FAIRY TALES RETOLD IN WORDS AND PICTURES:
TWO VARIATIONS ON THE *SNOW WHITE* THEME

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ABSTRACT: Fairy tales are widely known and acclaimed by both children and adults as part of our European collective consciousness. Translation processes play an extremely important role in their transmission, and yet, for the most part, they go unperceived by the primary audience. Using two contemporary versions of *Snow White* as case studies, this paper examines book covers and illustrations as instances of intersemiotic translation, considering the role they play in mediating and commenting upon the story in particular social contexts.
KEYWORDS: Fairy Tale, Intersemiotic Translation, Cover Art, Illustration

Sometime in the 19th century, fairy tales became an important part and parcel of children's education and socialisation in European civilisation. They were shaped by different generations in accordance with the prevalent public morals in order to provide the next generation with knowledge, instructions in acceptable behaviour, and entertainment. As a consequence, they are today widely known and acclaimed by both children and adults as part of our European collective consciousness.

The "classic" fairy tale, according to Bacchilega (1997, p. 3), is a literary appropriation of an older folk tale:

> As a "borderline" or transitional genre, it bears the traces of orality, folkloric tradition, and socio-cultural performance, even when it is edited as literature for children or it is marketed with little respect for its history and materiality. And conversely, even when it claims to be folklore, the fairy tale is shaped by literary traditions with different social uses and users.

Other tales were initially written by a single identifiable author, such as Hans Christian Andersen, though even these may have been based on stories heard in childhood. Both kinds have gone on to become a basic component of our intangible cultural heritage, rewritten for different audiences and adapted into different media.

Translation processes play an extremely important role in the transmission of fairy tales, to the extent that talking about them "is to talk first and foremost about translation" (Zipes, 2006, p. 197). Yet for the most part, this mediation goes unperceived by the primary audience: "When most children and adults hear or read 'Hansel and Gretel', they rarely think that they are reading or listening to a translation, no matter what language is being used, even German" (p. 197).

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Whatever the readers receive is doubly filtered, first by the original collector-writer and their publisher (source culture norms), and then by the translator and their publisher (target culture norms). And this already winnowed material gets sifted again when a tale is adapted for a particular audience. Naturally, when the prospective readership of the fairy tale consists of children, the translated product has to satisfy the requirements of those who purchase the book, usually adults, and those of the children who will "consume" it. This has far-reaching implications on translations (Dollerup, 1999).

There has been little research into the translations of original or retold fairy tales (Seago, 2001; Van Coillie, 2013), much less on their intersemiotic translations, except perhaps for adaptations for film and stage. This article aims to fill that gap to some extent by focusing on the intersemiotic dimension of fairy tales as represented by book covers and illustrations, with particular reference to two contemporary adult versions of *Snow White*.

2. Book covers and illustrations as intersemiotic translation

For a long time, the third of Jakobson's (2000) three translation categories – intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic – was practically ignored because of the primacy of written texts. As illustrations and book covers spring from the texts they adorn, they were assumed to be unoriginal, derivative, therefore inferior, just like translations compared to their source texts. However, there has recently been an increased interest in book covers and illustrations as intersemiotic translation, with studies by authors such as Mossop (2017), Ozhan (2018), Pereira (2008), Salmani and Eghtesadi (2015), and Sonzogni (2011), amongst others.

Pereira (2008) argues that, since (according to Jakobson) artistic translation can only be achieved through "creative transposition", illustration must be intersemiotic translation *par excellence*, as it "uses the literary text for reference" (Pereira, 2008, p. 106). Although they can also be valued independently as art, pictures can translate words just like words do, e.g. by literally reproducing textual elements in the picture, by emphasizing specific narrative elements or by adapting the pictures to a specific ideology or artistic trend.

Mossop (2017) discusses whether the covers of at least some books can be seen as intersemiotic translations of the texts they introduce: "when the cover of a book in its original language does somehow reflect the text, will the cover of a fairly faithful interlingual translation do so also, or will there be some conflict between cover and translation because the text has arrived in a different publishing culture?"

