“Cinderella” is the story about a girl who, after the death of her mother and the remarrying of her father, finds herself a servant in her own home at the hands of hostile family members. Her luck changes when through magic assistance she is able to attend the prince’s ball and wins his affection. Her lost slipper leads the prince back to her and they find their happily ever after. This classic tale has a long history and finds its origins in Egypt and China. The 1st century tale of Rhodopis and the 9th century tale of Ye Xian relate the story of a girl who marries a powerful ruler because her foot fits the right slipper (Strabo 89; Taylor 117 or Tatar Classic Fairy Tales 107). Tales following a similar storyline exist worldwide and in Europe alone hundreds of versions were registered by Marianne Roalfe Cox in 1892.

Many of the standard aspects commonly associated with the “Cinderella” tale—such as the pumpkin carriage, the fairy godmother, the transformation by means of magic, the tree the girl weeps at—originate in two of the best-known versions of the fairy tale, namely Charles Perrault’s “Cendrillon, or, The Little Glass Slipper” (1697) and Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm’s “Aschenputtel” (1814). Perrault, for instance, supplied the fairy godmother and the pumpkin carriage, while Grimm incorporated a magical tree and birds that grant the cinder-girl’s wishes. Authors of modern novels based on the fairy tale apply a number of the standard aspects of the tale, and steer the tale in new directions by adding new components.

A number of modern variants of the tale will be discussed, namely Diane Stanley’s Bella At Midnight (2003), Cameron Dokey’s Before Midnight (2007), Gail Carson Levine’s Ella Enchanted (1997), and the film Ever After: A Cinderella Story (1998). These particular
stories fit within a modern worldview and open up new ways of looking at this fairy tale. For example, Stanley’s story stands out for two reasons. Not only does Bella, the Cinderella, grow up with her prince as her best friend, but she becomes the ‘Worthy Knight’, a saviour sanctioned by God to prevent a new war from erupting. Bella’s transformation is not one of the silent beauty at a ball, but of a brave warrior on a battlefield.

On the other hand, Cameron Dokey’s *Before Midnight* stands out because the villain of this story is not the stepmother, but the girl’s own father. The stepmother actually becomes a caring and loving mother, which offers an interesting contrast to the stereotype that is traditionally attributed to stepmothers. The seemingly magical qualities of nature also contribute to the distinctiveness of this story.

However, out of the three novels *Ella Enchanted* is the only one that was made into a film (retaining little of the original story). What makes this novel stand out is the main aspect of the story: Ella’s fairy godmother gives her obedience as a gift at birth. Ella comes to see this as a curse, and her struggle with it drives the plot. Her love for the prince is what allows her to break the spell. The parody of fairy godmothers as helpers, which both fairy godmothers in this tale are not, is what allows for humour and a different view of fairy tale magic.

The film *Ever After* attempts to place the fairy tale in a realistic (medieval) early modern setting. Leonardo da Vinci fulfils the role of fairy godmother, and heroine Danielle disguises herself as a courtier throughout most of the story. The interaction and dialogue between Danielle, the prince, the stepfamily, and Leonardo create an interesting story. The fact that Danielle is an independent girl also contributes to the distinctive story this film communicates.

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1 A summary of each of these tales can be found in Appendix I.
The lives of the protagonists can be divided into three stages: the “positive family”, the “negative family”, and the “new family”. These different families will be referred to several times throughout this dissertation. The positive family exists of the people within the story who provide the cinder-girl with motherly or fatherly love. These characters may be living or dead, and the period in which they have the greatest influence is during childhood, although characters in the role of fairy godmother, which is a mother replacement, have a greater influence during adolescence. The positive family represents the experience of a happy childhood when parents were mostly caring and attentive. This experience is carried within the heroine throughout adolescence as a mental support during difficult times. The negative family exists of people within the story who provide the protagonist with no love or care and with whom is forced to live. These characters are living, and they have the greatest influence during adolescence. The negative family represents the struggle with puberty and parental authority most teenagers go through. The experience of the negative family influences the choices of the protagonist for the better and actually helps her find the courage to take action. The new family consists of one person: the prince. He functions as a source of support for the protagonist throughout the story, and often starts out as a friend of the cinder-girl. She will start a new life with him, and as such he represents a new family for the protagonist. The new family represents the discovery and acceptance of self (see chapter 4 below).

It must be noted that there is a problem with writing a Cinderella story for a modern audience. Diane Stanley explains that “the original ending of Cinderella (...) wouldn’t work in these postfeminist times. My heroine would have to earn her happy ending. If she and the prince were going to marry, they would have to come together as equals” (“An Interview” 6). The fairy tale would probably not work in a modern setting because Cinderella’s servitude would not be credible. A medieval or early modern setting conveys greater credibility because
in a feudal society servitude was a daily situation for many. Furthermore, a medieval or early modern setting provides the author with a society where often gender roles were set and highly unchangeable. Thus a story wherein Cinderella actively breaks with the conventions of a feudal society and the gender roles connected to that society becomes one that fits a modern view and the feminist mindset of today. Something that ties in with the use of setting is that fairy tales come with a set of fixed conventions that often do not uphold those of modern society. Accordingly, authors break with these preset conventions in order create new conventions that are more fitting for modern societal expectations.

There are two arguments that are useful to start this research with. Firstly, Walter Scherf explains that fairy tales are all about coping with the loss of family ties alongside the loss of childhood innocence. He continues that fairy tales are in a sense “psychodrama of family conflicts which claim to be worked through. And these family conflicts are the various departure situations of individual emancipation” (Scherf 85). Emancipation here means becoming an adult. Scherf’s argument entails that fairy tales relate, in a fantasy setting and extraordinary storyline, the struggle children have with growing up and finding their place in world. Secondly, Linda T. Parsons claims that children are able to “resist positioning and challenge stereotypes if the discourses through which to do so are available to them” (142). A modern version of “Cinderella” needs a “more complete character and plot development” and should be “targeted to the age when (...) children are able to recognize disruptive texts and question patriarchal stereotypes” (Parsons 143). To conclude Parsons’ argument, authors who produce modern versions of “Cinderella” can no longer make use of mere stereotypes and standard conventions.

These two arguments resulted in the following structuring of this dissertation: the first three chapters will analyse the parental figures within the tale, namely the mother, the stepmother and the potential mother-replacement, and the father. The last chapter will be an
analysis of the relationship between the character of Cinderella and the character of the prince, of which the focus will mainly be on gender roles and the influence of feminism. As the prince will become the eventual new family of the cinder-girl, this relationship is of a similar importance to that of the parental relationships. Each chapter will first relate theories, insights and arguments by different scholars before the analysis of the stories is begun. There are two theories that are applied across chapters. Firstly, there is the “good” and “bad” mother paradigm (Tatar Hard Facts 144-145; Bettelheim 68-69) to explain the function of parental characters, which is coupled to the idea of the “internalized mother” (Bettelheim 258).

Secondly, there is the use of masculine archetypes (Kahn 57-62) to analyze and determine the role of males within the tale. This is coupled to the idea of gender roles and the influence of feminism.

This dissertation will analyze the above mentioned stories based on the Cinderella tale and there will be a focus on the significance of the relationships within the tale, both inside and outside the family circle. To further support this analysis I will refer to and implement theories based on the classic fairy tale and arguments will be based on these theories. On the one hand the mother-daughter relationship and its importance for the stories will be examined, while the father-daughter and male-female relationships will mainly be examined by use of theories about gender roles and feminism. The distinction is made between the character of the father and the character of the prince. Therefore, there will be an extensive analysis of the family relations within the different versions of the tale, with a focus on the implications of these changes in the structure and function of the family members. The aim is to determine these changes, explain how they come to occur and by what means, and to demonstrate the importance of those particular changes.

The expectation is to find changes in the tale as well as the characters, because the “Cinderella” story is in constant development (Tatar, Classic Fairy Tales 102). It is likely that
each generation creates a uniquely new version of the tale. To what extent the changes are of importance is not discernable at this particular moment, yet it is expected that many of the changes are significant for the modern view of the tale and its importance in the development of a child. The greatest change is expected to be found in the father-daughter relationship and in the relationship between the protagonist and the prince. Furthermore, the role of the mother and stepmother is expected not to have changed much from the traditional versions by Perrault and Grimm, as it appears that stepmothers will retain a negative interpretation by the audience and the writers.
1. The Mother: The Depiction of the Good Mother

A central role in the Cinderella fairy tale is that of the mother figure. There are two ways in which the mother is presented in the classic version of the fairy tales: in Perrault she is deceased prior to the beginning of the tale (Perrault 16) and in Grimm she dies at the beginning of the tale (Grimm 115-116). The period of servitude enforced by the stepfamily therefore starts at the beginning of the story as well. A recurring element in the modern versions is that the protagonist enjoys a peaceful and happy childhood under the care of a mother figure, and she is not forced into servitude until adolescence. The care of the mother and her lingering presence after death provides a foundation for empowerment and independence. These stories have explored which circumstances force Cinderella into the role of servant, how she maintains her integrity during this period, and how she eventually escapes this role. Her escape is made possible by the positive experiences and qualities acquired during her childhood due to the influence of a positive family, which is mostly manifested in the mother figure. This influence continues throughout the stories and the memory of the positive family helps sustain the protagonist during her struggle with the negative family. The deceased mother is the most influential member of the positive family and therefore the first to be discussed. Other members of the positive family will be discussed in the following chapters.

There is commonly a “good” and a “bad” mother in fairy tales, respectively representing the positive and negative sides of the mother-experience of children (Tatar, *Hard Facts* 144-145). The character of the mother in “Cinderella” is depicted to represent the good aspects of motherly love, while the character of the stepmother functions as the negative example of motherly love. The division of the mother into good and bad versions in this fairy tale allows a daughter to be angry with the real-life mother without damaging this relationship.
The idea of the good mother is preserved internally when the real-life mother is perceived as a bad mother. Consequently the daughter is enabled to cope with the changing role the mother fulfills as the child matures: the mother becomes more of a disciplinarian in addition to her role as a nurturer (Bettelheim 68-69). In the case of Cinderella it can be assumed that had her mother lived, her life would have been drastically different. Therefore Cinderella’s mother represents the loss of the happiness provided by a standard family life. As will be explained in the following chapter, the texts used for this analysis provide a compensation for this loss in the guise of a foster family or a kind godmother. Both these characters are part of the positive family. However, the deceased mother retains a certain influence over the characters in the stories.

Elisabeth Panttaja claims that the role of Cinderella’s mother in the story is far from marginal, as her words and actions “are of vital importance in narrative sequencing and the overall ‘moral’ of the story” (88). Panttaja argues that Cinderella is in fact well cared for by her mother, in spite of the mother’s death, and that the story is about a mother-daughter relationship: “It is about the daughter’s loyalty to the (good) mother’s words and the mother’s continuing, magical influence in the (good) daughter’s life” (90) She continues to argue that Cinderella’s mother is paradoxical: while she seems to instruct her daughter in the value of long-suffering self-sacrifice, she is also a competitor similar to the stepmother: she schemes and plots to get her daughter the right man (90-91). The views of Panttaja can be interpreted as the idea that the tale of Cinderella teaches a girl not to rely on herself alone but also appreciate the care and wisdom offered by the mother.

Stanley Rosenman provides a different insight into the character of the mother:

Only through Cinderella living a full and generative life can the mother achieve a degree of immortality. The sense of Cinderella’s own mother’s loving and caring
presence provides the girl with a sense of worthiness, of preciousness, of
significance, that strengthens her in fending off the rending design of her new
family. Early good mothering enables Cinderella to deck herself out in good feeling
and self-esteem, cleansed of the defiling sculpting by the stepfamily and father. She
asserts her right to attend the ball, she can dress up, can carry herself like a princess
– if only for a limited time. The story’s excitement hinges on the question of
whether the experienced love of the mother will sustain Cinderella in her
tribulations. (379)

Rosenman actually provides an illustration of the influence of the positive family on the
character of Cinderella, and the importance of the mother within the positive family. The
mother’s care supplies the girl with the strength and self-assurance to claim a better life for
herself and to leave the negative family behind her.

The idea of the mother as a support and role-model for Cinderella is further supported
by the views of Jacqueline Schectman, who argues that: “A young woman growing up needs a
mother, well-grounded in her own femininity, with whom she can identify is she’s to value
the woman in herself” (Schectman 86). In order to become a worthy and independent woman
Cinderella is in need of the mother’s support, which lies in the memory of the good mother, or
in the assumed conviction that the deceased mother would have been a loving caretaker.
However, in many societies the involvement of the mother in childrearing has changed over
the past centuries. A large part of a child’s life is spent at school and many mothers work
outside of the home, which consequently means that it becomes more common for children to
be entrusted to the care of someone outside the family circle (Aapola, Gonick & Harris 79-
81).
The care of children is divided between both parents, divorced or not, and other caretakers, and as such a mother’s role in the life of her children is less significant. Mieke de Waal argues that: “mothers appeal to their children’s sense of personal responsibility” (39). A child is encouraged to learn for itself what is acceptable and what is not. These mothers do not expect their children to accept demands without question (De Waal 39). Through this practice an attempt is made at encouraging girls to internalize certain norms and develop a social character that will lead them to “want and do the things they are supposed to want and do” (De Waal 39). These mothers involve their daughters in their motives for establishing rules, and they identify good intentions and selflessness as being “for your own good” (De Waal 39). The examples a mother supplies about herself can be perceived by the daughter as an example of the mother’s expectations. In a similar fashion a mother can provide examples of other people to illustrate her approval or disapproval of certain behaviour or actions. With regard to the Cinderella tale and the cinder-girl’s mother-experience De Waal’s argument becomes an example of the bad mother (De Waal 39-40).

De Waal’s argument can be observed in the behaviour of the stepmother, who attempts to retain Cinderella in her role as a servant and to suppress her self-esteem. Cinderella is also reminded of her position within the household by the stepmother through the reference to the behaviour of other people. This is exemplified the modern stories discussed here. In Ever After, stepmother Rodmilla attempts to diminish the worth of her stepdaughter Danielle on several occasions. “Rodmilla: Some people read because they cannot think for themselves” (Ever After 17 min) and “Your appearance does reflect a certain... crudeness, my dear” (Ever After 17 min) reflect De Waal’s argument, yet the best example of Rodmilla’s attack on Danielle’s self-esteem occurs in the following scene:

Rodmilla: Paris at Christmas. Can you imagine? No. I don’t
suppose you can. My mother was hard on me too, you know. She taught me that cleanliness was next to godliness. She forced me to wash my face at least ten times a day convinced it was never clean enough. I was very grateful to her. She wanted me to be all that I could be, and here I am -- a baroness. And Marguerite shall be Queen. It's a pity you never knew your mother. There must be a little bit of her in you somewhere.

Danielle: I wish I knew what she looked like.

Rodmilla: Yes. Well, we must never feel sorry for ourselves, must we? No matter how bad things get, they can always get worse.

Danielle: Yes, madam.

Rodmilla: You have so much of your father in you. Sometimes I can almost see him looking out through your eyes.

Danielle: Really?

