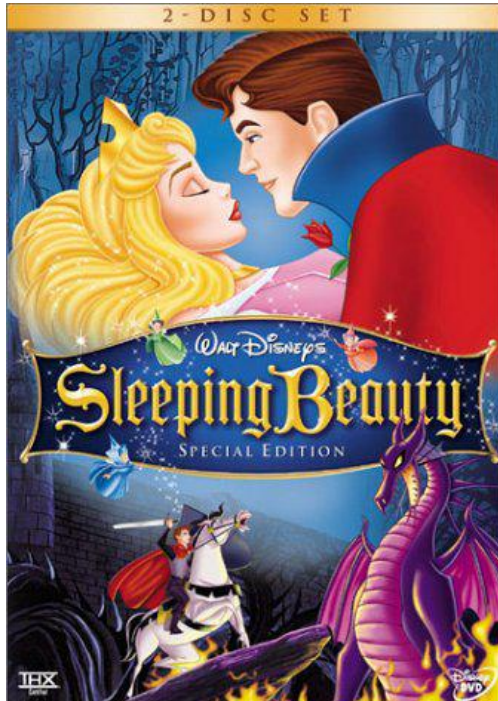


Sleeping Beauty vs. Maleficent



Popular Culture Research

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1. Introduction

In this paper, I am going to discuss and compare two Disney movies: *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) and *Maleficent* (2014), where the latter one is the adapted and live-action version of the animated *Sleeping Beauty*. Besides, after reading *Everything bad is good for you*, I will also combine the theory posted by Steven Johnson with these two movies in this paper to analyze the trend of popular culture and people's changing tastes and needs towards media.

Disney is a classical film company devoted to present best fairy tale. It has been made more than hundred movies since 1930s. With the trend of film popularity, the style and type of Disney movies vary a lot from 1930s till now. Compared with focusing on animated films and aiming at the target audience of children, Disney now pay more attention on complex plots, excellent frames, beautiful music and difficult film techniques. In order to attract more audience and satisfy the mass aesthetic, Disney always tightly follows the fashion and the taste of popular culture. That's why these two Disney movies can, on a large level, reflect the changes of most films, or popular culture as time goes.

As Steven Johnson mentioned in his book about "Sleeper Curve", the difference between these two films greatly verifies the theory that "Popular culture has, on average, grown more complex and intellectually challenging" (Johnson, 10). At early times, movies and TVS always focus on showing simple narrative and human relations to make sure that everyone can understand the story. However, as the time goes, movies and TVs become more and more complex. While *Sleeping Beauty* is

only a simple story about a cursed princess who is finally waken up by her true lover's kiss, *Maleficent* also describes the story and passion enmity worship love of the so-called "evil" witch. The whole story of *Maleficent* is much more complex and intellectually challenging. The changes of the popular culture also make people become smarter. We used to find it hard to understand the movies with more than one story line, but now, it's enjoyable for us to have a look at the stories of minor characters.

In this paper, I will focus on the complexity of the stories, scenes, plots, characters, character relationships, photographing techniques and marking strategies of these two films using narrative analysis, character analysis and network analysis and so on to see their dependency with Steven Johnson's theory in the book.

2. Plot

2.1 *Sleeping Beauty* (1959)

Sleeping Beauty is a 1959 American animated movie produced by Disney based on the story *sleeping beauty* by Charles Perrault. *Sleeping Beauty* was the first animated film to be photographed in the Super Technirama 70 widescreen process. The whole movie is centered on a cursed princess called Aurora.



Aurora is a princess who is born with attention of millions of people. When she is born, a royal parade and a grand ceremony are held to celebrate her birth and bless

for her future. Three fairies are also invited to the ceremony to bless Aurora. However, a powerful witch called Maleficent is forgotten to be invited by the king. She is so angry that she curses that Aurora will fall in sleep since her finger is pricked on her 16th birthday and until she receives a real love kiss.

The king is so worried that he announces to burn all the spindles in the whole country and asks three fairies to bring Aurora up until her 16th birthday in a deep forest.

After 16 years, Aurora becomes a rare beauty. She is diligent and kind-hearted. Everyone even the animals in the forest loves her. On the day of Aurora's 16th birthday, on her way to pick berries, Aurora meets a handsome prince called Philip. Prince Philip is deeply attracted by Aurora's wonderful songs and beautiful appearance. At the same time, Aurora also loses her heart to Philip. They fall in love and decide to meet this night.

However, in the afternoon, Maleficent's crow finds Aurora's house and Maleficent uses her cruse to make Aurora prick her finger unconsciously and fall into deathly sleep. On the night of that day, Prince Philip goes to the Aurora's cabin as decided. However, he is kidnapped by Maleficent, who is waiting in advance in Aurora's cabin. Maleficent wants to prohibit Prince from rescuing Aurora from her deathly sleep.

Three fairies save Prince Philip from Maleficent and help him escape from Maleficent's mountain. Maleficent is pissed off. She sets thistles and thorns on the way to Aurora's castle and becomes a dragon which can spray fire. However, with huge difficulties, Prince Philip still has strong will to save Aurora. He uses his sword of

truth and successfully kills Maleficent.

After arrival to the castle, Prince Philip kisses Aurora. With the power of true love kiss, Aurora wakes up and the whole country wake up too. At the end of the whole film, Aurora marries Philip and they live a happy life together.