Since the main function of book covers is to sell the book, they may differ from country to country in accordance with cultural expectations and traditions. However, in other cases, publishing a book with the same front cover is a condition of the contract, as uniformity may help readers, especially fans, to recognise the product and identify with it.

> While a cover may certainly convey aspects of the text, or at least not contradict it, the meaning of the text may also be sidelined, suppressed or even negated by another, much more important function of covers: they are first and foremost marketing devices (book buyers do indeed judge by the cover!), and secondarily freestanding art objects. As such, they

will tend to call up, in the minds of book buyers, themes that exist independently of the text in the source or target culture. (Mossop, 2017)

Sonzogni (2011), who published the first monograph on book covers as intersemiotic translations, takes as his premise the fact that, when a reader picks up a book, the essence of the text has been translated into the visual space of the cover. However, although in "negotiating between the verbal and the visual, book covers reveal the cultural assumptions of their designers, of their authors and of the readers of the text" (Sonzogni, 2011, p. 4), Sonzogni admits that, in practice, authors seldom have much influence over the cover of their books, given that, "in the real world, multiple paratextual influences intervene" (p. 4).

This situation may, of course, be different in cases where the author and illustrator functions are occupied by the same person. Could this be regarded as intersemiotic *self-translation* and, if so, how does it differ from conventional or third-party intersemiotic translation? Since the idea to be expressed verbally and pictorially comes from the same mind, does it make sense to consider one as the source code and the other as the target code? Or might it be more appropriate to regard the verbal text and its illustrations as two sides of the same intermedial project? What about the temporal dimension, i.e. when there is a time gap between their production?

These are some of the issues that will be broached in the following analysis of two contemporary adult versions of *Snow White* and their respective illustrations.

3. *Snow White* in pictures

There are many different ways in which fairy tales are intersemiotically translated into pictures. They may be accompanied by visual representations, such as book covers and illustrations, or adapted into picture books, graphic novels, comics or films, drawings and paintings. The international folk tale *Snow White* (Windling, [1997]), first published in German as *Sneewitchen* ("snowdrop") by the brothers Grimm in 1812, has been subject to all of these. Visual adaptations include the wonderful metalwork by Frank L. Koralewsky[1] (1911, Art Institute Chicago); 17 films – not counting television movies, series and episodes –, among them the 1937 animated film by the Walt Disney Company, the 1997 horror film *Snow White: A Tale of Terror* (directed by Sam Cohn), and the 2012 live-action film *Snow White and the Huntsman* (directed by Rupert Sanders); Bill Willingham's 2002 comic *Fables* and the videogame based on it (*The Wolf Among Us*, 2013); a 2016 graphic novel by Matt Phelan; Paula Rego's paintings on the theme, *Swallows the Poisoned Apple*[2] and *Snow White Plays with her Father's Trophies*[3] (1995, pastel on paper), and a painting by Fiona

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[1] Available at: https://www.artic.edu/articles/620/snow-white-and-the-seven-dwarfs (Accessed: 2 September 2019).

[2] Available at: https://www.saatchigallery.com/artists/artpages/rego_paula_swallows_poisoned_apple.htm (Accessed: 2 September 2019).

[3] Available at: https://www.saatchigallery.com/artists/artpages/rego_paula_snow_white_playing.htm (Accessed: 2 September 2019).

Rae entitled *Snow White changes into something rich and strange*[4] (2017, oil paint on canvas), among others.

The classic image of Snow White as docile maiden and exemplary housekeeper originates from the Victorian era, as can be seen in Figures 1 to 3, two of which dispossessed Snow White of her black hair: blackness is so strongly associated with evil that a pure, innocent heroine must have blonde or at least not-too-dark brown hair, which even Batten adheres to in his painting (Figure 4). Particularly influential were the pen-and-ink drawings and watercolours of Arthur Rackham (1867-1937), which Walt Disney admired so much that he instructed his illustrators to adapt them for use in his 1938 animated film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. However, Rackham's picture (Figure 5) is not so idyllic as the images from the 19th century, although Snow White still keeps her passivity: both he and Batten chose to show the princess in her sleep, surrounded by little men of not too prepossessing appearance, and the general atmosphere of these pictures does not seem to guarantee a happy ending. The variations in Snow White's age also have to be noted, especially as the tale ends with a royal marriage, as Tatar (2002, p. 83) points out: from Vogel's prepubescent girl through Meyerheim's adolescent and Rackham's teenager to Crane's and Batten's adult, the difference in age appears to be at least ten years. Perhaps Gaiman's paedophile prince was inspired by a visualisation similar to Vogel's (who is most truthful since Snow White is seven years old when persecution by her evil stepmother begins). Unconsciously, we all retain the images seen in our childhood and compare the pictures we later encounter to them.