Rodmilla: Yes, well your features are so... masculine. Well, to be raised by a man, no wonder you're built for hard labour. (Ever After 50 min)

In *Bella at Midnight*, the stepmother does not focus as much on keeping her stepdaughter in servitude, but rather on Bella’s lack of good manners or her actions. Examples are “Well Isabel [...] I see you are just as inept in the kitchen as you are everywhere else.” (Stanley 153) and “Isabel [...] do not shout like a fishwife. You shall deafen us.” (Stanley 165).

Furthermore, De Waal argues that the mother and daughter experience a closeness during the girl’s puberty that has not been experienced before (42). Desires and problems shared by the daughter are real themes for the mother as well, and as a result differences between mother and daughter can disappear (De Waal 42). A relationship of equality between mother and daughter is more likely to exists in today’s world instead of a traditional one
based on the mother being the foundation of all female wisdom (De Waal 42). This is evident in the modern versions, especially in *Ella Enchanted* where Ella and her mother are best friends. Another example is the relationship between stepmother Rodmilla and stepsister Marguerite in *Ever After*. They scheme and work together to win the prince’s affection, and they are punished equally for their treatment of Danielle.

Nevertheless, Mieke de Waal concludes that “in practice, there are all kinds of limitations and codes the daughter needs to live by. [...] as a result, teenage girls still have difficulty in developing their own identity separate from that of their mothers” (42). This has different effects in the modern versions. In *Ever After*, Danielle’s disguise by using her mother’s name, which will be explained further below, is a way of maintaining a part of the mother’s identity. In *Bella at Midnight*, Bella is presented to her father in her mother’s old dress, resembling her enough that the father falls into a fit of rage (Stanley 143-48). Bella is ordered to take the dress off and is never again allowed to wear clothing that confirms her resemblance to her mother. Bella cannot claim a part of her mother’s identity, other than the resemblance in her appearance, and therefore she is separated from her mother’s identity. Consequently, because she is not accepted as her mother’s daughter, she cannot reclaim her noble birth as a knight’s daughter. In contrast to this, stepmother Chantal in *Before Midnight* is the one reclaiming her stepdaughter’s birthright and identity as noblewoman when she accepts Cendrillon as her own daughter (Dokey 117-19).

Although Bruno Bettelheim’s argument that “Cinderella” is a story of oedipal desires within the cinder-girl for her father is interesting, it is will not be applied in this analysis. His argumentation about an “internalized mother” will, however, be applied here, as it functions to explain not only the importance of certain objects within the tale but also the importance of the deceased mother. The internalized mother is an image children store within themselves of the mother-experience in early childhood. This internalized mother is fed by the establishment
of basic trust between child and mother in infancy, and matures along with the child (Bettelheim 258). He explains this theory by means of the tree and birds in Grimm’s “Aschenputtel”. They represent the deceased mother’s spirit, and in turn they also represent the child’s spirit:

(...) it is the spirit which originally became implanted in the child as basic trust. As such, it becomes the child’s own spirit, which sustains him in all hardships, giving him hope for the future, and the strength to create a good life for himself. (...) It is a beautiful and effective image, even more meaningful and instructive to the child who is just beginning to internalize what his parents mean to him. It is significant to boys as it is to girls because the internalized mother - or basic trust - is a crucially important mental phenomenon, whatever a person's sex. (Bettelheim 259-260)

In “Aschenputtel” Cinderella plants a twig on the grave of her mother which grows into a large tree watered only by the girls tears, a magical element in itself. The tree flourishes and the mother’s spirit is nested inside the tree and the birds that always reside in its branches. Anything Cinderella wishes for is provided by this tree and the birds. It is:

one of the most poetically moving and psychologically significant features of the story. It symbolizes that the memory of the idealized mother of infancy, when kept alive as an important part of one’s internal experience, can and does support us even in the worst adversity” (Bettelheim 257).

These arguments related above indicate the importance of mothers in general for the function of the mother in “Cinderella” and for the mother-daughter relationship within the
tale. The importance of the mother figure is especially evident in the four modern versions based on the fairy tale. *Ella Enchanted, Before Midnight,* and to a lesser extent *Ever After* all demonstrate a different approach to the (deceased) mother and her role in the life of the protagonists. Furthermore, these three stories provide different approaches to what is expected of a good daughter, along with different interpretations of what a modern mother-daughter relationship entails.

In *Ella Enchanted,* protagonist Ella enjoys a happy childhood growing up with her mother as her best friend. Ella’s mother dies of an illness shortly before her fifteenth birthday. Unlike the other Cinderellas discussed here, she knows who her mother was and can feel the pain of losing her more deeply:

> Everyone called it losing Mother, but she wasn’t lost. She was gone, and no matter where I went [...] I wouldn’t find her. We’d never talk again, or laugh together. Or swim in the River Lucarno. Or slide down the banister or play tricks on Bertha. Or a million things. (Levine 11)

Ella’s mother sustains her daughter more actively because she lived. Ella has a clear memory of her, distinguishing herself from the other protagonists: the latter experience the actions and characteristics of their mother through other people. Ella is similar to Grimm’s Cinderella, who also experiences the loss of her mother consciously (Grimm 115-116).

Linda T. Parsons remarks about Ella’s mother that:

> she dies early in the story, and on her deathbed, she addresses Ella as precious and tells her that she loves her. This affirming statement is the last Ella’s mother speaks to her, sustaining her and strengthening her for what is ahead. (147)
Nevertheless, most important act of the mother seems to be that she forbids Ella ever to tell anyone about the curse of obedience that rests on her after Ella’s friend takes advantage of it (Levine 9-10). Given this context Parsons’ observation is valid, yet the order to remain silent is of greater importance to the story and to Ella. It provides hindrance rather than support for the her. Ella is continually restricted by the order of her mother – by her influence – and she is constantly struggling to break free of both the curse and the order to remain silent about her gift of obedience. The curse can be seen as the good behaviour that is expected of a daughter, which weighs down like a ‘curse’ on her personal development and identity. This expected good behaviour and the compliance of a daughter is explained by Sinikka Aapola as a method daughters have developed in order to earn a parent’s trust in their reliability and responsibility (Aapola, Gonick & Harris 95). While daughters play the part of obedient and complaint daughter, the girls actually achieve a certain degree of autonomy from parental authority (Aapola, Gonick & Harris 95). Ella is fully aware of the compliance enforced by her curse, yet she does not achieve autonomy until she breaks the curse and her compliance. This symbolizes that act of the compliant daughter causes hindrance in the development of a girl.

Additionally, the order of Ella’s mother can be seen as an attempt to stop Ella from developing herself away from the mother’s expectations. Although Ella loves her mother dearly, the curse and the order are an obstacle in the process of self-discovery and becoming an adult. However, these obstacles can also be considered as representative of the difficulty girls will experience when they attempt to separate from their mother’s care. Since Ella’s mother preserves her role as the good mother, this is not necessarily a negative development.

Levine removes the nature connection from the story (Levine 9), and something can be said here about the symbolism of removing the internalized mother Bettelheim connected to the tree. Eventually this connection will be broken and a new relationship can be build: it is at
the candle trees that Ella meets Prince Charmont for the first time (Levine 9-10). In the guise of future love, the trees are presenting Ella with the means to break her curse. In a sense, the supporting role of Ella’s mother is passed on to Prince Charmont: it is passed on from the positive to the new family. Furthermore, Ella is provided with the means to endure the negative family.

The mother in Before Midnight, Constanze, dies in childbirth. She is buried near her favourite tree, thus reconnecting her to nature. In Grimm’s “Ashenputtel” the tree on the mother’s grave thrives because of Cinderella’s grief (Grimm 119), whereas the tree near Constanze’s grave is destroyed by the inability of the father to mourn his wife: a bolt of lightning strikes the tree when the father slams his fists in anger into the ground (Dokey 8-9). The other flora on the estate vary in their produce after this day, and whatever is planted on the grave withers on the birthday of protagonist Cendrillon (Dokey 17-19), which reflects Constanze’s confusion at her husband’s behaviour. His refusal to mourn and accept his daughter as the gift she left behind hinders Constanze in resting peacefully.

Another reason for Constanze’s lingering presence is the daughter she left behind and the guidance and protection she wishes to provide her daughter with. Her presence functions to remind the other characters in the story of lost love, and daughter Cendrillon of the value of patience. The lesson of patience is reflected in the meaning of the name Constanze, which is derived from Latin and means “steadfast” (Hanks & Hodges 70). Furthermore, this seems to reflect the nature of a mother’s care: she will not leave her daughter’s side nor relinquish her belief in what is right for Cendrillon. The fact that Cendrillon’s real name is also Constanze symbolizes the connection between the mother and the daughter in this story, and it illustrates how the mother is part of the daughter’s identity. However, the fact that the daughter prefers to use the name Cendrillon demonstrates her difference and separation from the mother.
The discovery of Constanze’s portrait by Cendrillon and her stepfamily is an important moment within the story. This portrait has been locked away in a sealed off room, reflecting that the mother-experience is sealed deep within memory and can be used as a reminder of her love. This love is reflected in the portrait:

“Oh come and see,” I heard my own voice say. “Come and see what love looks like.” [...] For I had never seen an expression such as the one that gazed out at us from my mother’s portrait. Never had I seen any face so filled with light, with such a pure and radiant joy. There could be only one reason for a look like that, just one cause: looking into the face of the person you loved best in all the world, and finding what you felt reflected back. For the thing that was in my mother’s face, shining out from it like a torch in the night, was love. (Dokey 116)

Furthermore, the portrait functions as a reminder of lost love and of the love that should be shared in the present. The stepmother, Chantal, understands the message the portrait conveys and, while she bursts out in tears, realizes that she is doing wrong by her stepdaughter in denying her a mother’s love (Dokey 116-18). In the following chapter this particular moment and its meaning will be explained further.

A consequence of the discovery of the portrait is that Constanze hands over her duties as Cendrillon’s mother to Chantal, which cancels the bad mother out. Dokey seems to relate here that mothers can be considered ‘bad’, yet the mutual love between mother and daughter prevails over the bad mother-experience. The parental authority of the mother is excused on the grounds that a mother acts out of love. In fact, “rebellion against or separation from one’s parents are not necessary precursors in young people’s development into adulthood” (Aapola, Gonick, and Harris 92). Therefore, the wicked stepmother is not necessarily needed in a
Cinderella adaptation: she can act the role of the good mother. More about Chantal and her role as good mother can be found in the next chapter.

The mother in *Ever After* has a more symbolic role. She is internalized in the dress and slippers Danielle wears to the ball, and in the name Danielle goes by during her period of disguise: the name of her mother, Comtesse Nicole de Lancret. This concept illustrates two different sides to the mother-daughter relationship. Firstly, in using the mother’s name, Danielle is provided with the freedom to become someone else, and to exercise her full worth as a person outside her servitude. Danielle utilizes the name in order to exercise power over her own fate. Consequently, the mother encourages self-exploration and self-worth.

Secondly, Danielle is taking on her mother’s existence and becomes her. This is a fulfilment of the desire to be like her mother, or rather the preserved image of her mother that is set in her memory. However, in order to become her own person Danielle needs to reclaim her own name and forsake the disguise. This is reflected in the moment Prince Henry speaks her real name and accepts Danielle as his true love (*Ever After* 102 min). These two sides to the mother-daughter relationship illustrate the acceptance of a mother’s guidance, and of the release of that guidance in order to obtain a sense of self.

However, Nicole’s presence is not as clearly felt as that of Constanze or Ella’s mother, and her supporting role is transferred to the father. Nonetheless, Nicole’s heirlooms remain for her daughter when the only physical evidence of the father’s love is thrown into the fire: a copy of Thomas More’s *Utopia*. The importance of this book will be discussed in the third chapter. Although her father’s support is thus lost that of Danielle’s mother remains. Similar to the other Cinderella protagonists Danielle can draw strength from her mother’s lasting presence:

Danielle: What do you think you are doing?
Marguerite: Trying on my dress.

[...]

Danielle [as she the grabs the slippers]: These are my mother’s.

Marguerite: Yes, and she is dead.

[Danielle walks over and punches Marguerite in the face.]

Danielle [as she starts chasing Marguerite around the house]: I’m going to rip your hair out! (*Ever After* 69 min)

Nicole indirectly guides her daughter to active behaviour and the strength to claim control of her life. In the example above, the daughter is encouraged to rebel against her stepfamily. Furthermore, the disguise of a noblewoman becomes an encouragement to rebel against society’s conventions. In conclusions, Danielle can establish herself as an adult and independent woman because she is shaped by her mother’s support and presence.

Elisabeth Panttaja was correct in stating that role of the mother is far from marginal. In these different stories she represents the many aspects of motherhood and the strengths and weaknesses of the mother-daughter relationship. The internalization of the mother functions in two distinct ways: as a tool of empowerment and a foundation for self-discovery. The modern view of the mother-daughter relationship as explained by Mieke de Waal is also reflected in these stories: taking responsibility, obtaining independence, and learning what is just. However, the fact that none of the protagonists is truly free at the beginning reflects the restrictions that the mother can enforce, although she takes on the role of good mother. This was most evident in the order to never to speak about the curse in *Ella Enchanted*. Yet in *Before Midnight*, Cendrillon is also restricted by the good mother indirectly: as her daughter, Cendrillon is denied certain privileges, and her father’s love. Danielle in *Ever After* is actually
unrestricted by her mother because she obtains freedom under the guise of her mother’s identity. The restrictions enforced in this story are at the hand of the stepmother.

Furthermore, these stories reflect the ways in which daughters perceive (good) mothers and their function. A mother might not be an obstacle in a daughter’s development or evoke a struggle with parental authority, as is observed in *Before Midnight*. On the other hand, a mother could make up a larger part of a daughter’s identity than is first assumed. A mother could teach her daughter about steadfastness and patience, or she could provide the strength to prevail over the negative family. During the struggle a daughter can have with parental authority a (good) mother can have a negative or positive influence. Because the good mother is internalized she remains present during the adolescence of the daughter, functioning as a foundation upon which the daughter builds her identity. Consequently, within these stories based on “Cinderella”, the deceased mother no longer merely acts as a magical helper, but as a guide to inner strength, a good morality, and personal identity.
2. Stepmothers, Godmothers and Foster Families: The Bad Mother and the Function of Mother Replacements

In the Cinderella tale several other characters are able to take on the role of the mother. The stepmother and the fairy godmother both function as a replacement of the mother, taking on a different side in the “good” and “bad” mother paradigm. The function of the stepmother will be discussed first. She stands opposite to the good mother and it could be stated that she often functions as the head of the negative family. Maria Tatar argues on this that the stepmother “represents the obverse of all the positive qualities associated with mothers.” (Classic Fairy Tales 140). The stepmother is possibly the greatest obstacle in the struggle with parental authority. D.H. Ashliman explains the manner in which the stepmother functions:

Fairy tales provide a socially acceptable outlet for the venting of pent-up aggressive feelings towards authority figures. [...] Tales about wicked stepmothers also assist children in addressing their ambivalent feelings toward their closest parent [...] By placing a hateful being in the revered office of motherhood, storytellers provide a character with two mutually contradictory parts, thus helping children cope with the often chaotic demands of growing up. (363)

There are two myths related to the character and image of the stepmother, which can function to explain the stereotype of the stepmother. These two myths are opposites: on the one hand there is evil stepmother myth and on the other hand the myth of instant love (Dainton 93-94). The myth of the evil stepmother has gained such momentum that real-life stepmothers are regarded in a similar fashion (Dainton 94). The myth of instant love is kinder towards the real-life stepmothers, yet it remains a myth: it is not possible for a stepmother to
instantly love a stepchild as her own, nor is it possible that mothering will come naturally to
her (Dainton 94). Nevertheless, because there are real-life stepmothers, the Cinderella tale
attains a “real” dimension as well: this stands in opposition to the concept of the Ideal Mother
discussed in the previous chapter.