2.2 Maleficent (2014)

Maleficent is a 2014 American live-action movie directed by Robert Stromberg and adapted from the film *Sleeping Beauty* (1959). However, although inspired by and adapted from *Sleeping Beauty*, *Maleficent* changes *Sleeping Beauty*'s positive spin on the film and becomes a dark fantasy film focusing on



describing the story of so-called “evil witch” Maleficent. Instead of making Aurora an absolute main character in *Sleeping Beauty*, *Maleficent*'s main character is the so-called evil witch who is a villain in *Sleeping Beauty*. *Maleficent* “portrays the story from the perspective of the eponymous antagonist” and pays most attention on describing the story of complex between Maleficent, Aurora and the selfish and corrupt king Steven (wiki, Maleficent).

Maleficent is a pure fairy with strong power living in Moors magic forest. She enjoys her childhood playing with other fairies and magic creatures in the forest. Maybe because of the fact that she has never met human beings before, after meeting a peasant boy called Steven, who enters the Moors forest accidentally, Maleficent makes really close friends with Steven. And as times passes by, their friendship changes into

love unstoppably.

As Maleficent grows up, Maleficent becomes the guardian and protector of the Moors forest. Maleficent has huge black wings which can support her fly freely in the sky and fight invaded enemies for Moors. One day, when human King Henry tries to intrude the Moors with fires and arms and wants to appropriate Moors to himself with fires, Maleficent uses her wings to bravely fight for Moors, and wounds King Henry seriously.

Human army has no chance but to drawl back, but King Henry decides to take revenge on Maleficent and calls all his people to kill Maleficent by all means. He makes it known across the whole country that the first man to kills Maleficent can be the king of this kingdom and marry his beautiful daughter. Every man was attracted by such good chance to get position and treasure. They try their best to kill Maleficent, among them there is a man called Steven, who is the only human friend of Maleficent. Steven used to love Maleficent, but his love is totally overshadowed by his strong ambition and endless desire. He wants to make use of Maleficent's love to create his own wealth and power.

Steven comes to meet Maleficent as usual, but cheats her and makes her drink the dizzy water. During Maleficent's sleep, Steven cuts off Maleficent's wings and bring them to see King Henry as honor. As appointed, Steven achieves his wish to become the king, enjoying endless glory and wealth, but Maleficent loses her wings and her ability to fly. "Devastated by Stefan's betrayal", Maleficent "turns the Moors into a dark kingdom" and decides to take revenge on Steven's betray (wiki, Maleficent).

Chance finally comes when Steven's daughter Aurora is born. Maleficent comes to Aurora's birthday ceremony without invitation and curses that Aurora will fall in sleep since her finger is pricked on her 16th birthday and until she receives a real love kiss. Deeply hurt by Steven, Maleficent regards true loves as inexistence and doesn't believe her curse would be broken.

In order to avoid the curse to be established, King Steven announces to burn all the spindles in the whole country and asks three fairies to bring Aurora up until her 16th birthday in a deep forest. In order to supervise Aurora's situation, Maleficent secretly pays close attention to Aurora's growth when Aurora is a small child. To make her curse satisfy successfully, Maleficent gives Aurora food to support her life and saves Aurora from injury. Although Maleficent says it is just for the establishment of curse, but the ice in her heart is melted by Aurora. Through these mother-like behaviors, Maleficent gradually loves Aurora and treats her as daughter unconsciously. In getting along with Aurora, Maleficent decides to forget her hatred with Steven and wants to cancel her curse on Aurora. At the same time, King Steven is deeply immersed in his happiness of revenge on Maleficent, he calls people together and forces them to stay up to make iron weapons in order to kill Maleficent.

However, Maleficent can't cancel her curse and Aurora falls into deathly sleep on her 16th birthday. In order to break the curse and to rescue Aurora from deathly sleep, Maleficent tries her best to find Prince Philip, who Aurora falls in love with only at a glance, and brings him to Aurora's castle. On their way to castle, there are many iron thistles and thorns intendedly set by Steven, but Maleficent endures the huge pain

brought by iron and finally reaches the castle with her love to Aurora.

The kiss from Philip doesn't wake Aurora up, but the kiss from Maleficent makes Aurora awake. Maleficent loves Aurora from the bottom of her heart. The curse is broken, but Steven leads many soldiers with iron weapons, trying to doom Maleficent to death. At the most dangerous moment, Aurora releases Maleficent's wings and helps Maleficent win the battle.

At the end of the whole movie, Maleficent turns the Moors to its original magic forest and makes Aurora the queen of both human and fairy kingdom. Aurora also falls in love with Philip and lives happily with him.

2.3 Compare the complexity of two plots

After having the knowledge of both films, we can see clearly that the plot of *Maleficent* is more complex and tighter than that of *Sleeping Beauty*.

With almost same length of film, *Sleeping Beauty* only talks about one story about Aurora: A beautiful and kind-hearted princess is cursed by an evil witch, but the true love of prince helps her break the curse and they happily live together. *Sleeping Beauty* pays most attention on creating the braveness of the prince and the evilness of the witches, trying to create the atmosphere that light will finally beat darkness. It is just a simple story which kindergarten children can also understand without any efforts. The meaning of this film is also simple enough to fit young children too: light is good, evilness is bad and good people will have a happy ending. The plot and meaning of *Sleeping Beauty* are both very simple.