These visual representations express the characteristics expected from the ideal girl (and woman) in the period and may even overemphasise submissiveness for children as a reaction against women's liberation. Grimms' tales were often used to impart cautionary and exemplary moral lessons to their intended – double – target audience: bourgeois children and adults.

However, as Windling (2000, p. 14) points out, the Snow White theme is actually "one of the darkest and strangest to be found in the fairy tale canon – a chilling tale of murderous rivalry, adolescent sexual ripening, poisoned gifts, blood on snow, witchcraft, and ritual cannibalism…". It is, therefore, unsurprising that more recent versions of the tale have chosen to highlight these darker aspects, in some cases turning it into something closer to a horror tale.

In the next part I shall examine two contemporary retellings of *Snow White* and the illustrations that accompany them, in order to determine the extent to which they may indeed be considered intersemiotic translations.

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[4] Available at: https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/rae-snow-white-changes-into-something-rich-and-strange-t15085 (Accessed: 2 September 2019).

Figure 1. *Snow White* title page, by Walter Crane (Grimm and Grimm, 1963).

Figure 2. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* ("The girl serves food"), by Paul Meyerheim (Grimm and Grimm, 1890).

Figure 3. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, by Hermann Vogel (Grimm and Grimm, 1894).

Figure 4. *Snowdrop and the Seven Little Men*, by John Dickson Batten (tempera on gesso on canvas) (Batten, 1897).

Figure 5. *Snow White*, by Arthur Rackham (Grimm and Grimm, 1909).

4. "Red as Blood", by Tanith Lee

By the time the anthology *Red as Blood or Tales from the Sisters Grimmer* was published by DAW Books in January 1983, Tanith Lee was an acknowledged, full-time writer who had already won the British Fantasy Award. The book contains nine fairy tales retold in a manner which blends fantasy, horror, erotica, and romance, plus four one-page black-and-white interior linocut illustrations done by the author herself:[5] one a frontispiece and three depicting a scene each from tales "Red as Blood", "The Golden Rope", and "Black as Ink". The stories have been described as "TWISTED – tales of bloodlust, sexual frustration, schoolgirl nastiness, world-devouring ennui, and a detailed obsession with Satanism that truly makes one wonder" (Sterling, cited in Tiffin, 2009, p. 150).

The title story "Red as Blood" (1979) is based on the *Snow White* theme[6] and has been translated into Dutch (1989), German (1988), Hungarian (2015), Italian (1996), and French (1981, 2002). What is most noticeable about this story is the way in which it keeps all the main motifs of the original story, but subtly twists them. Until the very end, it seems like a dark fantasy told by an omniscient narrator, in which the wicked stepmother, whom we all know from the Grimms' tale, appears as important as Snow White herself. But the author reverses the roles: the princess called Bianca turns out to be a vampire that has

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[5] She studied Art for a year at Croydon Art College before switching to writing.
[6] Lee also wrote a short story entitled "Snow-Drop" (1993) and a novel entitled *White as Snow* (2001, Tor Books) on the theme.

inherited her condition from her mother, while the stepmother, the Witch Queen, is a devout Christian, and even has a Latin-speaking magic mirror. In this version, the dwarves become dwarf trees, and Prince Charming, the rescuer of the damsel in distress, is transfigured into Jesus Christ.