There are two different ideas applicable to the character of the stepmother in order to
explain her behaviour, and both of them were suggested by Jacqueline Schectman. The first
can be called “maternal jealousy”2, and the second suggests the existence of an internalized
stepmother, which is discussed in the next paragraph. Schectman explains the jealousy of the
stepmother figure by means of the fairy tale “Snow White” (Schectman 23-49), a theory that
applies likewise to “Cinderella”. Schectman continuous to argue that the tale of “Snow
White” becomes a story of “mid-life despair, of desperate attempts to escape the ravages of
time, of obsessive, overpowering envy in the face of narcissistic bereavement. For the
Stepmother/Queen, Snow White becomes an intolerable reminder of all that has been lost”
(24). In a similar fashion, to the stepmother in “Cinderella” the cinder-girl becomes a
reminder of a lost and idealised youthful version of herself, something she cannot find in her
own daughters. This maternal jealousy thus reflects a mother’s envy of her daughter’s youth,
and the mother can be painfully reminded of past mistakes and decisions. This could
unconsciously trigger behaviour in the mother that deems her a bad mother, when she might
have been a good mother before. As will be discussed below, maternal jealousy is most
apparent in Ever After.

The idea of the internalized stepmother is based on the following argument by
Schectman:

2 In Off With Their Heads! (127, 135-36) Maria Tatar also remarks on the envy of mother and stepmothers,
although she links it to the sexual desire the father might have for the daughter, or other men for that matter.
Since this argument is based on the concept of oedipal desires, I have chosen to not to incorporate it, as it does
not fit my own interpretation of maternal jealousy.
“Cinderella” is a story for the Stepchild in us all, for the lonely one waiting for her Prince, for the one who feels unseen by those she loves. We weep with Cinderella when we feel harried and abused, when a Stepmother within warns against our dreams. Joy, she seems to say, is gold that will surely turn to lead at the stroke of twelve. Cinderella’s triumph at the ball is a victory for all who’d prove Stepmother wrong, who would naysay her mocking, deprecating voice. When Cinderella dances with The Prince she dances for all who dare to wish for love, for recognition, for better days to come. (Schectman 80)

The concept of the internalized mother as introduced by Bruno Bettelheim can be extended to other characters within fairy tales. As Schectman seems to argue, there is also an internalized stepmother: she represents a negative inner voice feeding feelings of self-doubt, and creating inner struggles. The internalized stepmother demonstrates the assumed hold a mother’s restrictions can have over her daughter, although her encouragements would often be more powerful. The inability, lack of strength, or unwillingness of the Cinderella girls in these modern versions to leave the negative family demonstrates that this internalized stepmother is present. Mieke de Waal supplies an argument that contributes to the concept of the internalized stepmother and her ability to sustain a certain hold over a teenage girl. According to De Waal there is this urge within children not to disappoint their parents with what they do and aspire to do (De Waal 40), resulting in an inward conflict between the internalized stepmother and self-discovery.

A different argument by Schectman is that “Cinderella” is a tale of grief (Schectman 80). Whereas Cinderella grieves for the loss of her mother, the stepmother grieves for the loss of her first husband, while her second marriage has proven to be a wrong decision. She does
not allow herself to succumb to her emotions and consequently becomes a cold and harsh woman. She distances herself from her stepdaughter, who has become another load in her overburdened life (Schectman 81-82). Schectman’s argument is evident in Bella at Midnight, where the stepfamily is able to relate their experiences of loss because Stanley shifts between the perspectives of several characters, including stepmother Mathilda and stepsisters Alice and Marianne. This concept, relating the story of the stepfamily, is an answer to questions Stanley asked herself when she reflected on the tale of “Cinderella”: “Perhaps I should start with the wicked stepmother and stepsisters. Who were they? What happened to them before they met Cinderella and her father?” (“An Interview” 3).

In the story, Mathilda has experienced the loss of a beloved husband; the loss of her fortune and home; and the humiliation of asking a hated sister for help. In order to provide for her daughters, she is forced to marry a man who cannot and will not love her, and who treats her badly. She has become bitter, harsh, and uncaring towards anything but her daughter Marianne. She leaves her daughter Alice without care when she is most in need of it, because the girl succumbs to a depression over the loss of her father. When Bella’s care is forced upon Mathilda by her new husband, she tries at first to care for the girl. After a falling out with the husband (Stanley 147-48), she decides bestow no care upon Bella. The general lack of care affects Bella’s period with the negative family most. Any sympathy Mathilda might have gained at the beginning of the story is eventually lost due to the realisation that she neglects not only her stepdaughter, but her own daughter as well.

However, Mathilda does not necessarily represent the bad mother, but she rather represents bad mothering and its effects. Bad mothering can eventually be interpreted as a part of the bad mother. Neglect can be seen a form of cruelty and might cause psychological problems for someone: a fear of being loved could be developed, or an inability to bestow
love on others. With regard to the possible effects of neglect, Mathilda could be considered the worst stepmother in these stories.

A stereotypical wicked stepmother is presented in *Ever After*. Rodmilla de Ghent is a sly and wicked woman with no sign of affection for her stepdaughter. She is a presentation of maternal jealousy, and her behaviour reflects the inner desires connected to this jealousy. Her jealousy is instigated at the beginning of the story: the father dies shortly after bringing home his new wife, and he directs his last words of love at his daughter. The look in Rodmilla's eyes speaks for itself: the instant jealousy and hate that arise when Danielle is chosen (*Ever After* 10 min). It seems that Rodmilla is mostly jealous of the fact that her stepdaughter receives the male love in the story, first from the father-figure, and later the prince, while she is left with nothing. This can also be seen in her attempt to have Danielle experience the negative side of male love she herself had experienced by separating her stepdaughter from the prince.

Throughout the story Rodmilla’s acts of cruelty multiply. Near the ending of the story, she not only exposes Danielle’s true identity to the prince, but she also sells her stepdaughter to the household of a rapacious man. Rodmilla’s jealousy has turned to a hatred, as she declares the following right before Danielle is taken away:

Rodmilla: You are not my problem anymore.
Danielle: Is that what I am, your problem? I have done everything you’ve asked me to do and still you deny me the only thing I ever wanted!
Rodmilla: And what was that?
Danielle: What do you think? You are the only mother I have ever known. Was there ever a time, even in its smallest measurement, that you loved me at all?
Rodmilla: How can anyone love a pebble in their shoe? (*Ever After* 94 min)
Although Rodmilla’s behaviour might be understandable, the fact that she actively chooses to take on the role of bad mother, and thus wicked stepmother, puts her in the role of antagonist. Rodmilla is not a kind woman, not even to her own daughter Jacqueline. The viewer of this film will probably love to hate her, and is likely delighted when Rodmilla is eventually punished for her actions. It is possible that the maternal jealousy is recognized from the viewer’s own family relationships, and relief could be found in the realisation that other people experience the same difficulties with it.

However, Rodmilla’s actions force Danielle into adulthood without further help or guidance, which is actually a positive element in Danielle’s development. The more Rodmilla pushes her, the more she fights back. Consequently, Danielle’s independent nature and self-confidence grow alongside her rebellious behaviour, until she can play the same games her stepmother does. This is reflected in the last conversation between them, when Danielle has married Prince Henry without her stepmother’s knowledge and Rodmilla is punished for her actions:

Danielle: I will speak for her. She is, after all, my stepmother.

Rodmilla [reluctant]: Your Highness.

[...]

Danielle: I want you to know that I will forget you after this moment and never think of you again. But you, I am quite certain, will think about me every single day for the rest of your life.

Rodmilla: How long might that be?

Danielle: All I ask, Your Majesties, is that you show her the same courtesy that she has bestowed upon me. (Ever After 107 min)
The most extraordinary stepmother is Chantal de Saint-Andre in *Before Midnight*. As was stated in the first chapter, she is turned into the good mother by Cendrillon’s mother Constanze:

“I have been such a fool!” she cried. “I should have had this door broken down the very day that I arrived. I have behaved no better than your father, Cendrillon. I was so certain I had been betrayed by the one I trusted most of all. So furious with the king for making me marry your father that I forgot the reason I’d given him my trust in the first place. I forgot about love.” [...] In her face was a light that I had never seen before.

“But here love is, [...] I look at it, and I feel ashamed, for your betrayal is much greater than mine has ever been, Cendrillon. Your father threw away the greatest gift your mother could bestow - the gift of what their love created. I think that I have never heard of anything so wrongheaded, or so blind.” (Dokey 116-17)

Chantal promises Cendrillon that she will try and be a mother to her, and bestow her with the same love she provides her own daughters. Happily she states: “Another daughter, [...] What a wonderful gift!” (Dokey 118). Any animosity that might have existed between Chantal and Cendrillon is forgotten by the realisation that she cannot treat Cendrillon as she has been treated herself. Chantal represents the idea that a child’s love can bring great happiness, and that dwelling on the past can create unhappiness.

Chantal encompassing both sides of the good and bad mother paradigm reflects the acceptance of the mother’s dual role in childrearing. This acceptance lies in the understanding that a mother’s rules are instated out of love and not out of spite. Subsequently, there is an improvement of the mother-daughter relationship and the formations of a mutual
understanding of each other’s identity. Although it seems that this conversion of Chantal from bad to good mother also removes the negative family, the latter is still present in the form of Cendrillon’s father and this will discussed in the following chapter.

Additionally, Chantal’s change illustrates a more realistic take on the myth of instant love: Chantal states that she will try and love Cendrillon as her own child, and eventually she develops into a loving mother seeing to Cendrillon’s happiness and birthright. The progress that turns Cendrillon and her stepfamily into a unified and caring family demonstrates how two different families could face the difficulties with accepting each other and how they eventually come together as a whole new family.

When it comes to recreating Cinderella, the stepmother is retains a stereotypical function, often representing a combination of bad mothering and the bad mother. Factors that contribute to the representation of the stepmother as a bad mother are maternal jealousy and the loss of male love. Furthermore, the two myths of the evil stepmother and of instant love appear in the modern versions, and as Dainton explains are rooted within the real-life perception of stepmothers (Dainton 94-95). The evil stepmother myth is best represented by Rodmilla de Ghent, while the instant love myth is represented only by Chantal de Saint-Andre. However, the development to instant love is likely reminiscent of a real-life development between stepparent and stepchild. Chantal avoids the bad mother stereotype as she is steered towards acts of good by the good mother, representing that children do not always struggle with parental authority in the process of growing up. Although she is no longer part of the negative family, the latter remains present in the form of the father and his actions. A new aspect is the attempt made by these authors to explain the stepmother’s behaviour and grief. They wish to relate her story and attempt to make her more understandable. However, these efforts seem wasted as those same authors still have her function as the bad mother.
In Perrault’s version of “Cinderella” the role of the good mother is taken over by a fairy godmother. It is likely that the fairy godmother is one of the most commonly associated characters with the “Cinderella” tale. In these modern versions she appears in several different forms: as a parody of the fairy godmother in *Ella Enchanted*; as Leonardo da Vinci in *Ever After*; as God in *Bella at Midnight*. All of these will be discussed below. The novel *Before Midnight* does not contain a fairy godmother character, possibly due to the stepmother’s role as the good mother.

According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* a godparent is someone who stands surety for another during the rite of Christian baptism.

In the modern baptism of an infant or child the godparent or godparents make profession of faith for the person being baptized (the godchild) and assume an obligation to serve as proxies for the parents if the parents either are unable or neglect to provide for the religious training of the child. (“Godparent”).

A fairy godmother can be defined, by using Perrault’s story, as someone who provides assistance in solving problems by means of magic and who offers rewards for good deeds. The fairy godmother characters discussed here share parts from both definitions and reshape the function of the fairy godmother character within these Cinderella adaptations.

In *Ella Enchanted*, Ella’s troubles actually start because of a fairy godmother giving her “the gift of obedience” (Levine 1-2). By binding Ella to the ‘curse’ of parental authority, Lucinda can be seen as the godmother at baptism: she is helping the parents raise the child, and thus most exercise parental authority as well. Lucinda is the opposite of the fairy godmother seen in Perrault: she creates a problem by means of magic, instead of solving one; and she does not reward good deeds, but rather punishes unpleasant behaviour. As a baby Ella
is given the gift of obedience because she cannot stop crying and Lucinda is annoyed by it (Levine 1).

The other fairy godmother in this story, Mandy, refuses to interfere with Ella’s problems and to lift the curse. Therefore she also deviates from the definition of a fairy godmother. Mandy merely provides moral support, and similar to Ella’s mother seems to hinder the girl. However, she in fact represents a mother figure, who is urging Ella to find a way of lifting the curse without her help. She will not solve Ella’s problems for her and acts more as a guide instead of helper. Mandy’s function is more in line with that of a godparent, yet instead of guiding Ella in her faith, she guides her in self-discovery. At the end of the story, when Ella manages to lift the curse, Mandy confirms that her role had been that of a guide and onlooker: “You’re free. The curse is over, love.” Mandy was at my side, hugging me. “You rescued yourself when you rescued the prince. I’m proud and glad, sweet, I could shout.” (Levine 228). Mandy’s behaviour might seem odd to a child reader, yet in hindsight there is an affirmation that she has done what was right for Ella if the girl was to claim her own identity and her own life. Mandy is a member of the positive family, where she provides support for Ella and stands beside her during her dealings with the negative family, yet she does not actively interfere in Ella’s situation.

In Ever After the character of Leonardo da Vinci takes on the role of fairy godmother. Although he is portrayed as the opposite of a fairy godmother, he is not a parody of Perrault’s fairy godmother. The differences lie mainly in the following aspects: he is male; he is a scientist and artist instead of a magical helper; and unlike a godparent Leonardo has no previous connections to Danielle and her family. His function is to mediate between Danielle and Prince Henry. To Danielle, his role is more in line with that of a helper: when Danielle is confined to the cellar behind lock and key, it is Leonardo who gets her out. He then helps her
get ready for the masque by providing her with wings, sharing his wisdom with Danielle as a tool of encouragement:

Danielle: Signore, my name is Danielle de Barbarac and I am but a servant.
Leonardo: Yes, and I am the bastard son of a peasant, what has that to do with anything?
Danielle: I’ve deceived him.
Leonardo: The prince will understand.