However, in *Maleficent*, the plot is much more complex than in *Sleeping Beauty*. It talks about at least four story lines in parallel in almost the same length of time. First is about Maleficent and King Steven: A fairy and a human being once fall in love, but the human cheats the fairy for his own glory and wealth. The fairy is deeply hurt and decides to revenge on that human. For the first story line, it spares no efforts to show us the reason why Maleficent changes, implying the meaning that no one is evil by nature but can be changed by some painful past memory. Second is between Maleficent and Aurora: Maleficent used to hate Aurora because of Steven, but after experiencing the process of taking care of Aurora secretly, Maleficent finally has true love towards Aurora and treats her as daughter. For the second story line, we can find the true love doesn't exist between Philip and Aurora, but exists between Maleficent and Aurora. True love is not falling in love at the first sight. It needs time to turn a relationship into true love. Through 16 years' time, Maleficent gives up her hatred to Steven and develops the true love towards Aurora. Third story line is between Prince Philip and Princess Aurora. They fall in love with each other at the first sight, but, unlike the story in *Sleeping Beauty*, where this first-sight love leads them to break the curse and get married, this love only makes them develop the willingness to get along with each other. Compared with the story line between Philip and Aurora in *Sleeping Beauty*, the story lines in *Maleficent* are more realistic. In real life, relationship is more complex than in the fairy tale and *Maleficent* is devoted to show this complex love to the audience before the screen. Fourth story line is between Maleficent and her crown server, Diaval. Unlike in *Sleeping Beauty*, where Diaval is

only Maleficent's server, doing evil things for her, *In Maleficent*, Diaval becomes Maleficent's wings. Maleficent pins her hope of flying on Diaval and Diaval also learns how to love from Maleficent. The fourth story uses Diaval to show us Maleficent's real kindness and her tiny but unreachable wish. We can read multiple meanings from the complex story lines and feel each character's experience from the intellectually challenging story background.

Compared with *Sleeping Beauty*, the plot and meaning of *Maleficent* are both more complex and intellectually challenging.

3. Steven Johnson Connection

First, As Steven Johnson mentioned in his book *everything bad is good for you*, his main opinion about popular culture is "popular culture has, on average, grown more complex and intellectually challenging over the past thirty years"(Johnson, 10) and "making us smarter" (Johnson,25). Seeing from the different complexity in *Maleficent* and *Sleeping Beauty*, we can find that the directors are intentionally adding complexity to their film on plots, meanings, characters, scenes, music and so on, which I will continue analyzing in the following parts. Only for plots and meanings, *Maleficent* combines more detailed background story and realistic meaning into the whole movie. With the complexity in background story, we can see a flesh-and-blood fairy who has her own happiness and sadness instead of an evil witches representing darkness. With the complexity in meaning, we can jump out of the stereotype that the world is composed only by black and white, dark and light. We can experience

how true love is produced and exists in the real world. The complexity makes the film *Maleficent* more substantial and attractive. The complexity does happen between *Sleeping Beauty* and *Maleficent*, which greatly conforms to Steven Johnson's theory. Besides, for the content of popular culture, Steven Johnson doesn't believe that "the most today's pop culture is made up of masterpiece" (Johnson, 25). He thinks the media such as TVs, films and games are the best way to reflect popular culture. Masterpiece is defined as "a creation that has been given much critical praise, especially one that is considered the greatest work of a person's career or to a work of outstanding creativity, skill, profundity, or workmanship" (wiki, masterpiece). It is concentrated only on few people and is too far away from the ordinary human life. However, pop culture, which can be defined as "generally recognized by members of a society as a set of the practices, beliefs and objects that are dominant or ubiquitous in a society at a given point in time", is the culture shared by the society and owned by normal people (wiki, popular culture). That's why masterpiece can't represent the pop culture. However, for games, TVs and films, their target is ordinary people who have time to enjoy their lives, so they can represent the pop culture well. From the films, we can experience the trend of public taste and public favors. Just like two films I choose for the paper, the change from *Sleeping Beauty* to *Maleficent* shows us the trends of public favor to complexity and realistic details rather than a happy ending in pop culture

Then, not only for the content of popular culture, but for the target of popular culture, Steven Johnson also mentions that more and more complex popular culture

is “making us smarter” (Johnson, 25). In his book, he describes that “popular films have also increased the cognitive work they demand from their audience, exercising the mind” (Johnson, 73). In early ages, TVs and films are characteristic of its simple narrative and human relations so that audience can relax themselves while enjoying these entertainments. However, as time goes, these popular culture becomes more complex and intellectually challenging. In order to face up to these complex plots, people gradually develop the ability to handle difficult and multiple story lines and understand deep plot meanings. With the ability of understanding complexity, the public become smarter are not only satisfied with simple story and simple relations. They are looking for more complex films, and thus improving their intelligence. Therefore, the popular culture becomes full of complexity and people become smarter recursively, which makes the fact that “the shows that have made the most demands on their audience have also turned out to be among the most lucrative in television history” not a surprising thing (Johnson, 76).

4. Narrative analysis

4.1 Freytag’s Pyramid

Adopting Aristotle’s triangle of plot, Gustav Freytag puts forward his idea of five-part system to describe a story’s plot in a triangle in 1863. In Freytag’s Pyramid, the whole plot consists of 5 parts: Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action and the end with a satisfactory resolution.

The definition of these five plot components are referred from PowerPoint:*POP*

Narrative Analysis and are mentioned as below (De Meyer,57).

Exposition: The exposition always refers to the start of the story and the situation before the action starts. It sometimes contains the background where the story sets.

Rising Action: The rising action is the series of conflict and crisis in the story that leads to the climax. During these process, the pace of the story becomes tighter and tenser. Conflicts and crisis begin to be shown before the audience, thus making the audience more and more existed.

Climax: The climax is the turning point of the whole story, which is also the most intense moment in the whole film, either mentally or in action. In the climax, the content is always most wonderful and the audience is always most attracted to this part of the film.