The three colours usually mentioned before the birth of the princess Snow White (red as blood, black as the raven's wing and white as snow) lend themselves particularly well to the vampire theme. Indeed, it is rather surprising that, as far as I know, nobody thought to give the tale the vampire treatment before Lee, particularly as the theme was undergoing something of a revival: the humanisation of vampires and the reconceptualisation of monsters started around this time.[7] In this version, the princess' vampire nature is hinted at from the very beginning: her mother, who did not like the daylight or possess a mirror, licked the blood off her pricked finger, and when a few drops of holy water fell on her corpse, her dead flesh smoked. The imagery is also heavily Christian: the Prince who comes to free her is the Saviour himself, and the princess gets a second chance by going through a sort of purgatory: she has to pass through a purple, then a crimson, and finally a yellow room, after which she loses her body and becomes a beating heart which turns first into a raven, then into an owl, and finally, after she has lost all her blackness and all her redness, into a white dove. Thus, the story has an unsullied happy ending; total redemption is achieved when, delivered from evil, Bianca can restart life as a seven-year-old child.

The style of the narrative is rich and ornate, though most descriptions and dialogues are brief. Some passages have a strong rhythmic beat that is almost musical:

> "Seven asleep, seven awake," said Bianca. "Wood to wood. Blood to blood. Thee to me."
> […]
> Hop, hop, hop, hop. Hop, hop, hop.
> In the orchard, seven black shudderings.
> On the broken road, between the high hedges, seven black creepings.
> Brush crackled, branches snapped.
> Through the forest, into the clearing, pushed seven warped, misshapen, hunched-over, stunted things. Woody-black mossy fur, woody-black bald masks. Eyes like glittering cracks, mouths like moist caverns. Lichen beards. Fingers of twiggy gristle. Grinning. Kneeling. Faces pressed to the earth. (Lee, 1983, pp. 30-31)

The unusually frequent use of colours seems symbolic, particularly the way they are associated with the characters and events. The repetition of magical numbers also resembles the original fairy tales: three colours, the queen's three attempts to befriend Bianca, three rooms, three birds (which generally represent evil, knowledge, and innocence), seven dwarf trees, a seven-year-old child. The Lovecraftian portrayal of the unnamed evil embodied in the seven (symbiotic or parasitic) dwarf trees hints at ancient powers which lose their mobility, and thus most of their power, without a vampire.

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[7] Lee, along with a few eminent fantasy and horror writers, such as Anne Rice (*Interview with a Vampire*, 1976) and George R. R. Martin (*Fevre Dream,* 1982), became the forerunners of this trend, which of course culminated in an almost two-decade-long vampire cult in popular genres, especially in juvenile (young adult) literature.

The black and off-white[8] linocut image (Figure 6) that complements the story depicts the scene before salvation, contrasting the black-haired, white-skinned Bianca with the pale-haired Prince. The huge ring echoes the shape of the magic mirror, like a monstrance with an ever-watching eye at the centre. Further layers of meaning are added by the shape and position of the two hands in the foreground and by the slanting dark forest in the background. There are no fine details, only emblematic black lines and blots. In its way, the image is as suggestive as the narration: both illustration and text leave things unsaid, obliging the reader/viewer to flesh out the story using his/her own imagination and knowledge.

Drawing on a long symbolic tradition that combines elements from both Classical and Judeo-Christian cultures, Bianca's evil is expressed in a number of ways: by her emphatic darkness, snake-like hair (evoking Medusa), the blood trickling down her chin, a dark spot on her forehead (which may show a witch's or devil's mark), the possibly revealing décolletage, and the form of her mouth (simultaneously avid and scornful), nose (longish, flat) and eyes (she is definitely slit-eyed, with heavily applied eyeliner and possibly also eye shadow). Her position is also significant: she is on a level with the tree that provides the dark background to the Saviour.

In contrast, the Prince looks distinctly Caucasian, with big round eyes, a well-formed nose, full lips, and long, thick, light-coloured hair. He wears a light-coloured, closely fastened robe, not unlike an opulent monk's habit, and possibly has a wound in his hand at the exact spot where Bianca wears her huge ring. If so, it contradicts the text: "On his wrist there was a mark. It was like a star. Once a nail had been driven in there" (Lee, 1983, p. 35).

Figure 6. Accompanying illustration of "Red as Blood" (Lee, 1983).
(Reproduced with John Kaiine's permission)

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[8] The yellowish tint is due to ageing of the paper on which it was printed in 1983.