[...]
Danielle: How can I face him?
Leonardo: Because he deserves to hear the truth from the one he loves.
Danielle: A bird may love a fish signore, but where would they live?
Leonardo: Then I shall have to make you wings. (*Ever After* 83 min)

Because there is a lack of parental guidance for Danielle, Leonardo’s role as an elderly advisor compliments her search for identity and worth. In this sense he is a godparent similar to Mandy, as he guided Danielle in the faith one needs to have in oneself. However, unlike Mandy he has not been present during her childhood, and comes to stand outside the positive family: fatherly love is already provided by Danielle’s father Auguste during her childhood and she is supported by his memory. While Mandy has become a replacement for Ella’s mother, Leonardo has not become a replacement for Danielle’s father. However, Leonardo does take on fairy godmother characteristics: he helps to solve the ‘problem’ of Danielle’s confinement by using his ‘magic’ (science), and he rewards Danielle by giving her a portrait he has made of her, which becomes a reminder of the her story.
What makes Leonardo a distinctive fairy godmother is the fact that he actively involves himself in the relationship between Danielle and Prince Henry. This is more that the original fairy godmother or Mandy do for their Cinderella. When Danielle’s identity is revealed and Prince Henry’s love seems lost, he acts on her behalf and goes on to lecture Prince Henry about the fault in his decision to deny Danielle’s love:

Leonardo: What have you done?
Prince Henry: I have been born to privilege and with that come specific obligations.
Leonardo: Horseshit.
Prince Henry: You're out of line, old man.
Leonardo: No, you are out of line. Have you any idea what that girl went through to get here tonight?
Prince Henry: She lied to me.
Leonardo: She came to tell you the truth and you fed her to the wolves.
Prince Henry: What do you know? You build flying machines and walk on water.
And yet you know nothing about life.
Leonardo: I know that a life without love is no life at all.
Prince Henry: And love without trust? What of that?
Leonardo: She’s your match, Henry.
Prince Henry: I am but a servant to my crown and I have made my decision. I will not yield!
Leonardo: Then you do not deserve her.
[He leaves Danielle’s shoe behind] (Ever After 91 min)
Leonardo is the one handing the ‘glass slipper’ over to the prince, which is an important symbolic moment: unlike Perrault’s fairy godmother, who only provides Cinderella with clothing and a carriage, Leonardo actively intervenes and guides the prince to his Cinderella. In this particular moment his mediating role is most evident.

However, after his conversation Leonardo disappears from the story until the very ending. Similar to other fairy godmothers he steps aside in order for his ‘godchildren’ to find their way and correct their mistakes. While Leonardo becomes a liberator to Danielle, both literally and figuratively, to Prince Henry Leonardo becomes a wise grandfather teaching him the value in staying true to oneself. He shares his life-experiences on many occasions, of which the following advice is an example: “You cannot leave everything to Fate boy, she’s got a lot to do. Sometimes you must give her a hand!” (Ever After 42 min).

Leonardo represents the fulfilment of dreams and aspirations, and he encourages Danielle and Prince Henry to view the world in new ways. To him there are no limitations, which is reflected in this position as an inventor: he is continuously trying out ideas which others deem impossible or crazy. He is the incarnation of creativity and inventiveness, two elements (which are arguably necessary in the development of children) that help Danielle in her ability to break free of the negative family, and to end the journey of self-discovery. The portrait of Danielle painted by Leonardo becomes a reflection of her journey, and her serene gaze reflects the inner beauty that is obtained by fulfilling that journey of self-discovery.

In Bella at Midnight, Bella’s transformation is performed by a unique fairy godmother: God. Throughout the story, God is interpreted by the characters as an intervening force. Although he is not physically present, his ‘magic’ provides the solutions to Bella’s biggest problem: the recurrence of war. Furthermore, Bella is rewarded for her courage to save Prince Julian and for her yearning to stop the war. The belief in his interference is first indicated by foster mother Beatrice: “I think God must have looked down upon us then and
seen how lonely and dejected we were without our little prince. And so, not three days later, He sent a little princess to take his place.” (Stanley 20). Instead of seeing herself as the mediator between Bella and the prince, she sees God as the one who sent the children to her, making Him the mediator and herself a pawn (Stanley 24). To Bella, God is the one person that always stands at her side no matter the situation. He is a provider as well as nurturer, and it is Bella’s unrelenting faith in him that is rewarded with her transformation into the Worthy Knight, and thus the opportunity to stop the war:

Just then the clouds parted and a bright stream of moonlight lit the battlefield ahead. At the same moment, I heard the hollow thunder of a warhorse in full gallop. I turned to see from whence it came – and that is when I saw him: a solitary knight, riding between our two advancing armies, through a rain of arrows, carrying only a banner of purest white. He was clad in white armor, too – but in place of a helmet, he wore about his face a halo of heavenly flames, so that he shone like the sun! It was the prophecy fulfilled! The Worthy Knight, so longed for in the time of Great War! […] And then he was gone, the Worthy Knight. He disappeared into the darkness, and all was quiet for a very long time. (247-48)

Throughout this story God is a good fairy godmother. He intervenes when necessary and rewards good behaviour with a miracle. Nevertheless, it does seem that all events and meetings were planned (by God) and that takes away some of the magic of the story.

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3 Although the appearance of the Worthy Knight in combination with Bella’s transformation might seem reminiscent of the Armour of God (Ephesians 6: 11-17) or the Heavenly Warrior (Revelation 19: 11-16), Diane Stanley herself states that her sole influence came from the story of Joan of Arc, and that was likely to have unconsciously based the Worthy Knight on Joan (“An Interview” 4-7).
Furthermore, it appears as if the parental control is never lifted from Bella, which could reflect a real-life situation where parents remain present in the life of their children either physically or mentally. Yet the apparent active presence of God seems to be gone after Bella’s transformation, and He seems to take on a passive guiding role.

However, the magical emerald ring Prince Julian uses in order to find the Worthy Knight remains an mysterious artefact, as magic has had no other presence in the story apart from this ring. It could be argued that the ring is also a device used by God to guide Bella in finding Prince Julian, and likewise guide Prince Julian to discover Bella as the Worthy Knight. After her discovery, Bella is truly rewarded for her faith in God, as Julian is able to knight her, hence freeing her of her father’s authority and allowing her to marry him.

Of all characters, the fairy godmother has probably undergone the greatest transformation, not only in appearance, but also in function. She is parodied in Ella Enchanted, left out in Before Midnight, or takes on a non-magical form as is seen in Ever After and Bella at Midnight. The function of the fairy godmother is transformed to that of a wise advisor, a passive guide, or a presence not easily associated with the concept of the fairy godmother. Although it appears that the male fairy godmothers here are good in performing the tasks associated with fairy godmothering, it must not be forgotten that a male fairy godmother in itself is a new concept. It does not necessarily mean that women make for bad fairy godmothers, as Mandy is a good fairy godmother despite her passiveness. It does illustrate how the concept of the fairy godmother can be interpreted and altered into completely new versions. A modern fairy godmother, as is demonstrated in these stories, is a character who not only offers any form of assistance, but also has the insight to take a step back and let events unfold. Additionally, the fairy godmother character often functions as the replacement of parental support, becoming part of the positive family (see introduction).
A new concept that is demonstrated in *Bella at Midnight* is that of the “foster family”, in which every member of the family comes together as a whole, taking on the role of the good mother. The biological mother seemingly has no role in this story. There are no heirlooms or other mementos of her presence besides an old dress. The actual role of the deceased mother as seen in the other stories is taken over by wet-nurse Beatrice and her family. Bella, during her trials and tribulations, uses her entire family as a mental support. She makes small figures out of dough that she can carry around, which reflects the internalization of the happy relationship she had with the foster family and the dough figures function similarly to items that represent the internalized good mother. During the final events, Bella leaves her dough figures behind to stop the war (Stanley 233-36), symbolizing her movement away her family in order to become independent and actively take control of her life. She is no longer in need of the mementos of the internalized good family: their influence functions as a means to accept herself, and to build a personal identity apart from the identity already created by the good family. The foster family thus in its entirety becomes part of the positive family when the deceased mother is unable to, and as a whole are internalized within the cinder-girl.
3. On Fathers: Failing Masculinity and the Bad Father

In addition to the mother-daughter relationship, the father-daughter relationship is of great importance as well. Whereas the father mainly seems to disappear from the tale in Perrault’s “Cendrillon” and Grimm’s “Aschenputtel”, in these modern versions he has a significant role, especially in *Bella at Midnight* and *Before Midnight*. It can be argued that due to the influence of feminism there has been a greater emphasis on the father-daughter relationship within this tale, thus changing his function. This chapter attempts to explain and answer some of the questions surrounding the father’s changing role. These questions pertain to both his presence and his absence from the traditional and modern versions of the tale. After all, what is the father’s role in the tale? What does his absence signify? And what does his presence in the modern versions represent? In order to answer these questions and attempt to understand the role of the father, the focus of this chapter will mainly be placed the father’s representation of good and bad masculinity. The concept of masculinity will be explained as well as the theory applied here to clarify the father’s representation of either good or bad masculinity. The other theory that will be used to examine the character of the father is that of the “good” and “bad” mother paradigm, which is very suitable in obtaining an explanation.

Jack Kahn states in *An Introduction to Masculinities* that masculinity is the “complex, behavioral, emotional, expressive, psychosocial, and sociocultural experience of identifying with being male.” (2). The concept of masculinity is perceived differently in present-day society than it was a century or even decades ago. Feminism has likely been one of the greatest influences on this change in perception, yet the social structure of the modern society

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4 In "Cendrillon", the father is only mentioned in the first paragraph and in a remark in the third paragraph on his uxoriousness: “for his wife governed him entirely” (Perrault 16). In "Aschenputtel" the father is only present on two occasions: where he brings home presents for his family and when he chases the transformed Cinderella with an axe (Grimm 118-19, 122-124).
has remained that of a patriarchy, which is “(a) male dominated, (b) male identified, and (c) male centered” (Kahn 23). In a patriarchal society cultural institutions are over-represented by men and throughout history men have prevented women from entering these institutions and reshaping them (Kahn 24). Male norms are used to determine the value of human behaviour and, according to Kahn, society views what men do as normal and good, and what all others do as abnormal and wrong:

Men are seen as objective, which is good; women are seen as subjective, which is bad. Men are rational and logical, which is useful; women are emotional and irrational, which only leads to problems. Men are strong, women are weak. Ultimately, what is meant by these constructs has largely been determined by men who portray women as substandard and inferior. (Kahn 25)

What can be derived from this is the idea that men who differ or deviate from the way ‘men’ are defined in a society, are thought off as less than men or not men at all.

To add further insight into the function of the father, in this chapter a theory developed by Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette will be applied to the character. The following chapter will discuss and examine the function of the prince according to the same theory. Moore and Gillette’s theory offers a specific insight and understanding into the character of the father and his portrayal in these modern versions. The theory comprises several archetypal masculine energies (Kahn 57-62), of which the “king” and the “lover” apply to the father, and, as related in the next chapter, to the prince. The king archetype encompasses the courageous and thoughtful leader ideal and the king’s leadership is purposeful in the betterment of others (Kahn 61). With regards to the function of a father in general, this archetype is connected to the role he plays in a child’s upbringing. The lover archetype represents the “aspect of the
male psyche that connects to and cares for others.” (Kahn 62). The ideal image here has the lover forming intimate and caring connections to other people, but also has him share pain with others because of the legitimate interpersonal connections that are kept (Kahn 62). With regards to the function of a father in general, this archetype is connected to the role he plays as the head of the family and the accompanying responsibilities that follow from this position.

Both archetypes have two unbalanced sides to them: one where the man is oppressive and the other where he is selfish (Kahn 59-60). Both sides are unbalanced because they are not considered to be good masculine behaviour: the king becomes either a “tyrant” or a “weakling prince”, whereas the lover becomes either an “addicted lover” or an “impotent lover” (Kahn 60-62). The two fathers in Bella at Midnight and Before Midnight, respectively Edward of Burning Wood and Etienne de Brabant, display these unbalanced sides. Edward mainly represents the tyrant: he punishes his daughter for taking his wife from him by refusing to raise her, and when he does reclaim her, he simply takes no interest in her. This also reflects the weakling prince in him, as he takes no responsibility in raising his daughter and ‘leading’ her through the difficulties in life (Kahn 62). Etienne mainly represents the weakling prince as he leaves his home and does not return to it until the ending of the story. He does not even accompany his new wife to his estate. He avoids all responsibility for the care of his family. He does become the tyrant archetype when he kidnaps his daughter in an attempt to ‘punish’ her for reminding him of his failure as a father and husband.

The unbalanced side of the lover displayed by both fathers is the addicted lover. This means that Etienne and Edward derive their self-worth through the love of, and for, their respective wives (Kahn 62). When she is lost to him, he loses his self-worth, and he cannot function as a good man anymore. The loss of the object of addiction triggers the impotent lover: the father lacks the ability to connect intimately with others (Kahn 62). Because of this
he cannot accept himself nor love himself, and thus he cannot educate his daughter in these aspects of self-acceptance.

Nonetheless, the influence of women on the formation of masculine ideals has increased, and the masculine ideals desired by the dominant men in a patriarchal society have likely changed accordingly. Sheldon Cashdan argues that fairy tales originally are “maternal documents and so place greater emphasis on the relationship between mother and child, particularly as it relates to the development of the self. As a result, the role of fathers tends to be devalued or given short shrift.” (94). Since women have been systematically kept from having any influence on the male institutions and on the male dominance in this patriarchal society for centuries (Kahn 24), the one domain that they seemingly do exercise control over, child rearing, is open to their ideas of masculinity. However, even this particular female domain shows signs of a male dominated society at work, as the perceived good aspects of masculinity are enforced and the bad aspects are condemned by these female storytellers. However, these modern stories based on the “Cinderella” tale are constructed in a time where women apparently do have influence on the male institutions and can defy male dominance, seen for example in the feminist movement.

Presently, society undergoes constant change and the influence of women on what masculinity should entail is part of this continuous change. This is evident in these four stories, as their female authors relate their expectations of masculinity and fatherhood. They have asked the question: Why is Cinderella’s father not there for his daughter? As related above, the fathers in Before Midnight and Bella at Midnight appear to blame their daughters for the loss of their wives and consequently leave their daughters alone. In Ella Enchanted, it appears that the father is only interested in his wealth and not his family, therefore he always travels to increase his fortune, and when his fortune is lost his daughter becomes a means to reclaim wealth by marrying her off to a rich old man. However, in Ever After the father is
represented as a loving parent and a man who cares deeply for his family. It is his death that prevents him from protecting and helping his daughter.

The depiction of these four fathers has brought about the following argument: the theory of the “good” and “bad” mother that was applied in the first two chapters (Tatar Hard Facts 144-145; Bettelheim 68-69) can also be applied to explain the function of the character of the father. He can be divided into a good and bad version, similar to the division of the mother into two separate forms. The good father appears during childhood, following a similar pattern to that of the good mother. Furthermore, the good father presents the positive experience of the father in childhood, whereas the bad father represents the negative experience of the father. Therefore, the good father is likely to die in the story as the good mother does, however he is not replaced as easily as the good mother seemingly is.

