her external characterization. As "any images containing opposites can also symbolize totality" (Mitchell 2010, 274), the queen gave birth to a daughter "with a skin as white as snow, lips as red as blood, and hair as black as ebony, and she was named Snow-white" (Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm 1882, 213). Her dark black hair and white skin do not create a conflict, but work together in perfect harmony, and thus make her the fairest of them all.

Conclusion

Myths have always been an essential part of humanity. Archetypal stories include a variety of more specialized genres, but all reflect the universal pattern of the hero's journey, which is analogical to the basic, invariable principles of the process of development and applicable to a great number of human experiences. As such, it can be perceived as an archetype of the human life which consists of images derived from the collective unconscious. It mirrors the process of individuation and the divergent forces operating in the psyche, where some enhance integrity, while others prevent it. Depending on the particular genre, the archetypes gain a more or less specific form that is communicable through language. Fairy tales are then an example of a more specialized variation of monomyth, where archetypal images are adapted to children's experiences, as well as their cognitive skills. In the TV series *Once Upon a Time*, fairy tales are adapted for different purposes with the aim to inspire *adult* audience, and the communication of the universal concepts is therefore even more complicated.

The adventures of fairy tale characters depicted in the series are not restricted to typical crises related to particular stages in a child's development, but rather provide a more general picture of the life journey illustrating the relevance of these struggles to further personality development in adulthood. In respect to this description, the plot of Snow White creates the central storyline. Since the classical story imaginatively demonstrates the aspects of the transition from childhood to adulthood, the writers of *Once Upon a Time* use the theme and components of this fairy tale to design a more complex piece of work. Furthermore, the plot of the original version is essentially built on the conflicted nature of the human mind, which is traditionally represented by the archetypal distinction between good and

evil. The two concepts are personified in two female characters who are driven by different motives, where one is an opponent to the other. The series then uses the potential of this illustrative model and develops the characters' roles further.

As a result, the extensively altered characterization in this postmodern adaptation radically affects the meaning and purpose of the stories, but the archetypal patterns have not disappeared, as the essence of the original images serves to convey a different message. As the characteristic attributes of both Snow White and the Evil Queen as adult women are manifested in the new roles that come with adulthood, their characters in *Once Upon a Time* represent the positive and the negative aspects of the mother archetype. The different paths each of them chooses show what virtues are necessary to be consolidated in order to live a good life as opposed to traits generating pathological behaviour, and how they are manifested in real-life situations that relate to lives of contemporary adult spectators. Also, within the endeavour to reveal the true nature of the human mind, the writers displays its ambiguity and present duality as an indispensable aspect of life.

Moreover, as a postmodern narrative, it uses the mythical features of the stories to draw attention to the significance of these very images, and thus emphasises the role of the collective unconscious in individuals' spiritual growth, which is often undermined due to the influence of secularization of the modern society. The TV series characters' symbolical awakening thus enhances the universal fascination with magic and encourages the audience to embrace their spirituality.

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