It is obviously not a rare occurrence that a story's descriptions and illustrations do not match; however, in this case the author and the illustrator are the same person, which makes this slight difference rather curious. We can only speculate about whether it was a deliberate attempt to offer a subtext and comment on the main story, or if each version was executed separately, according to different aesthetic criteria.

5. "Snow, Glass, Apples", by Neil Gaiman

This short story was first published as a chapbook – actually a benefit book for the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund – and illustrated by Charles Vess in 1995 (Figures 7 and 8). It has since appeared in various anthologies (including Gaiman's 1998 collection *Smoke and Mirrors: Short Fiction and Illusions*),[9] sometimes without pictures, sometimes with illustrations by other artists. It has also been produced as a play for voices and packaged as an audiobook (*Two Plays for Voices,* 2002, Caedmon), as well as adapted into a graphic novel by Colleen Doran and Gaiman (Figure 11). According to the Internet Speculative Fiction Database,[10] it has been translated into Dutch, French, and Spanish (there is also a Hungarian version, although this is not mentioned there).

Its tremendous success must partly be ascribable to the great popularity of the vampire genre in the nineties and beginning of this century, which enabled it to sit alongside bestselling titles such as Steven Brust's *Agyar* and Tanya Huff's *Blood Price*, and series like Barbara Hambly's *James Asher*, Kim Newman's *Anno Dracula*, Alloy Entertainment's *Vampire Diaries*, and Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight*. Another contributing factor is its multimedial approach. It seems that, in the 21st century, editions that involve text, pictures, and recorded voices are more commercially attractive than those with a literary approach alone.

This particular reworking is a story of unrelieved horror. It is narrated by the stepmother, the wise woman or witch queen, who recognises the princess for an unnamed terror very soon, yet does nothing to save her husband, the king, from her. When the king dies sucked dry by his daughter, the queen commands her to be removed from the palace to the forest during daytime. However, the princess continues killing the dwarf people of the forest, so the queen poisons three apples and takes them to the wood for her stepdaughter to eat. The first bite poisons the princess, her heart stops, and for a while the country prospers. Then a necro- and possibly paedophile prince, whom the queen had tried and failed to seduce, finds the princess in a coma and rapes her. The act dislodges the poisoned piece, and as they suit each other so well, they decide to get married and celebrate their wedding by burning the queen alive.

A few more deviations from the customary *Snow White* tale can also be detected in Gaiman's version. First of all, the three colours do not occur at the beginning of the story,

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[9] Other anthologies include those edited by Adams (2009), Beagle (2010), Brite (1997, 2005), Datlow and Windling (1997), and Greenberg (2007).
[10] Available at: http://www.isfdb.org/cgi-bin/pubseries.cgi?40 (Accessed: 2 September 2019).

but in the middle ("Her skin was still pale, her eyes and hair coal-black, her lips as red as blood.") and in the last sentence ("I think of her hair as black as coal, her lips as red as blood, her skin, snow-white."). Perhaps in connection with this, the princess does not take after her mother, as she does in "Red as Blood", which means that we do not get any explanation of what made her such a monster. Bad things just happen – which is perhaps the most horrific idea we have to face in this story as well as in real life.

Explicit sex is usually purged from traditional fairy tales and often from their adaptations as well, but in this short story it is a repetitive presence. First, the king deflowers the sixteen-year-old heroine as is his right; after their spell-wrought marriage, he sends for her whenever he wants sex; then it transpires that the princess commits sexual abuse as well, while drinking her father's blood; in the forest, literally and metaphorically heartless, she kills a monk during sexual congress. The next such scene is the queen's attempt at seducing a visiting prince, who is unable to have sexual intercourse with a live woman, and therefore buys the seemingly dead princess in order to rape her.