The good father in these four stories appears in Ever After and he functions as a member of the positive family. Auguste de Barbarac is portrayed as a kind man and loving father. He brings home books for his daughter to read, providing her with the material to develop herself intellectually. The last book he brings her before he dies is Utopia (Ever After 7 min), and Danielle uses this book to create a personal identity apart from that of a servant. Furthermore, Auguste’s guidance is incorporated in this book and Utopia becomes the item in which Danielle internalizes him. Comparable to the internalized mother mentioned in the first chapter, it can be argued that there is also an internalized father: the storage of father-experience in early childhood within oneself, and strengthened by an establishment of basic trust between child and father (see chapter 1). The internalized father in this story is preserved in the book, and as such is Auguste’s identity. Danielle can use her father’s identity to create her own: the minute the book Utopia is destroyed Danielle is forced to relinquish her father’s guidance. She now has no physical reminder of him, and must continue on the memory of her father alone. Additionally, Auguste performs an important task the good mother in Ella
*Enchanted* also performs: he connects, although indirectly, his daughter to the prince. When she meets the prince and quotes pieces from *Utopia* she gains his interest. It is the influence of her father that allows Danielle to be free-spirited and this free-spiritedness is what causes the prince to fall in love with her.

The bad father is represented by the other fathers in these four stories. Unlike the bad mother, some bad fathers are present throughout the entirety of the protagonist’s youth. Similarly though, they are mostly active during the protagonist’s adolescence. A father could be seen by his daughter as overprotective or too restricting, and similar to the mother becomes an obstacle to the daughter in the development of a personal identity and of personal strength. This is something that is represented in “Aschenputtel”, where Cinderella’s father displays behaviour towards his daughter that symbolizes his desire to keep his daughter from leaving his protection. After the first two balls he is sent after the mysterious girl and cuts down her hiding place, asking himself “Could it be Cinderella?” (Grimm 122-25). In the modern versions *Before Midnight*, *Bella at Midnight* and *Ella Enchanted*, there is little evidence of this same desire in the fathers, as their protection has been mostly non-existent from the day the daughters were born. Etienne de Brabant leaves his estate and his daughter to fend for themselves, Edward of Burning Wood enforces the protection and care for his daughter onto another family, and Sir Peter is never home to exercise control over his household and would rather impose his daughter on someone else in exchange for riches. These three fathers thus deviate from the role of protector that is commonly ascribed to fathers and from Grimm’s “Aschenputtel”, where the father is unwilling to pass on his role of protector.

Additionally, in many older versions of the fairy tale the father is unwilling or unable to prevent the cruelty of the stepmother. Perrault excuses the father in “Cendrillon” as being uxorious: “The poor girl suffered it all patiently, and didn’t dare complain to her father, who would have scolded her, because he was completely under the woman’s sway.” (Perrault 10).
The father’s uxoriousness contributes to the idea that he portrays bad masculinity. Uxoriousness is probably one of the greatest, if not the greatest, failing in traditional masculinity, as it has led to the downfall of mankind: Adam eats the apple because Eve asks him to, causing him to be cast out of Paradise (Genesis 3: 1-24). Adam fails to restrain his wife, and as such fails God, who can be perceived as the ‘perfect’ father. The father’s lack of masculinity is negative for his function as a role model, yet his absence could be perceived as a positive development: the lack of male authority could become a tool of liberation for women. There is no father to impose his authority and his ideals upon the daughter, something that can be considered a dream come true for girls: they can obtain a freedom unfeasible to them before. Thus the disappearance of the father comes to represent the freedom that is gained when male authority is overcome.

However, the meaning of uxorious as “dotingly or submissively fond of a wife; devotedly attached to a wife” (“Uxorious”) with regard to the relationship between the stepmother and the father does not appear in these four stories. Edward of Burning Wood shows no affection for his second wife. On one occasion he even hits her after she accidentally has dressed her stepdaughter in the clothes of Edward’s first wife:

“How dare you!” he shouted, grabbing Mother fiercely by the arm. “Is this your idea of jest, woman?” Then he slapped her face. I gasped and clung to the doorframe, knowing not whether to run or stay.

[…] “Have you gone mad?” Mother cried, her hand against her burning cheek.

“No, Mathilda, not mad. But I fear you shall drive me to it.” (Stanley 147-148)

Edward’s remark that Mathilda may drive him into madness is evidence that there is no uxorious behaviour directed towards her.
Etienne de Brabant treats his wife similarly to his daughter: he leaves her on his estate and hardly takes her desires into regard. Yet when he orders her to stay home instead of attending the ball, she defies him and goes with her daughters and Cendrillon:

Then, with a suddenness that left all of us gasping, she tore the note in two, and then in two once more. Taking three quick steps, she moved to the fireplace.

“What a pity those same bandits set upon my husband’s messenger and delayed him. […] the command to keep us all at home did not arrive in time.”

[…] It is by the king’s command that we are summoned to the palace, and to the palace we shall go. Etienne de Brabant may believe he is my lord and master, but the king is his.” All of sudden, she gave a grin. “The command of a king trumps that of a husband, every time.” (Dokey 131-132)

There is no love lost between Chantal de Saint-Andre and Etienne de Brabant, and Etienne certainly has no uxorious behaviour in him if he orders his wife to stay home, instead of answering to her wish to attend the ball.

In Ella Enchanted, Sir Peter marries stepmother Dame Olga for her wealth. However, he is soon forced to love her when fairy godmother Lucinda “blesses” them with the gift of eternal love (Levine 146-48). This causes him to continuously flee from his house and from Dame Olga, reflecting his inability to love and care for others. Subsequently, it can be stated that sir Peter is not uxorious as he is avoiding his wife and any form of uxoriousness he might perform if he remains in her presence.

Furthermore, the medieval setting of these modern stories contributes a great deal to the acceptance of the father’s behaviour by the other characters and the reader: the modern view of the Middle Ages reinstates the father as having sole authority over the family. In the
present day, emancipation of women and equality between men and women is no longer supposed to be an issue. The concept that fathers own their daughters and wives is deemed unacceptable today. As a consequence, the medieval setting allows the story of Cinderella to function better within such a historic setting instead of modern one. The feminist views of the present make these protagonists admirable because of the setting, and change the role of the father within the tale, mostly into that of the bad father. As stated before, bad fathers appear in *Bella at Midnight, Before Midnight,* and *Ella Enchanted.* A further analysis of each father will now follow.

In *Bella at Midnight,* Edward of Burning Wood is introduced by his sister-in-law Maud as an arrogant and proud man, forbidding his wife from ever seeing her family again. Maud soon comes to see his true nature:

> There was such a coldness in those eyes, such hardness near to hatred, that it positively made me tremble, and I could not help but turn away. I remember thinking, when first he pierced me with that terrible gaze, that Edward of Burning Wood was not altogether right in his mind. (Stanley 4)

Maud distrusts him even more as his love for Catherine seems to be a “wild, possessive, fanatical love.” (Stanley 5), demonstrating the “addicted lover” archetype, and consequently his failing masculinity. When the object of his addiction, his wife, is taken from him Edward becomes a man enraged. His daughter becomes the culprit and as such must endure his rage:

> If I like? If I like? I would like you to get her out of here! I do not want that creature in this house, do you understand? Nor in your house, nor anywhere in this city! I will not breathe the same air she breathes! (Stanley 15)
Although Stanley allows for her characters to relate their stories, and their insights into Bella’s story, Edward is never given the opportunity to speak and explain himself. He is distanced from the other characters and placed in the role of antagonist. This seems to be a way for Diane Stanley to reflect her thoughts on her biological parents, as she never had the opportunity to know them (“An Interview”). She seems to reflect on the assumed unfulfilled desire of many children to understand the behaviour of their parents. The fact that Edward of Burning Wood is a man who seemingly hates his daughter could reflect Stanley’s own anger at her father and it likely reflects her fear of her father’s true intentions in leaving. In the eyes of children of single-parent families, it could be argued that Edward becomes a fictional representation of the parent that left. Any anger for this parent can be directed at the character of Edward, similar to the anger a child can direct at the character of the stepmother.

Protagonist Bella does not accept Edward of Burning Wood as her father, but instead claims foster father Martin as her true father (Stanley 276). This reflects the acceptance of the good father and the rejection of the bad father. As mentioned in chapter two, Bella creates dough figures which represent her internalization of her foster family, and thus she internalized Martin as the good father of her childhood. Furthermore, Bella’s acceptance of the good father illustrates the acceptance of a father’s love and care as part of one’s identity, which can be called upon during difficulties faced in either adolescence or adulthood.

In *Before Midnight*, Cameron Dokey had asked herself some questions concerning the father and his absence:

[...] But the fact that he was there at all simply proved too intriguing a notion for me to pass up. If Cinderella’s father is still alive, but takes no action to save or protect her, what might this say about both him and the woman to whom we are all
accustomed to assigning the role of the bad guy? What would happen if I put a father back into the mix? With that, my own version of the story was off and running. (“Author’s Note”)

Comparable to Edward of Burning Wood, Etienne de Brabant refuses to accept his daughter Cendrillon. As was argued in the first chapter, Etienne’s anger and inability to mourn is demonstrated by the lightning strike that destroys the tree on his wife’s grave. His wife, before dying, foresees Etienne’s behaviour:

Love her for me, care for her when I am gone, for I fear her father will do neither one. When he looks at her, he will not find joy in the color of her hair and eyes. He will not see the way that I live on. Instead he will see only that she came too soon, and that her arrival carried me out of this life. (Dokey 4-5)

Etienne, by closing the door to Constanze’s room and portrait, closes his heart off from love and what it had brought him. His inability to mourn and his refusal to accept the daughter Constanze left behind indicate his change from the “addicted lover” to the “impotent lover”: his bad masculinity could have been changed into good masculinity due to the loss of his object of addiction, yet it has altered to a different form of bad masculinity. This alteration seems to indicate that one form of bad masculinity could induce a different form of bad masculinity.

Etienne’s portrayal of the impotent lover is exemplified by the following remark, when he is asked to bestow a wish on his daughter: “I wish that I might never see her again, unless the sight of her can give back the peace that she has stolen. As I imagine that day will never come, matters should work out well.” (Dokey 13). Nevertheless, eventually Etienne comes to
mourn his wife with help from his daughter. Cendrillon explains:

Grief and sorrow are one and the same. But until you feel regret for what is now forever out of reach you do not truly mourn. [...] “Place your palm on the dead trunk of the tree Constanze d’Este planted as your bride. Then tell me you have no regrets. That you do not see all the things that you have stolen from us both, but from yourself most of all.” (Dokey 185)

Etienne truly mourns his wife and what he had lost due to his errant behaviour (Dokey 184-86). This provides him with the strength to discard the role of impotent lover and accept his failure as a father and as a man. Etienne represents the acceptance of loss and the struggles associated with it. It can be argued that his removal from Cendrillon’s life after this event restructures him as the good father, however Cendrillon does not internalize him nor does she indicate any acceptance of him as a part of her identity:

“I wish to be my mother’s daughter,” I said. “I will make many mistakes, have many regrets, take many risks, but I will not do what my father did. I will not turn my back on love.”(Dokey 190).

Sir Peter in Ella Enchanted differs from Edward of Burning Wood and Etienne de Brabant, as he is a man obsessed with wealth. He had married Ella’s mother for fortune and not for love. It is apparent that he does not care for his daughter unless she could be of use to him, which is seen in his desire to marry her to a wealthy old man in order to regain their fortune (Levine 129-30, 135-42). Sir Peter embodies both the weakling prince and the impotent lover: his constant absence from the home demonstrates his lack in leading his
family, and his greedy, selfish nature shows his inability to love. This is also seen in his flight from Dame Olga when fairy godmother Lucinda forces him to love his new wife by means of a fairy ‘gift’. His true nature is revealed as a man who cannot and will not embody good masculinity, or take on the function and responsibility of a good father. Sir Peter represents the unwilling husband and uncaring father, which is akin to the behaviour of stepmother Mathilda in *Bella at Midnight*: the lack of care can be the worst cruelty bestowed on a child. The psychological effects of neglect of a father are similar to that of a mother’s neglect, and in this case could prevent a girl from trusting men in general.

The function of the father in the tale of Cinderella has been extended and mostly changed in a negative sense. The father has become a member of the negative family, while in the traditional tale he was not due to his lack of presence, physical or otherwise. This can be coupled to the concept of the “bad” father, where the bad father also represents bad parenting and bad masculinity, which is visible in the unbalanced sides of the “king” and the “lover” archetypes. The failings of the father are greater in these four stories than in the old versions of “Cinderella”, where he disappears and has no further influence on the story. The inquiry into the father’s absence by Dokey and Stanley has provided similar outcomes in the portrayal of their father characters: they have replaced the idea of the father’s uxoriousness with that of an inability to cope with loss. Instead of the stepmother, the father has become the instigator of problems, misfortunes, and misery for not only his daughter, but for many of the other characters as well. His behaviour affects that of other characters and therefore his influence on the story has drastically increased. The exception of these fathers is Auguste de Barbarac in *Ever After*, as he is the portrayal of the good father. He becomes a support for the daughter, and can be seen as an internalized father.
4. The Prince and Cinderella: Changing Roles and Feminist Influences

The previous chapters have elaborated on the functions of the parental characters within the Cinderella tales by Perrault and Grimm, and in the four modern stories. To a certain extent he can be connected to the parental characters because he embodies a future life in which Cinderella shall become a parent herself. Furthermore, the prince functions as a counterpart to the father and his behaviour. However, as was mentioned in the introduction, there are three stages at work in these stories of which the latter, the “new family”, is represented by the prince. During the story the prince functions as a source of support for the protagonist. It can be argued that the prince helps the protagonist to overcome the negative family and to claim a personal identity. The acceptance of the prince as a husband represents the acceptance of adulthood and the start of the protagonist’s own family. The foundation of the supporting role of the prince is built upon his friendship with the cinder-girl that develops into a mutual love. Furthermore, the protagonist is able to remain true to herself despite the expectations of the others. She acquires the acceptance that her personal identity partly consists of the parents’ identities and partly consists of her own combined interpretations of self.

The prince is able to act as the new family because he has established himself in Moore and Gillette’s balanced archetypes of masculinity. As the “king” archetype the prince encompasses the courageous and thoughtful leader, and his leadership is purposeful in the betterment of others (Kahn 61). This means that prince is in acceptance of his role in society and his role in the lives of those dear to him. As the “lover” archetype the prince is able to form intimate and caring relationships, but he can also understand and share pain with others (Kahn 62). He is in acceptance of himself as a person. This all reflects that he accepts the difference in class between himself and the cinder-girl, and that he is able to understand the
pain she endured during servitude. The prince’s portrayal of good masculinity comes to act as
a counterbalance to the failing masculinity of the father. These archetypes in relation to the
princes in these stories will be discussed at length below.

Nevertheless, in the old versions of “Cinderella”, the prince had a small role in the fairy tale, argued by Belinda Stott as the fact that: “he remains a shadowy figure who remains undeveloped as a character” (Stott 22). Examples from Perrault and Grimm provide evidence for Stott’s argument. In “Cendrillon” the actions of the prince are described, but he himself is not given a voice nor does he actively travel across the kingdom to fit the glass slipper on the foot of Cinderella. Furthermore, there is no mention of love between the prince and Cinderella: “She was taken to the young prince, dressed as she was. He thought she was more charming than before, and, a few days after, married her.” (Perrault 21). In “Aschenputtel” the prince is given a voice but hardly anything interesting leaves his lips: “The prince danced with her alone, and if someone asked her to dance, he would say: “She is my partner.’” (Grimm 122-25). Although this prince personally searches for the girl whose foot fits the slipper, he is portrayed as a rather oblivous man, riding off with the wrong girl two times and only reminded of this by the magical birds that assist Cinderella (Grimm 125-27).