Falling Action: Falling action is used to describe all the action which follows the climax. It is often not as intense as the climax, sparing no effort to give the audience a feeling of stopping abruptly.

Resolution: Resolution refers to the conclusion, which is like the tying combining together all of the story lines.

For *Sleeping Beauty* and *Maleficent*, we can also divide their plot into 5 parts to visually see the story.

4.1.1 Sleeping Beauty

Exposition: Aurora is cursed when she is born and will fall into deathly sleep when she is 16th years old.

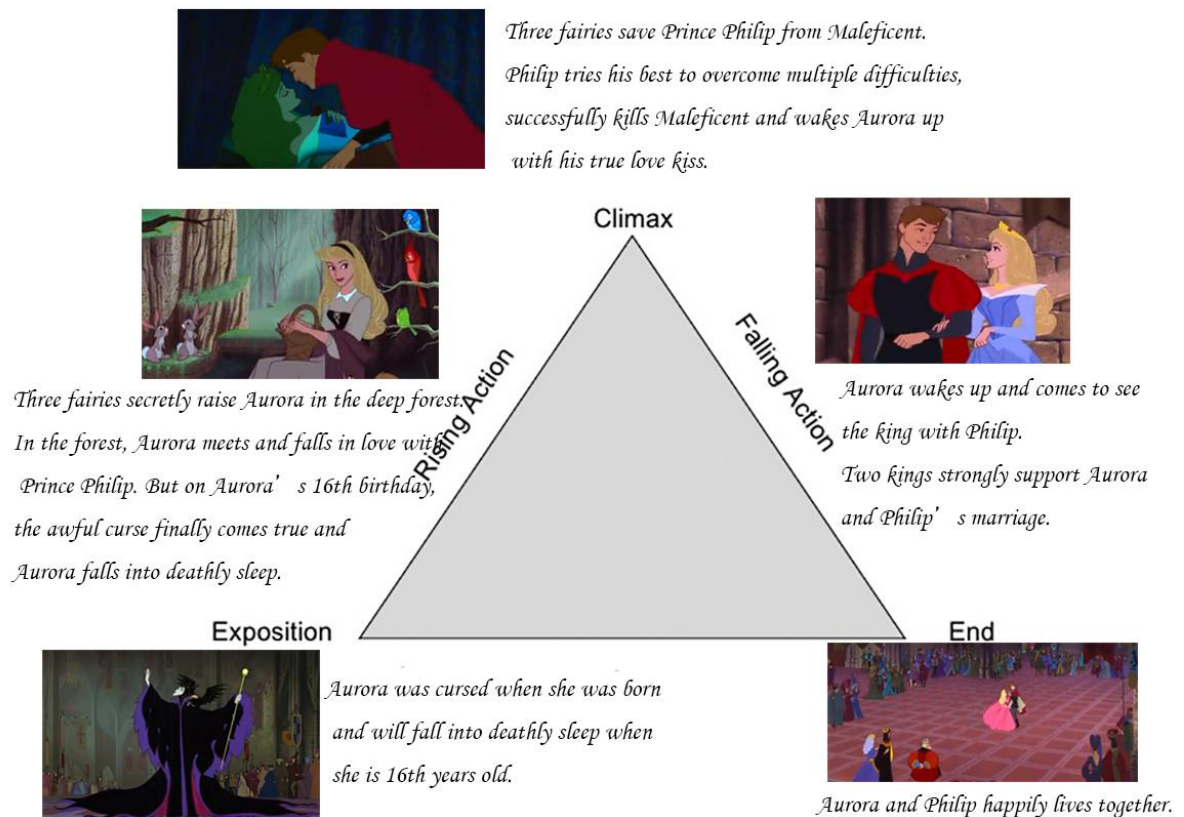
Rising Action: Three fairies secretly raise Aurora in the deep forest. In the forest,

Aurora meets and falls in love with Prince Philip. But on Aurora's 16th birthday, the awful curse finally comes true and Aurora falls into deathly sleep.

Climax: Three fairies save Prince Philip from Maleficent. Philip tries his best to overcome multiple difficulties, successfully kills Maleficent and wakes Aurora up with his true love kiss.

Falling Action: Aurora wakes up and comes to see the king with Philip. Two kings strongly support Aurora and Philip's marriage.

Resolution: Aurora and Philip happily live together.



4.1.2 Maleficent

Exposition: Maleficent is a guardian fairy of the Moors. She falls in love with a human called Steven but is cheated and deeply hurt by Steven. Steven cuts off Maleficent's wings for his own wealth and glory. Maleficent decides to revenge on Steven and curses his daughter Aurora.

Rising Action: In order to satisfy her curse, Maleficent secretly pays close attention to Aurora. In the process of raising and saving Aurora, Maleficent gradually forgives what Steven had done to her and treats Aurora as her daughter. Maleficent wants to cancel her curse but fails. On Aurora's 16th birthday, she pricks her finger unconsciously and falls into deathly sleep.

Climax: In order to save Aurora, Maleficent willingly steps into Steven's trap. Maleficent first makes Philip kiss Aurora, but fails to make Aurora awake. But after Maleficent's kiss, Aurora miraculously wakes up.

Falling Action: Steven wants to doom Maleficent to death with iron weapons, but Aurora releases Maleficent's wings at the critical moment. The wings help Maleficent win and Steven finally takes death as his own consequence.

Resolution: Maleficent unifies the fairy and human kingdom and the world finally becomes peaceful. Aurora also decides to get along with Philip.