The reverse ekphrasis, the representation of texts into images by the artists, also emphasises the horrific side of the story, with a marked use of black, white, and red. Charles Vess' black-and-white pencilled picture (Figure 7) in the first DreamHaven edition (Gaiman, 1995) depicts an unkempt and furious child, a little bird- or harpy-like, right before attacking, that is, her bestial features predominate over her humanity. It translates the terrifying aspect of the child's waywardness perfectly and creates a strong connection with the opening sentence of the story ("I do not know what manner of thing she is."), as well as with the scene when the queen observes how her stepdaughter follows and kills her prey in the forest: "As I watched, in the eye of my mind, I saw her edge and step and flitter and pad from tree to tree, like an animal: a bat or a wolf".The expressive picture focuses on the stepdaughter placed in the middle, but the composition gives an impression of asymmetry due to the ominous trunk and a very peculiar-looking main branch of the tree upon which the girl perches, and the unexplainable white spots add to the frightening atmosphere. The front cover (Figure 8) employs the same dehumanising trick to enhance menace: in it, a human figure can hardly be distinguished from the vegetation, appearing to mingle with it. Vess' art has been influenced by many artists, including two great classics, Rackham and Vogel, already mentioned in this article.

Figure 7. Charles Vess' interior illustration of the DreamHaven edition (Gaiman, 1995).

Figure 8. Charles Vess' front cover of the DreamHaven edition (Gaiman, 1995).

George Walker's wood engraving in the 2002 Biting Dog Press edition (Figure 9) portrays the queen fleeing from her stepdaughter in panic, after dropping the basket with the poisoned apples. The last word of the title and the author's name printed in red have a dramatic effect, since everything else is black and white, while at the same time alluding to the part about the famous three colours in the brothers Grimm's tale. The vaguely female, featureless black silhouette on the right side, small, yet dominant compared to the queen in the foreground, inspires terror by its very indistinctness. It is the only portrayal in which the artist does not place Snow White in the centre of the picture, corresponding to

the story. Interestingly enough, he used one of the ten "Snow, Glass, Apples" woodcuts to illustrate a point in his book *The Woodcut Artist's Handbook* (Walker, 2005, p. 40), and that picture, representing the queen, is also slightly asymmetric.
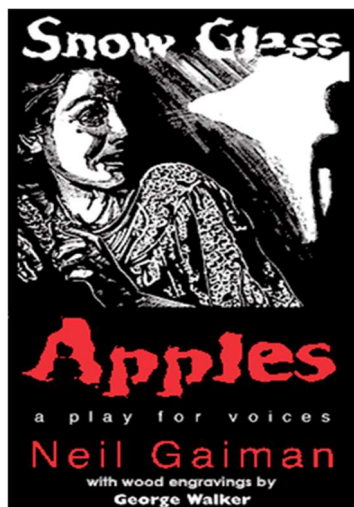

Figure 9. George Walker's woodcut (Gaiman, 2002).

Julie Dillon's painting (Figure 10) on the cover of a 2008 limited-edition gift-set by Black Phoenix Alchemy Lab conveys a very different impression with its broader palette of colours, although it is as disturbing – if not more so – than the others. There is a naked girl's bust in the middle of a circle in the upper part of an ochre rectangular frame filled with pale green. In the circle's background, it is snowing on stylised trees. The circle is broken by an apple which hangs on a red thread, probably flowing blood, coming from the girl's mouth, and which is enclosed, bracketed by her black hair. The apple looks like a despairing face. The girl's eyes have no whites, are a little slanted and very dark, and express both soullessness and determination. The blackness of hair and eyes and the redness of the mouth, flowing blood and apple, are very striking against the pale background.

Figure 10. Julie Dillon's front cover (Dillon, 2009b). (Reproduced with the artist's permission)

Figure 11, one of the six interior images, which illustrates the scene when the prince shatters the glass coffin in order to rape the seemingly dead princess, employs the traditional black, white, and red (and a few greys). The gaping mouths express mindless brutality on both sides, although the girl has not yet regained consciousness. Interestingly, it looks like she is just dropping the apple, and perhaps this element symbolises the suspended state, frozen time.