It could be argued that the prince is regarded as an idealized mate, and objectified as a mere tool to be used in Cinderella’s escape. His behaviour and actions are set: he is supposed to be a ‘good’ man who recognizes the goodness and beauty of Cinderella, and he will provide for her by means of marriage. This particular function of the prince relates to the reader that being a good Cinderella entails being taken away by a ‘prince’ and given a better life. To a male reader, it could entail that if they act as a ‘prince’ they will find themselves a beautiful and good girl ready to be swept of her feet. This an example of the gendered behaviours that can be found embedded within this tale and unconsciously taken in by the reader.
It appears that fairy tales have changed little throughout the ages with regard to this type of depiction and transmission of gendered behaviours. The importance of fairy tales because of this is remarked upon by Linda T. Parsons: “fairy tales are an integral part of the complex layering of cultural stories and influences that affirm and perpetuate cultural norms. Fairy tales constitute a kind of ‘script’ for acceptable forms of feminine and masculine behaviour.” (135). She continues to argue that fairy tales add to the creation of boundaries of agency, subjectivity, and anticipated rewards (Parsons 136). Fairy tales provide an example of what behaviour is acceptable, yet it is impossible to determine the exact influence of fairy tales on the development of the unconscious of children. Historical and cultural contexts are specific to the tales, and as the reader is a part and product of those contexts, the gendered discourses embedded in fairy tales is easily accepted as natural, essential and conclusive (Parsons 136). This may provide a problem in adapting the Cinderella tale for a modern audience, and as was discussed in the previous chapters, many of the stereotypical characters within the tale have been altered, recreated, or removed. The characters of the prince and Cinderella have been changed extensively to fit a modern interpretation of desirable gendered behaviours.

However, as noted several times above, these four stories were created under the influence of feminism: these stories belong to what Parsons labels as “feminist fairy tales” (Parsons 140). The protagonist of a feminist fairy tale attains independence and respect by assuming a position of power, and a recurring theme in fairy tale reinventions is that women must achieve autonomy if they want to determine their own destinies. It is the self-determination of the protagonist that drives the plot (Parsons 140). The employment of imagination, creativity, or trickery in order for the heroine to transcend gender roles is another characteristic of these fairy tales (Parsons 139-40). The pattern of a feminist fairy tale is evident in these four stories, as will be discussed below.
Parsons continues to argue that “young girls appropriate the position and subjectivities of the heroine. What is possible and acceptable for the protagonist becomes possible and acceptable for the reader.” (Parsons 136). Furthermore, the promise of marital bliss with a ‘prince’ is generally not easily accepted by modern young women. Aapola, Gonick and Harris argue in Young Femininity that girls internalize “girl power”, which they describe as a:

feminist ideal of a new, robust, young woman with agency and a strong sense of self. [...] it offers them an image of young femininity which is about possibility, limitless potential and the promise of control over the future. Embedded in the concept is a sense that a life of success and happiness is within reach of girls who learn the skills and/or have the characteristics necessary for continual self-invention. The constraints of gender, race, class, sexuality, disability and ethnicity on this bright future is covered over by the suggestions that an individual can overcome all with the right attitude and drive. (39)

Coupled to this is the neo-liberal concept of individualization and the growing social pressure to act on behalf of one’s own happiness (Aapola, Gonick & Harris 36-37, 54). This is reflected in the role of saviour the protagonists take on in these stories: they save their princes and themselves on their own. The change in the cinder-girl’s actions can also be ascribed to the fact that in many feminist texts masculine attributes are added to the behaviour and character of the feminine subjects in the story (Pennell 59).

Additional to Parsons’ argument is the explanation of the regendering of children's literature by Beverly Pennell. In order to regender any tale, Pennell argues that: “women/girls may be represented as agential protagonists while men/boys may ‘have a tendency to self-effacing, to be caring, to be vulnerable’” (Pennell 61). Consequently, young men may find it
difficult to acknowledge a shift in the status of males in modern society. After all, there is an internalization of various stereotypes of masculinity boys encounter, which is similar to the internalization of stereotypes of femininity girls are confronted with (Johnston and Mangat 147-48).

These arguments, concepts and ideas correspond with the construction of these stories and with the ideas of the authors. In *Ever After* Prince Henry has not established a personal identity, nor correct masculine behaviour at the beginning of the story. He is described as a “man who was still a boy... in many, many ways.” (*Ever After* 11 min). His inability to recognize Danielle as the girl who knocked him off his horse reflects his undeveloped masculinity: he has no regard for others nor does he take any interest in them. However, Prince Henry is soon displayed as a good man at heart, when he relinquishes his chances of escape in order to recover a painting for Leonardo da Vinci (*Ever After* 19 min).

The conversation that ensues recapitulates Prince Henry’s character and his dreams, which are suppressed by parental authority:

Prince Henry: Why, here I am on my way to Genoa and I find my salvation on the highway! Sir, you are the very founder of forward thinking and my father is the king of backward. Perhaps you can talk him into the 16th century?

Leonardo da Vinci: Captain Laurent, do translate.

Captain Laurent: Prince Henry suffers from an arranged marriage Signore, among other things. (*Ever After* 23 min)

Prince Henry demonstrates a need to break with the stereotype of the passive, charming prince. However, he does not change in the process and he remains ignorant of the possibilities that are contained within the power he exercises. Protagonist Danielle manages to
change his character, resulting in the acceptance of his position as a prince, and the implementation of correct masculine behaviour. She attracts Prince Henry’s attention with her actions and words instead of her looks (Ever After 28 min). Danielle’s utopian viewpoint and her ability extent those ideas into her own beliefs about the world are what puts her intellectually on a different level from Prince Henry. Danielle represents a feminism that supports both the ideas of liberal feminism and of socialist feminism (Kahn 9-11). Liberal feminism is found in Danielle’s remarks about the lack of cultural resources (education, jobs, voting rights etc.) that are open to the people. Socialist feminism is found in her abhorrence of selling and buying servants and her remark that the prince is to proud to work his own land, thus arguing that there is no difference between him and a peasant (Kahn 9-11). Prince Henry fails to abide by the ‘forward thinking’ he claims to uphold.

When at a later time Danielle and Prince Henry are ambushed by gypsies, they promise Danielle she can take anything she can carry with her. She lifts Prince Henry over her shoulders and walks off. This is the instant in which Danielle becomes the saviour and her equality to the prince is established. She has earned the respect of all men present. Only now can Prince Henry confess his love for her: “Danielle: I am sorry, my mouth has run away with me again. Prince Henry: No, my lady, it is your mouth that has me hypnotized” (Ever After 66 min). They kiss and that moment represents the acknowledgement of Danielle's inner beauty by Prince Henry. The message of inner beauty works if actress Drew Barrymore, who plays Danielle, were generally considered to be of average beauty, unlike the association of Cinderella with incomparable beauty. Although Drew Barrymore is not considered of incomparable beauty by my peers, the fact that she is still good-looking reduces the message of inner beauty. She is portrayed as beautiful in the film, and painted as such by Leonardo da Vinci. It could be argued, however, that it is her inner beauty that makes her outer beauty so appealing. The actresses playing the roles of the stepsisters could be considered more
beautiful in appearance, yet the inner beauty of particularly stepsister Marguerite is unappealing and thus she is not recognized as a beautiful woman.

Prince Henry’s acknowledgement of Danielle’s equality to him is represented in both his admittance of the fact that she saved his life, and in the fact that Danielle is now allowed to call him by his name instead of his title:

Prince Henry: You saved my life you know, back there, in the woods.
Danielle: A girl does what she can, Sire.
Prince Henry: Henry.
Danielle [smiling]: Henry. (Ever After 67 min)

Nevertheless, the moment of betrayal is soon at hand: Danielle’s true identity is revealed and Prince Henry, relinquishing Danielle’s right to call him ‘Henry’ and thus the acceptance of their equality, accuses her of being “just like them” (Ever After 89 min). He accuses her of scheming to win his hand, as the other courtiers do. This reflects his belief that his personal development due to her is also a lie. It seems that this becomes Prince Henry’s final struggle not only with himself, but also with the people that are important in a person’s life, as they can turn out to be different than was always assumed. Nonetheless, Prince Henry comes to discover that his love for Danielle is more important than his feelings of betrayal. He goes off to save her, demonstrating the acceptance of correct masculinity and the accompanying archetypes of the king and the lover.

However, Danielle is a feminist protagonist and does not need saving as she can do this herself. Her masculine qualities appear when she draws a sword on the man who bought her (Ever After 101 min). She assumes a position of power and claims autonomy, symbolized by the key she receives to unlock the chains on her ankles and the words of her ‘captor’:
“Your freedom, my lady. (Ever After 102 min). When Prince Hendry arrives to save her, Danielle has already saved herself. Prince Henry comes to beg her forgiveness and her hand in marriage, once again establishing the equality between them by not only addressing Danielle by her true name, but it is also reflected in the following words: “And the name’s Henry, if you don’t mind. I kneel before you not as a prince but as a man in love. But I would feel like a king if you, Danielle de Barbarac, would be my wife” (Ever After 103 min).

While it may seem that Danielle is refuting her own utopian idealism when she becomes a part of the ruling class, she actually acquires the opportunity and means to actively execute her ideas and beliefs. On the other hand, Prince Henry arranges the punishment of the stepmother and stepsister, thus stepping forward as the protector: he performs the masculinity required of the balanced king archetype. Yet equality between Danielle and Prince Henry is not restored if Danielle is unable to triumph over her stepmother. It is the sight of Danielle as princess and her request that Rodmilla be treated the same as she was that constitutes Danielle’s final moment of freedom from the negative family.

Prince Charmont in Ella Enchanted has a different role in the story, and different effect on the life of protagonist Ella. Although he has never met Ella before, he appears to have a fondness of her, which is based on stories he had heard about Ella (Levine 13): he seemingly has determined beforehand to become her friend. Prince Charmont and Ella become friends and he eventually becomes not only the light in her life, but the means to lift her curse. He seems too good to be true, which is demonstrated in his outrage about Ella being sent off to finishing school: “And when he heard you were at finishing school, he was indignant. He demanded to know why you needed to be finished since there was nothing wrong with you to start with.” (Levine 69). It can be argued that in order for Prince Charmont to become Ella’s new family, she needs to reject all changes enforced on her by parental authority.
Throughout the story, Prince Charmont is portrayed as ever supportive of Ella and as someone always reminding her about her true worth. Parsons provides a good conclusion about Prince Charmont:

Char is everything the father is not. He is kind, considerate, and sensitive to others’ feelings. He is smart and steady. He is also a man other men admire. He looks forward to his first military duty and is viewed by the older men under his command as a “toiling prince” (p. 113), one who is eager to learn how to do things correctly. He also helps us see that being a king is a thankless job rather than a position of glamour and adventure. Char displays many characteristics that are typically masculine, but he also exhibits characteristics that reflect feminist concerns. In short, his subject positions are varied, and his agency takes many forms. (Parsons 148-49)

Prince Charmont is a man in full acceptance of his masculine roles as the king and the lover, and his continuing correspondence with Ella while he is away is evidence of his correct masculine behaviour. Eventually, he writes to let Ella know that he is in love:

*You like me. You wouldn’t waste time or paper on a being you didn’t like. But I think I’ve loved you since we met at your mother’s funeral. I want to be with you forever and beyond [...]*

*Who has your grace? Your expression? Your voice? I could extol your virtues endlessly, but I want you to finish reading and answer me quickly.*

*Today I cannot write of Ayortha or my doings or anything. I can only post this and wait.*
Love (it is such relief to pen the word), love, love—

Char (Levine 181-82)

Although Prince Charmont embodies all the good qualities associated with men and proper masculinity, Ella is a free-spirited girl only held back by the curse. Her attempts at autonomy are always hindered by the negative family. Her eventual acquirement of it comes from her desire to save someone else, and because she does not attempt to break the curse on her own behalf. Ella needs to be selfless in order to be a worthy lover. In her decision to break Prince Charmont’s heart to save his life, she sacrifices her own happiness and, in a way, her life for him:

I wouldn’t escape the curse by marrying Char. I would be more cursed than ever.
And he would be cursed too. [...] Cursed, I couldn’t marry him. [...] But now my only choice was to convince him to give up on me. (184-85).

Prince Charmont portrays two of the tendencies Pennell noted: he is caring and he is vulnerable. Because of this, Ella needs to embrace masculine qualities in order to save him. Not only does she make the hard decision to break his heart, accepting in part the king archetype herself as she believes this is best for Prince Charmont. However, she must find the strength to overcome the curse by herself:

[...] there was room for only one truth: I must save Char. For a moment I rested inside myself, safe, secure, certain, gaining strength. In that moment I found a power beyond any I’d had before, a will and a determination I would never have needed if not for Lucinda, a fortitude I hadn’t been able to find for a lesser cause.
And I found my voice.

“No,” I shouted. “I won’t marry you. I won’t do it. No one can force me!” I swallowed and wiped my mouth on my filthy sleeve. I leaped up, ready to defy anyone.

[...] could my refusal mean the spell was broken? Could it? I took stock of myself. I did feel different: larger, fuller, more complete, no longer divided against myself – compulsion to comply against wish to refuse. Larger, but lighter, much lighter – a burden shed. A massive burden.

[...] I had been able to break the curse myself. I’d had to have reason enough, love enough to do it, to find the will and the strength. [...] Char was enough.


Me. (Levine 225-28)

Ella is triumphant: not only did she save Prince Charmont, he in turn saved her from the curse. Throughout her servitude the memory of Prince Charmont and his friendship have sustained Ella: he has been the positive force that accompanied her while she struggled with the negative family. With the acceptance of his hand in marriage, Ella can leave her negative family behind. She declares that finally she is old enough to marry at the end of the story (228-29): that she is ready to accept the new family. Instead of others deciding for her what she is to do, she can now make her own decisions as an adult. The fact that Ella refuses the title of princess and creates her own of ‘Cook’s Helper’ and ‘Court Linguist’, along with her refusal to stay home while Prince Charmont is away (Levine 231), reflects a modern interpretation of marriage: matrimony does not become the end of her personal identity (Lieberman 199), but rather an establishment of her identity as an adult and independent
woman. The refusal of the title princess therefore establishes Ella as independent from Prince Charmont: she does not define herself by the identity of her husband, but rather creates her own unique identity.