4.2 Narrative Analysis

Narrative Analysis is an analysis model used to judge the complexity of a film or other media. It calculates the complexity of film language through many parts such as characters, place, editing, time and sound by marking scene. From narrative analysis model, we can clearly see the difference in complexity of *Sleeping Beauty* and *Maleficent*.

4.2.1 Sleeping Beauty (1959)

SCENE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
PLOT																									
Aurora																									
Philip																									
Maleficent																									
CHARACTER																									
Aurora																									
Philip																									
Fairies																									
King and Queen																									
Maleficent																									
PLACE																									
Casde																									
Forest Cabin																									
Forest																									
Forbidden Mountain																									
POV																									
First																									
Third																									
CAMERA/EDITING																									
Slow																									
Medium																									
Fast																									
TIME																									
Continuous																									
Back																									
Forward																									
SOUND																									
Diegetic																									
Non-diegetic																									

4.2.2 Maleficent (2014)

SCENE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	
PLOT																																													
Maleficent																																													
Aurora																																													
Philip																																													
Steven																																													
Diaval																																													
CHARACTER																																													
Maleficent																																													
Aurora																																													
Philip																																													
Fairies																																													
Diaval																																													
Steven																																													
Old King																																													
PLACE																																													
Castle																																													
Forest Cabin																																													
Moors Forest																																													
Dark Moors Forest																																													
Forest																																													
POV																																													
First																																													
Third																																													
CAMERA/EDITTING																																													
Slow																																													
Medium																																													
Fast																																													
TIME																																													

As we can compare from the above two narrative analysis, we can easily recognize that *Maleficent's* narrative is much more complex than *Sleeping Beauty's* narrative.

In terms of scene, *Maleficent* has more scenes than *Sleeping Beauty*. According to what I have analyzed in the above picture, *Sleeping Beauty* has 25 scene along the whole film while *Maleficent* has 44 scenes. *Maleficent* is more complex in creating its scene than *Sleeping Beauty*.

In terms of plot, *Maleficent* has more story lines than *Sleeping Beauty*. *Sleeping*

Beauty only have two story lines, one is main plot about main character Aurora and another is the sub plot about Philip, who is used to support Aurora a true love and good marriage. However, *Maleficent* has at least five story lines, where the main plot is about Maleficent and the other four are separately about Aurora, selfish king Steven, Philip and the crown Diaval. *Maleficent* has more plots running in parallel than *Sleeping Beauty*. With the similar film length, *Maleficent* combines more sub plots to support the main plot, thus increasing its complexity in its narrative construction.

In terms of characters, *Maleficent* also has more minor characters and more detailed character figures. *Maleficent* enriches the figures of Steven and Maleficent and shows the audience their love-hatred relationship. With these addition, the audience can fully understand the reason why Maleficent would curse Aurora and what kind of person Maleficent really is. Beside, in *Maleficent*, the crown Diaval which only acts as Maleficent's server in *Sleeping Beauty*, is no more an animal, but a live person who has his own feeling. Diaval acts as Maleficent's friend and wings. He can understand Maleficent's real thought and can reach where Maleficent wants to but can't get to. These characters make the film *Maleficent* more complex in its narrative model than *Sleeping Beauty*.

In terms of places, *Maleficent* also has more places in which the story runs involved than *Sleeping Beauty*. *Sleeping Beauty* only covers 4 different places while *Maleficent* covers more than 5 locations.

For the skills applied to the film, *Maleficent* is also using more complex editing skills

in order to give the film a better watching effect. Since *Sleeping Beauty* is an old film produced in 1950s, it is understandable that the director then had no thoughts of changing the editing pace to create a relative atmosphere. We can see from the table above, the speed of camera editing in *Sleeping Beauty* is stable along the whole film while in *Maleficent*, the director changes parts of editing pace to reflect the characters' mood. Thus, for the skills and techniques applied to the film, *Maleficent* uses more complex skills and techniques.

Besides, from the structure of narrative model mentioned as above, we can find that *Maleficent* has a non-linear narrative structure, while *Sleeping Beauty* more tend to have a linear narrative structure.

All in all, according the analysis model above of two films, we can clearly experience the difference in complexity between a film of early ages and a modern film, thus proving the sentence Steven Johnson has said "Popular culture has ,on average, grown more complex and intellectually challenging "(Johnson ,10).

4.3 Cinematics

We can use <http://www.cinemetrics.lv/index.php> posted on the Power print to have a look at the complexity of film language about the information of cutting, montage, editing and camera handling. Following are the separate database of *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) and *Maleficent* (2014).

4.3.1 Sleeping Beauty

The following is the cinematics database of *Sleeping Beauty*. Some detailed information covered in database is also mentioned as left.