Figure 11. Julie Dillon's interior illustration (Dillon, 2009a).
(Reproduced with the artist's permission)

All of these images respectively emphasise, firstly, ferocity and resolve; secondly, imprinting others' mind with blind terror and obedience; thirdly, hunger and doggedness; fourthly, ostensible vulnerability and mindlessness – against which one does not have a ghost of a chance. The front covers obviously attempt to give a general impression, and succeed admirably, while the interior illustrations may be more specific (compare Figures 7, 9, and 10 with Figures 8 and 11). Yet, despite the identical sentiments they evoke, their composition, toolkit, medium, and execution could not be more diverse: for instance, the three book covers centre respectively on the queen (Vess), on both the queen and her stepdaughter, though not to the same extent (Walker), and on the stepdaughter alone (Dillon), which reflects the fact that Gaiman's story has two active heroines struggling for supremacy. The artists also belong to different representational traditions, but they all chose a simple, unornamented way to express their visions, so they contrast with the image created by Colleen Doran for the Dark Horse Comics cover of the graphic novel version (Figure 12), published in August 2019; the latter is reminiscent of Harry Clarke[11] and represents a much more Art Nouveau style. It shows a beautifully groomed, bejewelled woman who holds a length of twine with a bleeding heart in her bloodied hands. The queen here is highly stylised, with an expressionless face, slightly slanted and accentuated eyes, and claw-like fingers. The artist uses black, white, red, gold, silver and blue, as well as royal symbols. The picture conveys a very different mood than the previous ones due to its

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[11] "Doran has cited Clarke as a spirit guide and visual informer of her work on this book" (Okay, 2019). Further comparisons can be seen at https://comic-watch.com/comic-book-reviews/snow-glass-apples-fearsome-faerie-fables-for-the-fireside (Accessed: 2 September 2019).

elaborateness. The few interior images also publicly available are packed to the gills, minutely detailed, vibrant, and colourful, and seem to really adapt Gaiman's ideas to visual implementation as dictated by the needs of this format; obviously, a graphic novel can cover much more than a book's front cover or illustration, usually subordinated to other aspects such as the narrative or marketing purposes. Okay (2019) thus writes in his review:

> Doran's adaptation has unearthed something within Gaiman's short story that has elevated it to more than it was before. Snow, Glass, Apples is a mixture of comics tradition – showing what was written – and the picturebook tradition of framing what was written in the iconography it inspires. Doran has pulled an illustrated encyclopedia out of the cultural roots of Gaiman's dreams and Grimm's world.

Obviously, Doran's rendition approaches visual storytelling the most, whereas the others either summarise the whole tale or just depict a particular scene.

Figure 12. Colleen Doran's front cover (Gaiman and Doran, 2019).

One thing that is interesting about all these illustrations is the way that the artists have taken the story at face value, using the various resources at their disposal to depict the princess as evil. However, Silverlock (2015) and James (2018) cast doubts on the reliability of the queen's narrative. According to Silverlock (2015):

> The shift in narrative voice is particularly crucial. Without altering most of the key portions of the plot, Gaiman presents an unsettling new version by showing the Queen's motivations and justifications of her actions in the face of the vampiric evil that is the young princess. The way that Gaiman has shifted some of the central signifiers in the plot is crucially linked to his choice of narrator: this is the Queen's story. The Queen makes several mentions of the lies that the prince and princess have told of her, implicating the traditional tale and making the original a competing narrative to the Queen's own version. Even in this version, however, the Queen is not presented as an entirely reliable narrator. The Queen's presentation of her story

is complicated by her capability for violence, power struggles and sexual manipulation. In addition to this, the Queen's belated acknowledgement of the glamour she has used on the King in their courtship adds to the sense of distrust by the reader. The Queen plays upon key icons from the traditional tale to subvert its meaning, making it a fascinating exercise to contrast their original functions in competition with the new meanings assigned to them in her narrative.

None of the visualisations are ambiguous in this respect, except perhaps the graphic novel, as Doran's ornate and overflowing pictures represent the two protagonists as quite alike, hence underscoring their rivalry: their looks and age are not so dissimilar, they both have mask-like faces (heart-shaped for the stepdaughter, which is a nice touch, and oval for the queen), smooth, wrinkle- and (most of the time) expression-free skin, and fashioned eyebrows. Even their movements resemble each other: only their colouring differs significantly. They may indeed vie for the same man (first the king, then the prince) and reign.