Prince Julian in *Bella at Midnight* is the only prince who literally acquires a voice as the author relates the story also via his viewpoint. Another difference from the other two princes is that he grows up with protagonist Bella, becoming nearly inseparable friends. Their remarkable relationship is described by Bella’s foster mother at the beginning of the book:

> Seeing the two of them together, you would have thought they were brother and sister. I do not mean that they looked alike [...] Yet there was something so like in their nature, some powerful force that bound them together, beyond all explaining, whatever it was, any fool could see that it was not Martin or Will or me that Julian came to see so often - it was Bella. [...] I never dreamed aught would come of it. Indeed, I do not think *anyone* could have guessed the true consequence of the childish affection. (Stanley 23-24)

Bella and Prince Julian share a similar fate: both were unwanted by their families and left elsewhere to grow up, and both are later on taken away from the happy childhood they enjoyed together. Bella is reclaimed by her biological father and Prince Julian is sent off to live in the neighbouring country of Brutanna as a hostage according to a peace treaty signed by his father. While Bella’s struggle with parental authority and personal identity is presented in the form of the stepfamily and the uncaring father, Prince Julian’s period of time spent away from his family and friends represents his final steps toward accepting not only the proper masculine roles for a man, but also that the final steps towards adulthood need to taken
alone. However, Prince Julian’s change to good masculine behaviour is trigged by the event where he hurts Bella’s feelings:

She would think herself a world-class fool for having thought well of me, for believing I was steadfast and honorable in my character, and a loving friend. [...] Suddenly I was overcome by the enormity of all I had lost [...] I felt a desperate need to take action, to run and find Bella that very minute and beg her to forgive me [...] I swore that from that day forward I would always strive to be as decent and honest as she had once thought me to be. Unchangeable Bella, with her unerring sense of who she was, her fixed inclination toward all that was good - she would be my north star. And truly, I have become better and continue striving still. (Stanley 80-82)

Prince Julian lives up to the expectations of Bella, who is the only person he truly loves. Prince Julian not only represents the new family, but he is part of the positive family as well. Bella represents the positive family for him. He eventually accepts that she is the only one who can become his new family. Bella admits that: “Losing Julian shifted the foundation upon which I had built my life.” (Stanley 86). She clings to an internalized image of Prince Julian, represented by a dough figure. Bella seems to forgive Prince Julian, and she embraces the good in him in an attempt to continue with her life and with her development as a person.

When Bella and Prince Julian meet again, they have both changed. Bella has overcome her negative family by her desire to save his life, and she has not only taken on the masculine concept of adventure, but she has literally taken on the role of a boy by disguising herself as one. It actually provides her with more freedom to be a boy than to be a girl. Bella comes to embody the active role in the story: she travels to save her prince; she is the one who
bestows him with a kiss instead of the reverse; she rides between the armies as the Worthy Knight without fear for her own life; she saved the peace between the two countries. Although Prince Julian sets off to stop his brother from invading, he fails in the role of saviour as he is captured and treated like a traitor. Bella is the agential protagonist, and her feminism is represented in her function as the Worthy Knight, who is assumed to be a man. The fact that the ‘perfect’ father, God, chooses a girl to perform His miracle demonstrates how Bella’s active behaviour is favoured over the passive behaviour that is associated with the stereotype of the Cinderella-heroine.

The prince’s function in the tale has certainly been expanded and changed, yet his role as saviour has been taken over by the cinder-girl. On the other hand, his role has been diminished because of the feminist influences accompanying modern interpretations of the fairy tale. The change in the function of the prince is brought about by several factors: the regendering of child literature which places the girls in more active roles; the feminist fairy tale which implements the protagonist in a position of power; the concept of the new family; the acceptance of certain aspects of masculinity as acceptable in the behaviour of girls; the influence of neo-liberal individualization. Today, it is no longer possible for female protagonists to play a passive role in a story. Consequently, the prince becomes a supporting character in the protagonist’s life, and he is often turned into a better man because of the protagonist’s character: he needs to be susceptible to the changes a woman desires of him. The idea of the new family and the prince also show an inner urge of people to be accepted as they are.
Conclusion

As long as the fairy tale continues to awaken our wonderment and project counter worlds to our present society where our yearnings and wishes may find fulfillment, it will serve a meaningful social function not just for compensation but for revelation: for the worlds projected by the best of our fairy tales reveal the gaps between truth and falsehood in our immediate society and provide us with comforting counsel about how we can insert ourselves cunningly into our daily struggles to turn the course of the world’s events in our favor. (Zipes 29)

The goal of this dissertation was to determine the distinct change in the functions and roles of the characters within the Cinderella tale and what has instigated these changes. It was found that stereotypes are no longer applicable, as modern authors question the motives and actions of the characters involved in the tale. Furthermore, the changes were instigated by different causes: the differences in time and society from the old versions; feminism and the changing role of women; a new outlook on childrearing; and individualization. Many of the psychological elements of the tale, such as the “good” and “bad” mother paradigm, have continued to exist. However, these elements tend to be altered to fit a modern view and interpretation of the tale. The greatest alteration is that of the role of the father as a the ‘bad guy’, and the subsequent bad father concept that follows from this.

The characters involved in the tale have largely remained the same: a servant heroine, a prince, an absent father, a deceased mother, a fairy godmother, a stepmother and stepsisters. The greatest variation is seen in the fairy godmother role as she even becomes represented by God. In order to understand the absent father with regard to a modern interpretation of the tale, he is provided with different reasons to explain his lack of care, as he does not display
any uxorious behaviour towards his second wife. The authors themselves questioned the original stereotypical roles and if there could be more to them. As a result, these recreations of the tale cast the characters in new light, provide them with a voice of their own, and in order for them to not be judged on their stereotypical role alone they are provided with a past.

The parental characters of the mother figure, the stepmother, and the father have extensively been recreated and recast in different roles. The character of the prince has largely been extended and altered, and the character of Cinderella has been changed into an active agential protagonist. What has become apparent is that the mother is more important in the tale than was initially thought at the start of this research, and her influence is noticeable throughout the story. Her role can be split between the “good” and the “bad” mother, in which the good mother is an internalization of the image of the mother in early childhood, called the “internalized mother”, which resided in certain objects and heirlooms. Despite her death, she has an influence on the story and the characters within it, and she is able to influence the actions of her daughter. She functions as a mental support during the time spent with the negative family. Unlike the older versions by Perrault and Grimm, in the modern versions the deceased mother retains no magic to help her daughter, yet her assistance, or lack of assistance, is recast in new forms: the portrait in *Before Midnight*, the use of her name in *Ever After*, and the order to never speak of the curse in *Ella Enchanted*.

The mother is at times replaced by a fairy godmother archetype, who takes on a more guiding role. This ‘fairy godmother’ is often not magical but acts as a wise advisor and in these stories she is recast in a form that is either a parody, a non-magical person, or even a supernatural presence: respectively reflected in Lucinda and Mandy, Leonardo da Vinci, and God. Therefore, a fairy godmother can be found anywhere, and in anything, as long as the role of that person or entity is that of a helper and guide. Apart from the fairy godmother a new concept shows itself clearly in *Bella at Midnight*. The foster family is introduced as a
completely new idea within the Cinderella tale, and it replaces the biological parents who are either deceased or unwilling to care for the protagonist. Every member of the family comes together as a whole, takes on the role of the good mother, and thus becomes the positive family. The protagonist eventually loses the care and love of that foster family when she is forced to live with the negative family.

The counterpart to the character of the good mother is represented by the stepmother. She embodies the bad mother and she represents the struggles that children have with breaking away from parental authority. Furthermore, she represents maternal jealousy and how daughters relate to this. Although authors have attempted to provide reasons for the actions of the stepmother, and in so doing making her more acceptable, the stereotypical myth surrounding her remains. She is portrayed as an evil stepmother out to make her stepdaughter’s life miserable, and to prevent the girl from ever finding happiness with a man, like she herself has experienced. The exception to this myth is stepmother Chantal in Before Midnight, who is more in line with the myth of instant love (Dainton 93-94). She does not fit the bad mother stereotype as she is steered towards acts of good by the good mother, which represents that children do not always struggle with parental authority in the process of growing up. She also demonstrates that the fairy tale of Cinderella can work without the stereotypical evil stepmother when she is replaced by another wicked force, in this case the father.

The role of the father has also been extended and drastically altered, and the father has become part of the negative family. This can be linked to the idea of the “good” and “bad” father, in which the bad father represents bad parenting and the wrong aspects of masculinity. The latter is visible in the unbalanced sides of the “king” and “lover” archetypes of Moore and Gillette. The father’s failings in the modern versions of Cinderella are greater than in the old versions, in which he merely disappears from the story. He is the active instigator of his
daughter’s misfortune and misery, and his rejection of her provides the tale with a new dimension. Furthermore, the replacement of his uxoriousness with a lack of care for his family and a sort of hate for his second wife adds a different meaning to the tale. The exception to this is the good father in *Ever After*, who functions as a mental support for his daughter and becomes an internalized father similar to the internalized mother. This story seemingly follows a more traditional pattern, although the father is removed from the story by death instead of uxoriousness.

The prince, the other male character of importance, is supposed to counter the father’s failing masculinity, and to provide the correct kind of male love. His role has been expanded significantly: he has become a complete character; he is seen as a friend and eventual lover of the cinder-girl before the final events; and in some versions he shares the role of protagonist with the cinder-girl. He has retained the idea of being an idealized mate, but this is coupled with his friendship to the protagonist and his ability to either change his character due to her influence (Prince Henry, Prince Julian), or to completely accept the protagonist for who she is (Prince Charmont). However, his masculine role in the story has been diminished in importance because of the feminist influences on the fairy tale and its recreation. Due to the “regendering” of children’s literature it is no longer possible that female protagonists play a passive role in a story. They appear to employ several masculine aspects in this process and this is probably the most important incongruity, which is exemplified in the role of saviour that the cinder-girl takes on: they do not necessarily change roles with the saving prince, but rather they actively take it upon themselves to protect what is dearest to them. As a result of this, it encourages the search of self and of acceptance of that self by others, wherein the concept of the new family comes to illustrate an inner urge to be accepted as an individual person. This has become the function of the prince, as he has more of a supporting role than
anything else. The idea of him as an idealized mate may have only shifted in the perception of what an idealized mate is, rather than the entire concept being replaced.

All these characters have come to be a part of the three stages mentioned in the introduction. The “positive family”, “negative family”, and “new family” are clearly present in every version of the tale. It will be suggested here that this becomes a theory applicable to other modern stories based on the fairy tale “Cinderella”. However, it must be noted that these families are not represented by the same characters in every version. The positive family mostly consists of the deceased mother and deceased father, the fairy godmother, and foster family. Furthermore, Prince Julian in *Bella at Midnight* is part of the positive family as he is the childhood friend of the protagonist. The negative family is seemingly more consistent in its members. It is composed of the father and the stepfamily. The fact that the father falls into this group demonstrates a certain struggle of teenage girls with the father’s control over them and with his protective nature. From a certain point of view, it can even represent a girl’s struggle against the patriarchal society and the associated expectations of girls within this society. This can be coupled to the changing role of women within society due to the influence of feminism and the equalization of men and women in increasingly more parts of society.

This changing role of women and girls is reflected in the new family and its only member, the prince. Important to note is that the prince is a friend before he becomes the lover, and he is often shaped by the protagonist’s actions, ideas, or character. He is usually present during the time in which the protagonist’s struggles with the negative family take place. These two elements make him the only person who is good enough to be the new family: the prospective husband. The acceptance of the new family also symbolizes the end of the journey of self-discovery, and demonstrates self-acceptance in finding the ‘right’ person. Generally speaking it can be argued that the three family concepts embody how children cope
with growing up; what their struggles are during adolescence; who they come to see as negative and positive influences in their lives; and what memories, advice, people, lessons etc. they take along in life. The three families come to constitute a pattern that reflects the phases of childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood. The positive family and negative family both constitute experiences of childhood and adolescence that are good as well as bad, and a person’s identity is given shape by these particular experiences. The new family comes to constitute the acceptance of that identity and how it was formed, and this acceptance is reflected in relationship with the future husband.

Apart from the original setting being utilized, the medieval setting is seemingly the only one that allows for the tale of “Cinderella” to have effect in the present day, the tale has evolved to a new extent. It cannot be assumed blindly that the story is merely a tale of rags-to-riches, sibling rivalry, or a prince-to-the-rescue. It has become a story that tells of self-discovery with the aid of good influences from family and friends, and to what extent they provide this aid. This eventually leads to the creation of a personal identity and the development of a dependent adolescent girl into an independent adult woman. Essentially, the fairy tale is no longer a mere moralizing tale but reminiscent of a Bildungsroman, or a coming-of-age story.

5 The medieval setting allows for the feminist influence to be noticeable. As was discussed, the women in the tale are independent and highly active, which is not assumed to have been the case in the Middle Ages, apart from exceptions such as Eleanor of Aquitaine or Joan of Arc.
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<http://www.oed.com>

Appendix I:
Book and Film Summaries

Summary of Bella at Midnight by Diane Stanley (2003)

Characters:
Bella: the protagonist.
Prince Julian of Moranmoor: Bella’s childhood friend.
Beatrice: wet nurse to Julian and foster mother to Bella.
Martin, Will and Margaret: Bella’s foster family.
Maud: Bella’s maternal aunt.
Sir Edward of Burning Wood: Bella’s biological father.
Matilda: Bella’s stepmother.
Alice and Marianne: Bella’s stepsisters.

This is the story of Bella, a golden-haired girl whose mother dies in childbirth. Her father is angry at her for causing her mother’s death that he has her aunt take the child away to be fostered. She is taken to another town and given to a peasant, Beatrice, to be wet nursed alongside a prince named Julian. Her father does not reclaim her. She and Julian grow up together and become loving friends. He keeps calling her “Princess Bella” and eventually gives her a small gift that represents his love for her: a thimble. Neither of them seems to notice the great division that lies between his world and hers.

Then Bella’s world collapses. On day, when they are in their teens, Julian treats her badly and breaks her heart by denying publicly that they were ever friends. That very day, as he plans to apologize, he is sent away as a hostage to a neighbouring kingdom as insurance that the peace treaty is not violated. With feelings of guilt he rides off, convinced he will never see his friend again. In the meantime, Bella is suddenly taken away to live with her estranged father and his resentful wife and daughters. She is miserable in the loveless and cold home of her father. She is mostly ignored and finds comfort in the memory of her old family and Julian, of whom she makes small dough figurines. While living in her father’s house, Bella hears of a plot to violate the peace treaty and in the process Julian’s life will be sacrificed by his brother, the king. She rebels against her father, but is put away. With the help of her stepsister Alice she escapes, whom gives her a magical ring, and she heads off to rescue Julian and the kingdom. She goes to her aunt and receives money, a beautiful dress, and glass slippers before she goes on her two-week journey to the castle where Julian now lives happily. All the while, she disguises herself as boy and takes on a servant’s position in order to enter the castle and meet Julian.

She dresses the part and meets him at the wedding feast, right before the troops of the king plan to attack. On meeting him, Bella kisses him, as she had already forgiven him for his past mistake. She tells him all about the plan to attack and they go off to stop it. Julian rides to his brother’s camp, but is captured and placed in front of the army as punishment for his betrayal. Meanwhile, Bella sees the armies approaching each other and she is overcome by grief. She then blacks out. The armies are suddenly halted by the prophesised Worthy Knight, who appears in a bright white armour and head of fire. The king is blinded and the armies throw down their arms. Peace is restored, but when Julian goes to tell Bella, she has disappeared and only her torn dress, the magical ring, and the glass slippers remain.