ASL: 8.2

MSL: 5.9

MSL/ASL: 0.72

LEN: 74:22

NoS: 544

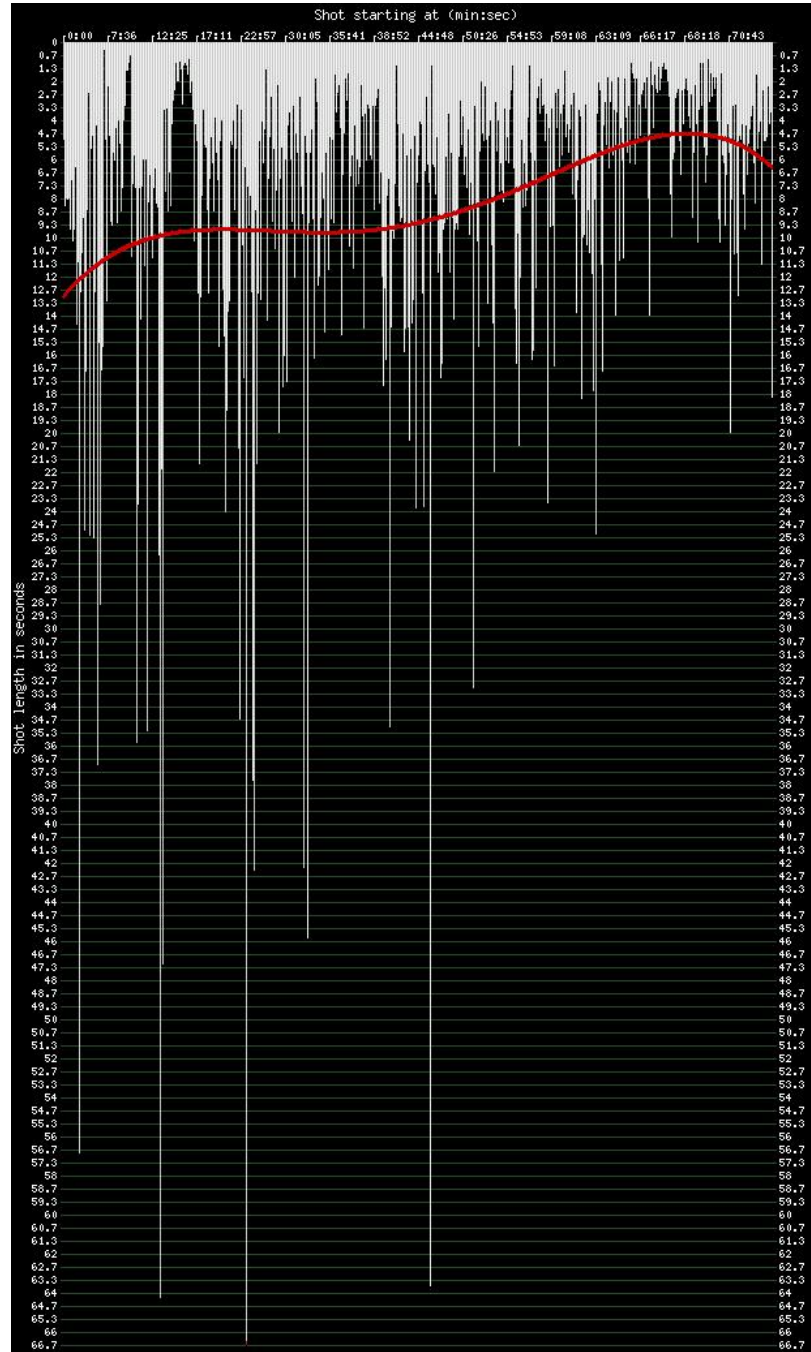
MAX: 67.7

MIN: 0.3

Range: 67.3

StDev: 8.3

Cv: 1.01



4.3.2 Maleficent

I don't find the cinematics database of *Maleficent* on the internet, but I take a certain period of 8-minute fragment at the beginning of the film and make the cinematics database myself. The detailed information covered in database is also mentioned as left.

ASL: 2.92

MSL: 2

MSL/ASL: 0.68

LEN: 8:01

NoS: 165

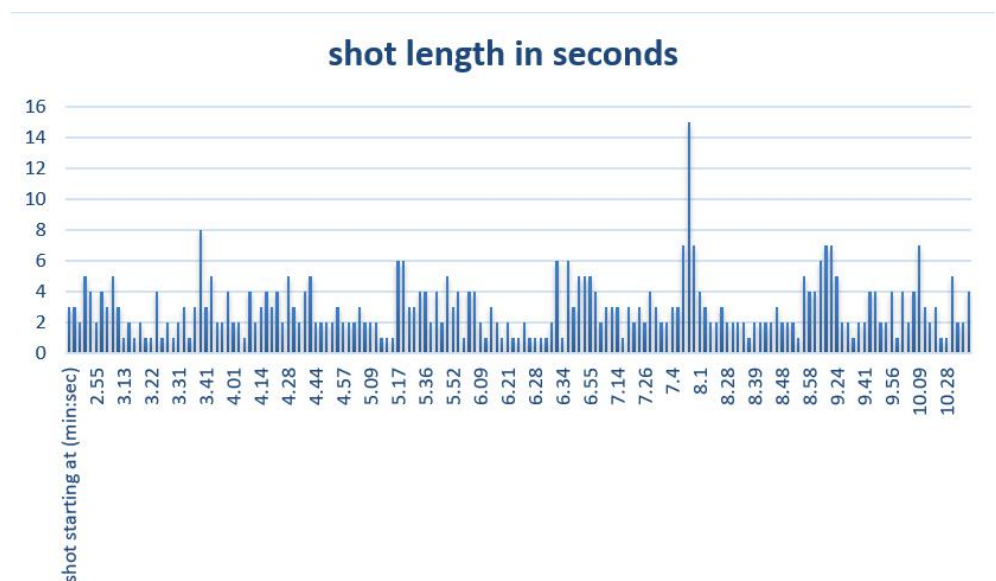
MAX: 15

MIN: 1

Range: 14

StDev: 1.81

Cv: 0.62



Although I only make the cinematics for Maleficent of 8 minutes in the beginning of the film, but i do get some information by comparing these two films. When a film starts, its pace is always slower than that in the middle of the film where the climax happens. Therefore, the average pace of the whole film Maleficent should be slightly faster than the beginning 8 minutes. Comparing the 8-minute Maleficent with the

whole cinematics of *Sleeping Beauty*, we can find that *Maleficent* has much more shots than *Sleeping Beauty* and its shot length is shorter in general, which shows that *Maleficent* is more complex in its photographing techniques.

