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Here, the problems of the 'once upon a time' motif are made explicit: by making the tales appear to portray a limitless world that anyone from any era can 'come and join', the outdated and sexist moralities and ideologies integral to patriarchal stories (think of Perrault's explicit 'morals' tagged on to the end of each tale, for example) are held up as universal and relevant to all women regardless of era. Women today are still indoctrinated into the same ideologies of passivity, beauty equals goodness, rescue by a handsome prince, marriage as ultimate fulfilment, Snow White domesticity, and 'good' behaviour equating with the reward of 'happily ever after', that were written into the stories centuries ago. Fairy tales are renowned for their predictable structures and inevitable 'happily ever afters' that seem destined to repeat themselves for each new generation. (For example, the Queen in Snow White was once 'the fairest of them all' but is rejected after her marriage to the king and replaced by a new, younger maiden; it is implicit that this fate awaits all women, with Snow White eventually to follow in the Queen's footsteps.) Thus, fairy tales often constitute elements of cyclical mythical time in which there are repeated fates and feats (i.e. heroic acts) doomed forever to repeat themselves.<sup>23</sup> This type of temporal structure leaves no room for change, with even the 'ever after' endings negating the idea of a future in stopping the story at its present state of 'happiness' (usually marriage) as if life ends at that point, to remain unchanged forever, before the next story unfolds between its 'once upon a time' and concluding 'happily ever after' parentheses. (Note that some anti-tales subvert this in showing the unhappy futures that can follow the vague 'ever after' camouflage: Dina Goldstein's photographic image 'Snowy' in her collection *Fallen Princesses*, for instance, depicts an exhausted Snow White cradling two demanding infants, with another pulling at her skirt hem, as she struggles to keep on top of her domestic duties while her husband, Prince Charming, lounges in torn tights watching horse racing, oblivious to the domestic battle going on around him.)<sup>24</sup>

The circle of mythical time shared by the repetitious nature of the fairy tale genre must be broken in order to provide a conclusive closure for outdated ideas and to signal the beginning of new conceptions of being. Freeman notes that one way of doing this is through swapping the circular archetypal pattern for the historical line's trajectory.<sup>25</sup> Essentially, by replacing the stagnancy of mythical time, and its continual repetitions, with endings that look to a different and unknowable future, feminist change can take root. Anti-tales, as revisions of the old stories, envision such new beginnings; despite 'retelling' being an implicit element of this genre, they *revise* the tales, recreating them with an emphasis on their difference or break with the original story. Uncritical repetition is no longer an option.

Overall, the temporal aspects of fairy tales have both pros and cons. While those such as the female conteuses in the seventeenth century



Figure 3.2 Dina Goldstein's 'Snowy' (2008).

availed of the timeless disguise the genre afforded by couching their subversive political ideas in tales of fantasy and magic in an intolerant society, this same timelessness allows outdated ideologies to replay across centuries and remain unchallenged. In addition, as well as the problems of 'once upon a time', 'happily ever after' poses its own set of challenges, with time often stopping at the perceived point of patriarchal fulfilment, marriage. As a genre, it has also been noted that the tales share the trait of mythical time's cyclical repetition, reinforcing stagnant ideas rather than advancing new ones. Anti-tales, of course, break this cyclical loop in reinventing the stories.

Having outlined these ideas, I now have a basis from which to illustrate how anti-tales confront these temporal dilemmas and alter the use of time in order to destabilise assumptions about it, both as we accept time in our everyday lives and time as we have allowed it to go unquestioned within the fairy tale genre. The anti-tales I discuss here do not simply replace one conception of time with another, rather they unsettle and disturb any attempts to know time in its entirety, positing instead a willingness to accept its multifarious nature and constantly shifting complexity.

### **Time for Change: Rethinking Temporality in the Twenty-First Century**

Significantly, while the previous two sections outlined the problematic masculine time of the clock and the troublesome patriarchal tactics

- 7 Ibid.
- 8 *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, dir. James Bobin (Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment: 2016) [on DVD]. Hereafter, any material quoted in relation to *Alice through the Looking Glass* is taken from this text.
- 9 'Time's Arrow' is related to the Second Law of Thermodynamics. This pertains to the idea that the energy dispersed with the Big Bang causes increasing entropy and the descent into chaos, with the universe working to equalise the distribution of mass and energy – a state where there is no free energy left to cause chemical reactions or sustain life, bringing the universe to a still equilibrium eventually. This asymmetry of time, in which natural processes are understood as being irreversible, provides direction for Time's Arrow, helping us to distinguish between the past, the present, and the future it pulls us towards, as the universe works through its stages of entropic chaos.
- 10 Giordano Nanni, 'Time, Empire and Resistance in Settler-Colonial Victoria' in *Time & Society*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (2011), p. 6.
- 11 Ibid., p. 6.
- 12 Ibid., p. 5.
- 13 Ibid., pp. 5, 6.
- 14 Ibid., p. 6.
- 15 Quoted in Paul Smethurst, *The Postmodern Chronotope: Reading Space and Time in Contemporary Fiction* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), p. 31.
- 16 Nanni, 'Time, Empire and Resistance in Settler-Colonial Victoria' in *Time & Society*, p. 6.
- 17 Ibid., p. 26.
- 18 Donald Haase, 'Children, War, and the Imaginative Space of Fairy Tales' in *The Lion and the Unicorn*, Vol. 24 (2000), p. 362.
- 19 Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1976).
- 20 Elizabeth Waning Harries, *Twice Upon a Time: Women Writers and the History of the Fairy Tale* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).
- 21 Haase, 'Children, War, and the Imaginative Space of Fairy Tales' in *The Lion and the Unicorn*, p. 362.
- 22 William C. Dowling, *Ricoeur on Time and Narrative: An Introduction to Temps et récit* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), p. 14.
- 23 See Mark Freeman, 'Mythical Time, Historical Time, and the Narrative Fabric of the Self' in *Narrative Inquiry*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1998), pp. 27–50.
- 24 Dina Goldstein, 'Snowy' in *Fallen Princesses* <<http://www.fallenprincesses.com>> [accessed 7th September 2016].
- 25 See Freeman, 'Mythical Time, Historical Time, and the Narrative Fabric of the Self' in *Narrative Inquiry*, pp. 27–50.
- 26 Smethurst, *The Postmodern Chronotope: Reading Space and Time in Contemporary Fiction*, pp. 32, 104.
- 27 For accessible outlines of these scientific ideas I recommend reading Sonia Front's *Shapes of Time in British Twenty-First Century Quantum Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015). Front not only explores these ideas but proceeds to apply the theories to her readings of literary texts. See also Paul Smethurst's *The Postmodern Chronotope: Reading Space and Time in Contemporary Fiction*.
- 28 See Linda Hutcheon, 'The Postmodern Problematizing of History' in *English Studies in Canada*, Vol. XIV, (4th December 1988), pp. 365–382.
- 29 Huehls, *Qualified Hope: A Postmodern Politics of Time*, p. 6.

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