Julian, convinced she is dead, goes on a search for the Worthy Knight after seeing him lying wounded in the same magical ring Bella carried on her. Stepsister Alice shows him how
to use it and accompanies him on his search for the knight. When Julian eventually finds the knight, and has gathered a great following of people in doing so, he finds a wounded Bella. Her banner still stands near the hut where she lies, it is a piece of her white dress. She was the Worthy Knight, and Julian takes her back with him after making her a knight. She is reunited with her old family and tells of her adventure. Then Julian asks her to marry him and she accepts.

**Summary of *Before Midnight* by Cameron Dokey (2007)**

**Characters:**
- Cendrillon/Constanze: the protagonist.
- Constanze d'Este: Cendrillon’s mother.
- Etienne de Brabant: Cendrillon’s father.
- Raoul: a boy with no past growing up with Cendrillon.
- Old Mathilde: a healer and surrogate grandmother to Cendrillon.
- Chantal de Saint-Andre: Cendrillon’s stepmother.
- Amelie and Anastasia: Cendrillon’s stepsisters.
- Pascal: the prince and twin-brother of Raoul.
- Niccolo: a soldier and informant at court.

Cendrillon’s mother Constanze dies in childbirth, and father Etienne, enraged, blames his newborn daughter for it. Lightning strikes Constanze’s grave and splits her favourite tree in two. He then leaves a baby boy at his estate and leave, not to return for many years later. When Cendrillon tries to grow anything on the grave of her mother, it blooms but immediately withers on her birthday.

Old Mathilda takes care of both children and they grow up together, Cendrillon and Raoul. Raoul is never allowed to leave the estate and works as a stableboy, because both children were raised by the servants. Cendrillon does long for her father’s love, but it is never received. One day, a stranger arrives at the door, soldier Niccolo, who has washed up on the beach below the castle. He becomes part of the household, sharing tasks with Raoul, and he eventually goes to court to find out more about Raoul’s past and tells of the ball the prince is giving to find a bride.

Meanwhile Cendrillon’s father has remarried Chantal de Saint-Andre and she and her daughters arrive on the estate. At first they seem unkind and uncaring, but when Constanze’s portrait and the truth about Cendrillon’s heritage is discovered, Chantal embraces Cendrillon as one of her own daughters. They grow to love each other, and Raoul and Anastasia even fall in love, despite their different backgrounds. Then the invitation to the ball arrives, and Chantal, going against the wishes of Etienne, rides off with her daughters, Cendrillon, and Raoul to the palace to attend. There, the plot thickens.

At the ball Cendrillon meets her father for the first time, and he is not too happy. She also meets prince Pascal, and true to the original story, they fall in love instantly, as if she has always known him. She then realizes Raoul and Pascal look exactly alike. Raoul turns out to be Pascal’s twin brother, and Etienne had been working on a plot with the queen to replace Pascal with Raoul. The latter is confused on what to do, but eventually decides to follow his heart thanks to Anastasia, and he refuses to help the queen. But before he can tell Cendrillon, she is kidnapped back to the estate by her father. Everyone rides after them, including Pascal. Cendrillon, however, manages to convince her father of his errors and his wronged behaviour.
to her. She stands up to him, and eventually, he breaks down and finally mourns. He then leaves, never to be seen again. Cendrillon is reunited with Pascal, Raoul and Niccolo who had rode after them. The it is revealed that everything on Constanze’s grave is blooming and when they confess their love for each other, the dead tree on the grave trembles back into life.

**Summary of *Ella Enchanted* by Gail Carson Levine (1997)**

**Characters:**
Ella: the protagonist.
Prince Charmont: Ella’s friend and eventual lover.
Lady Eleanor: Ella’s mother.
Sir Peter: Ella’s father.
Lucinda: the fairy who cursed Ella.
Mandy: a fairy godmother living with Ella.
Dame Olga: Ella’s stepmother.
Hattie and Olive: Ella’s stepsisters.
Areida: Ella’s friend from the neighbouring country of Ayortha.

At birth Ella was ‘given’ the gift of obedience. This requires her to obey every order she is given. When she tries to disobey, she starts to fall ill and faint. Even though she was cursed, Ella had a happy childhood living at home with her mother and the house fairy Mandy. Her father is mostly absent, travelling and trading throughout the kingdom.

When Ella is 8, she tells a friend about her curse. This girl takes immediate advantage of it, and Ella’s mother forbids her to ever tell anyone she is cursed.

By the time Ella is almost 15, she and her mother catch a cold. As always, her father is away on business. Ella gets better, but her mother dies. At the funeral she meets Prince Charmont (Char) and her future stepfamily Dame Olga, Hattie and Olive. Prince Charmont and Ella share memories and it appears that they like each other instantly.

At the zoo Ella meets Charmont again. They talk, help a gnomic child and struggle with an ogre who orders Ella to come to him to be eaten. Charmont helps her out and they bring the gnomic child back to its parents. Char then promises to catch a centaur colt for her when they visit the zoo, but Ella is sent off to finishing school before he can make good on the promise. Before she leaves, Ella is given a magical book that allows her to read letters and journal entries of other people.

Hattie soon figures out about Ella’s curse and starts to take advantage of it at finishing school. Ella tries to fight back, but little works. She also meets her best friend Areida, who is from the neighbouring country of Ayortha. But Hattie orders Ella to stop the friendship.

Ella then escapes the school in search of the fairy Lucinda, who had cursed her. She hears of a giants’ wedding where both her father and Lucinda are likely to be attending. Along the way there she meets some elves and is ambushed by ogres. She learns their language and she manages to keep them from eating her long enough for a chance encounter with Charmont, who saves her. Happy they met again, Ella jokingly demonstrates what she has learned at finishing school, but Char is not amused by it. They go their separate ways and Ella manages to attend the wedding.

Ella finds Lucinda, but the fairy orders Ella to feel blessed with the gift of obedience, so Ella ends up feeling good about the orders. She goes home with her father. Sir Peter is
going bankrupt and needs Ella to marry a wealthy man, which is will happily do thanks to Lucinda. Mandy finds out and orders Ella not to feel blessed about the curse.

Soon her father remarries to Dame Olga and at the wedding she meets Charmont again. They have fun and dance and their friendship grows. Dame Olga soon learns about Ella’s curse and starts treating her stepdaughter like a slave. She is kept away from Charmont when he attempt to visit her, and she manages to write to him with a lie that is ordered to stay in her room as punishment for her behaviour at the wedding.

Meanwhile, Charmont has to leave for Ayortha for a year. During this time, Charmont and Ella write each other letters, making their lives more bearable. When Charmont admits that he loves Ella, she realizes the consequences of her marrying him while she is still cursed. She decides to write a letter that will break his heart, stating that she married another man for his money.

When Mandy finds out, she has had enough and summons Lucinda. She tricks Lucinda into becoming a squirrel and an obedient child, both for three months. Six months pass and Charmont returns from Ayortha. There will be three royal balls to find himself a bride. Mandy brings back Lucinda, and the fairy is a changed woman. But she still refused to undo the curse. Yet with a little help from her, Ella goes to the ball, disguised as a girl named Lela. She dances with Charmont and they fall in love all over again. Charmont does hint at knowing who she truly is by singing a song he learned in Ayortha. On the third night, a jealous Hattie rips of Ella’s mask and she is revealed. She runs home and tells Mandy about it. They decide that Ella must run away, but before she can, Charmont arrives and find her in her servant’s garb. He brings out a glass slipper that only Ella will fit and she is revealed. He know now that her letter was fake and asks her to marry him.

Now Ella’s trial begins, as the ideas of what could happen if she married him while she was still cursed return to her mind. She fights with all she’s got to say ‘no’, and she succeeds. She tells Charmont about the curse and that she will marry him, because she is now ‘old enough to marry’. They marry and live happily together.

Summary of Ever After: A Cinderella Story
Screenplay: Susannah Grant, Andy Tennant & Rick Parks.
Director: Andy Tennant

Characters:
Danielle de Barbarac: the protagonist
Prince Henry of France: Danielle’s friend and lover. Also a protagonist.
Auguste de Barbarac: Danielle’s father.
Comtesse Nicole de Lancret: Danielle’s deceased mother.
Rodmilla de Ghent: Danielle’s stepmother.
Marguerite: the mean stepsister.
Jaqueline: the kind stepsister.
Maurice, Pauline and Louise: Danielle’s fellow servants and friends.
Gustave: Danielle’s childhood friend.

King Francis: Henry’s father.  
Queen Marie: Henry’s mother.  
Pierre le Pieu: a cruel and rapacious courtier who buys Danielle.  
A band of gypsies: they ambush and later befriend Danielle and Henry.

In the early 19th century, The Grimm Brothers are summoned by the elderly Grande Dame of France. After one of the brothers expressed curiosity about a portrait showing a young woman, the Grande Dame replies that she is Danielle de Barbarac (Drew Barrymore), and reveals a jewel-encrusted glass slipper, beginning her story with “Once upon a time…”

The eight-year-old Danielle de Barbarac is a mischievous tomboy indulged by her progressive father, Auguste. The two are very close, sharing a love of books, including his latest gift to her, Thomas More’s *Utopia*. He soon marries Baroness Rodmilla de Ghent (Anjelica Huston), who has two young daughters, but he dies almost immediately afterward. He addresses his dying declaration of love to his daughter, rather than his new wife.

The Baroness thereafter ensures that Danielle’s life is miserable. By the time Danielle is eighteen, the estate has fallen into decline, as the Baroness has no interest in farming and simply wishes to get back to court. Her favourite, the elder daughter Marguerite (Megan Dodds), has grown to be as cruel and arrogant as her mother, while the younger daughter, Jacqueline (Melanie Lynskey), who has yet to assert herself, is sweet-tempered and forgiving.

Danielle has been reduced to a servant in her own house, reading herself to sleep with *Utopia* by the fireplace.

She rises early one morning to collect apples, only to discover a strange man attempting to steal one of their horses. Enraged she unhorses him by throwing an apple right between his eyes. He reveals himself as Prince Henry (Dougray Scott), and Danielle prostrates herself for fear for her life. He apologises and promises absolution in exchange for her silence, tossing her a bag of gold for the horse. She decides to use the money to rescue her friend Maurice, whom the Baroness had sold to pay off her debt to the Crown.

Prince Henry, meanwhile, interrupts a band of gypsies ransacking the carriage of an old man who begs the Prince to rescue his most prized possession. Henry grudgingly agrees, returning the prize (later shown to be the Mona Lisa) to the elderly man, who declares that a beautiful woman is always a matter of life and death. He is none other than Leonardo da Vinci, summoned by the King and Queen to the French court, and Henry goes with him.

Danielle goes to the castle to buy back Maurice in the disguise of a courtier, saving him from being sent to the New World colonies. The guards tell her it is too late, but she argues loudly before the assemblage, quoting *Utopia* and catching the ear of the Prince who has just returned. Impressed with her intellect and strength of character, he is also captivated by her beauty and refusal to give him her name, although eventually she leaves him with the name of her mother, Comtesse Nicole de Lancret.

Here begins the game of cat and mouse, with the Baroness scheming to match Marguerite with the Prince and Henry in turn seeking the mysterious Comtesse Nicole de Lancret. He and Leonardo stumble upon Danielle at the river, and they meet again several times, as they argue about *Utopia*, class conventions, responsibility, and freedom, and she challenges him to use his position for a greater good. At one point, they stumble on the same gypsies Henry fought for the Mona Lisa, and after they are accosted she rescues him in an uproarious turn of events that brings them all together around the campfire that night. He begins to think of how he might accomplish something of his own, in light of what they have
shared, and they kiss. He knows too that unless he chooses a wife before the upcoming masquerade ball, his parents will marry him off to a princess of Spain.

When Danielle’s stepfamily receives their invitation to the ball, they lament their failing fortunes and don’t know what to wear, until the Baroness proposes that Marguerite should wear Danielle’s mother’s wedding dress and the matching glass slippers, which were stored away for Danielle’s wedding. When Danielle catches Marguerite trying on the dress. This makes Danielle accost her and chase her down the stairs until Marguerite seizes Danielle’s copy of *Utopia* and threatens to throw it in the fire. Danielle gives in but Marguerite burns the book anyway and the Baroness has Danielle whipped.

Danielle decides her utopian view of her relationship with Prince Henry is futile, and that she must break it off. She meets him again as they had planned, but her courage fails her as Henry, now love-sick, misinterprets what she says and declares his love for her. Danielle holds back tears, even as they kiss, but when Henry embraces her she cries out in pain, and bids him farewell as she flees.

Just before the ball, the Baroness discovers the interludes between Danielle and Henry, and her masquerade as the Comtesse de Lancret. She then informs the Queen that the Comtesse she has gone to marry another, and the Queen in turn tells Henry. Danielle is locked in the larder, to keep her away from the Prince and the ball, but her childhood friend Gustave finds the courage to ask help from Leonardo da Vinci, who frees her by unhinging the door. He also encourages her to go to the ball and tell Henry the whole truth, and that his love for her will be enough to overcome convention. Da Vinci declares he will give her wings, and the servants give Danielle her mother’s dress and slippers, which they have hidden.

Danielle enters the ball and Henry is overjoyed, but the Baroness rushes forward and reveals Danielle as a commoner. Danielle tries to explain but Henry is humiliated and refuses to listen, calling her an imposter just like all the others. Devastated, she runs away, dropping one of her slippers. Leonardo picks up the slipper, and reprimands Henry for abandoning Danielle, and the principles he claimed to espouse, when she risked everything for him.

Henry stubbornly refuses to consider the truth, until he is about to be married. As the wedding begins, the Spanish princess sobs uncontrollably, imploring her parents to allow her to marry her lover. Henry bursts out laughing at the scene and lets the princess go to her lover. In the meantime, Danielle has been sold to a vile landowner, Pierre Le Pieu, and in exchange the Baroness recovers all the household goods she had sold to herself afloat. When Henry hears about it, he rushes off to rescue her.

At his castle, Le Pieu threatens Danielle, now a servant in shackles, with sexual advances. She turns the tables on him and she threatens him at sword-point; in exchange for his life he frees her. She walks out of the castle just as Henry arrives. He begs for her forgiveness and calls her by name, telling her he’s been looking for the woman who left behind the glass slipper the night of the ball. He asks her to marry him as he slips it on her foot, and she accepts.

The Baroness and her daughters are summoned to court, assuming that Henry plans to propose to Marguerite. Instead, Rodmilla and Marguerite are asked if they have ever lied to the Queen, and while the Baroness tries to explain herself, Marguerite tries to save herself by blaming her mother, until the King calls an end to the quarrel. The Queen then strips the Baroness and Marguerite of their titles and tells them that they will be shipped to the New World colonies, unless someone pleads for them. Rodmilla scans the room in a panic until Danielle steps forward, beautifully dressed and crowned, as Henry introduces her to Marguerite as his wife. Rodmilla reluctantly curtseys to Danielle, who says she will never think of her again, but that Rodmilla will remember her for the rest of her life. Marguerite and the Baroness are sent to work in the royal laundry for the rest of their days as just punishment.
for forcing Danielle into servitude. Jacqueline, who had always been kind to Danielle, is spared punishment.

The Grand Dame reveals to the Brothers Grimm that she is Danielle’s great-great-granddaughter, and, as evidenced by the glass slipper and Da Vinci’s portrait, not only did they live happily ever after, but that the story is indeed true.