First, the average shot length of *Maleficent* is much shorter than that of *Sleeping Beauty*. The average shot length of *Sleeping Beauty* is 8.2 seconds and the median shot length of shot is 5.9 seconds while the average shot length of *Maleficent* is only 2.92 seconds and the median shot length is 2 seconds. And these data are only for the beginning of *Maleficent*, where the pace of the story is slower. From that, we can get that the average shot length of *Maleficent* is shorter. Less shot time means more shots for a similar length film. *Maleficent's* shots occupy less time, which means *Maleficent* is more complex in photographing and shots-cutting than *Sleeping Beauty*.

Besides, the longest shot time in *Maleficent* is much shorter than that in *Sleeping Beauty*. In *Sleeping Beauty*, the longest shot is about 67 seconds while in *Maleficent* (although just an 8-minutes fragment), it is only 15 seconds. Although not that exact, but in terms of plot, *Maleficent* does pay more complexity into cinematics: photographing, cutting and editing of the film.

5. Character Analysis

5.1 Character Introduction

Sleeping Beauty

Princess Aurora: Princess Aurora is a beautiful girl with sunshine-like golden hair and

shame-rose-red lips. She is kind and warm-hearted. When she is born, she is cursed by an evil witch and falls into deathly sleep when she is 16 years old. Only true love kiss can wake her up from her sleep.

Prince Philip: Prince Philip is a handsome boy who immediately falls in love with Aurora at his first sight. When he knows that Aurora falls into deathly sleep, he overcomes all the difficulties to save her.

Maleficent: Witch Maleficent is an evil woman who is easily to harbor resentment against others. She feels angry when she is not invited to Aurora's blessing ceremony, so she curses Aurora to fall into deathly sleep on her 16th birthday.

Three fairies (Flora, Fauna and Merryweather): These fairies are three kind but careless fairies with magic. They are invited to bless Aurora when Aurora is born and act as Aurora's foster mother after Aurora is cursed. When Prince Philip is kidnapped, it is also they that help him escape and overcome difficulties to come to see Aurora.

King Steven and Queen Leah: King Steven and Queen Leah are kindest parents in the whole country. They want to give the best gifts to their daughter Aurora, but forgot to invite Maleficent, which cause the later curse to happen.

King Hubert: King Hubert is Prince Philip's father. He strongly recommends his son to marry a princess to keep two countries unit in the next generation.

According to different classification of characters, we can classify the above characters into different categories.

1. Major characters and Minor characters

As is mentioned in Pop Narrative Analysis, “Major characters and minor characters, depending on how important they are for the plot” (De Meyer, 18). We also classify these above character according to their importance in the film. In *Sleeping Beauty*, Aurora and Philip are undoubtedly major characters. Their story is launched with Aurora and Philip’s story and also ends with their happy ending. Maleficent, three fairies, Kings and Queen are minor characters to support the love story of Aurora and Philip.

2. Round characters and flat characters

Round characters can also be called as Multi-dimensional and dynamic character, which refers to a character who has complex and contradictory personality. At the same time, flat characters are also called mono-dimensional and static characters, which represent characters who have a pure and mono personality. In *Sleeping Beauty*, all the characters are all flat characters. Prince Aurora represents beauty and kindness. Philip represents bravery and justice. Maleficent represents evil and dark sides. There is no conflict or change in their personalities from the start to the end.

3. Protagonists and antagonists.

Protagonist always refers to a positive character, while antagonist is always who fights against either mentally or physically or sets difficulties for the protagonist. In

Sleeping Beauty, Aurora and Philip are the protagonists while Maleficent is the antagonist. Maleficent always tries her best to prohibit Aurora and Philip from having a happy life.

Maleficent

- 1. Maleficent:** Maleficent used to be kind and powerful fairy who had huge wings to support flying in her childhood. However, after being cheated and hurt by a human called Steven, Maleficent loses her wings and hates Steven so much that she curses Steven's daughter Aurora. However, in the process of getting along with Aurora, Maleficent gradually forgets the hatred between Steven and her and begins to love Aurora from her bottom heart.
- 2. Princess Aurora:** Princess Aurora is a beautiful girl loved by everyone she meets. She is pure and kind like an angel. In her growth, she melts Maleficent's heart and calls back Maleficent's kindness. In the whole story, she has a special relationship with Maleficent.
- 3. Prince Philip:** Prince Philip is a lovable character. He falls in love with Aurora at the first sight and is persuaded to kiss Aurora. But it seems that his kiss is not the antidote for Aurora.
- 4. King Steven:** King Steven is a selfish and ambitious man who can sacrifice his love for his position and wealth. Although he falls in love with Maleficent, he regards their love as minor things compared with his glory and wealth. After hurting Maleficent, hatred fills all his heart, turning him to a terrifically crazy man.
- 5. Crown Diadem:** Crown Diadem is a crown saved by Maleficent. Maleficent turns him

into human and after then, he becomes Maleficent's wings. He is the one who always on Maleficent's side and can understand all her feelings.

6. **Three fairies (Flora, Fauna and Merryweather):** Flora, Fauna and Merryweather are three fairies with limited magic. They give blessing on the ceremony of Aurora's birthday and bring Aurora up in a forest cabin, but they are really not good at taking care of children.
7. **Old King Henry:** Old King Henry is an ambitious king. He wants to invade the Moors forest and has huge ambition to make fairy kingdom himself. However, his ambitious dream is broken by Maleficent. Therefore, he announces that whoever kills Maleficent can be the next king, which leads to subsequent love-hatred story of Maleficent and Steven.