This might imply that intersemiotic translations share some of the characteristics that Baker (1993) suggested could be common to translations in general, namely a tendency to normalise, simplify, and make explicit. Certainly, of the illustrations analysed here, the only one that seems to buck the trend is Lee's illustration of "Red as Blood" (Figure 6), which offers a different visual information to what is found in the written text. Yet this, too, is in keeping with translation scholarship. As we have seen, Lee's illustration, unlike the others, is an intersemiotic *self*-translation: and one of the most marked characteristics of self-translations, as opposed to ordinary or "allograph" translation, is that "self-translators are routinely given poetic license to rewrite 'their' originals" (Grutman and van Bolderen, 2014, p. 324).[12] It would be interesting to examine more cases of intersemiotic self-translation to identify if such a pattern indeed exists.

6. Conclusions
All the retellings we have analysed here maintain the persecuted heroine motif,[13] but reverse the perspective: the wicked become virtuous, the blameless culpable, and (in Gaiman's case, at least) the villain and victim may even change places. To some extent, then, these versions restore the erotic and violent components expurgated from fairy tales in the 19th century, keeping the original motifs but in different form. In doing so, they force the reader out of his/her comfort zone, subverting expectations while adhering to both the fairy tale and (dark) fantasy genre conventions.

The visual renderings, although indeed powerful and inventive, comply with the present visual conventions of the fairy tale, fantasy, and horror genres; all of them appear to be firmly lodged in and influenced by the traditions of fine (illustrative) arts, and do not

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[12] This claim is supported by other scholars, such as Cordingley (2019, p. 352), Montini (2010, p. 306) and Grutman (2009, p. 259).
[13] Persecuted heroine is type 710 in the Other Tales of the Supernatural section of the Aarne-Thompson-Uther Classification of Folk Tales, or Tale Type Index, which categorises tales by their main motifs. Available at: http://www.mftd.org/index.php?action=atu (Accessed: 11 November 2017).

turn these upside down using the same elements to create new, thought-provoking meanings, as the writers did in their retellings. They transgress the boundaries of children's literature, so they certainly contribute to smuggling back literary fairy tales into the literature intended for (young) adults, but do not exceed the boundaries of visual representations suitable for an adult audience.

So if these beautiful and expressive images are more norm-following than the narratives themselves, to what extent can they be considered intersemiotic translations? That depends on our definition of translation. Mossop (2019) contends that visual/linguistic transposition always means an unavoidable amount of additions when a text is transposed, and a great deal of inevitable omissions when an image is described. It, therefore, "makes transpositions between language and pictures the worst possible place to look for instances of intersemiotic translating" (Mossop, 2019, p. 84). The author proposes to set up criteria to investigate intersemiotic translation with transpositions involving music. He is right regarding the fact that the findings of most research on interlingual translations and invariance-oriented criteria do not apply to intersemiotic translation.

Pereira (2008, pp. 105-106), on the contrary, compares visual representations to poetry translation and claims that

> illustrations can especially be seen as translations because as a process, the methodologies employed by illustrators are in the majority of cases the same as those adopted by translators to translate a text; and as products, illustrations play a very significant part in the reception of the literary work, so that the visual creation of the drawings is very similar to the verbal creation of the text during translation.

Recalling all the English versions of a Sappho poem Sebnem Susam-Saraeva cited in a poetry translation class, I find Pereira's comparison to poetry translation convincing enough to assert that the pictures reproduced here are, in fact, intersemiotic translations of the *Snow White* tale: they capture at least one essential component through which they evoke the same sentiments as the narratives themselves.

Finally, I would like to extend what Le Guin (2009, pp. 17-18) wrote about her version of *Sleeping Beauty* to any retelling of fairy tales:

> We can play variations round about it, imagine peasant trespassers or rapist princes, happy or unhappy endings, as we please. We can define it; we can defile it. We can retell it to improve its morality, or try to use it to deliver a "message." When we are done, it will be still there: the place (…) where nothing changes. Mothers and fathers will read the tale to their children, and it will have an influence upon those children. The story is, itself, a spell. Why would we want to break it?

All retellings of high quality, either verbal or visual, or both, certainly do not break, but renew the spell again. Just as Tanith Lee, Neil Gaiman, Julie Dillon, Colleen Doran, Charles Vess, George Walker and all the other artists did in order to please us.

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