According to different classification of characters, we can also classify the above characters in film *Maleficent* into different categories.

1. Major characters and Minor characters

Since "Major characters and minor characters, depending on how important they are for the plot" (De Meyer, 18), we can classify these above characters according to their importance. In *Maleficent*, The main characters are no more Aurora and Philip, but Maleficent. Maleficent exists in most scenes of the film and the whole film is also launched around Maleficent. The story begins with the love-hatred story of Maleficent and ends with Maleficent's release and change in mind. Steven, Aurora, Philip, three fairies, Diaval and old king Henry are all minor characters to support the

story of Maleficent and show Maleficent's personality.

2. Round characters and flat characters

Round characters refers to characters who has complex and contradictory personality while flat characters represent characters who has a pure and mono personality. Compared with characters in *Sleeping Beauty*, all the characters are all flat characters, in *Maleficent*, there are round characters combined with flat characters. Maleficent and Steven are both round characters while others are flat characters. Maleficent used to be pure and kind girl, but after being cheated and hurt by Steven, the seeds of hatred grows up in her mind. However, her kindness and forgiveness are awoken by Aurora. Huge conflict between hatred and forgiveness makes Maleficent a round character. Besides, Steven is also a round character. He loves Maleficent but he desires wealth and position more. Love and betrayal keep crushing each other in Steven's heart, making his personality really complex. On the other side, other characters are all flat characters. Prince Aurora represents beauty and purity. Philip is just a loyal prince who first falls into love. Diaval is a loyal server and a nice friend for Maleficent. There is not conflict in their personalities.

3. Protagonists and antagonists.

Protagonist always refers to a positive character running through the whole story line, while antagonist is always who fights against the protagonist either mentally or physically or always sets difficulties for the protagonist. Different from in *Sleeping Beauty* where Maleficent is the antagonist, Maleficent is now the protagonist of the whole story. Steven is the antagonist who always wants to doom Maleficent to death.

His humanity is totally overshadowed by his greed and hatred. He tries to kill Maleficent at any time.

5.2 Different Character classification and roles:

According to the above classification of two films, we can see characters' different categories in the following table:

	Sleeping Beauty	Maleficent
Major and Minor		
Major characters	Aurora	Maleficent
	Philip	
Minor characters	Maleficent	Steven
	Three fairies	Aurora
	King and Queen	Philip
		Three fairies
		Diaval
		Henery
Round and Flat		
Round characters		Maleficent
		Steven
Flat characters	Aurora	Aurora
	Philip	Philip
	Maleficent	Diaval
	Three fairies	Three fairies
	King and Queen	Henery
Protagonists and Antagonists		
Protagonists	Aurora	Maleficent
	Philip	
Antagonists	Maleficent	Steven

We can conclude from the above table that comparing with *Sleeping Beauty*, *Maleficent* decreases the number of major characters, but adds more round characters, which makes the story and characters more complex and flush.

Besides, due to different characters' roles and personalities and even new characters in two films, we can also compare their difference in the following table.

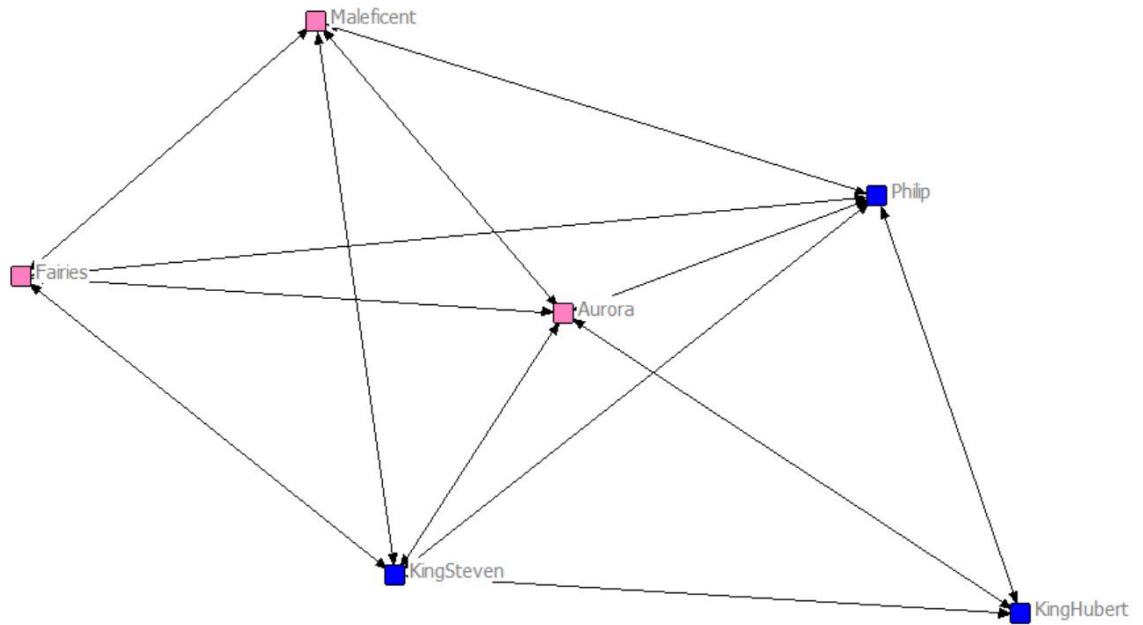
	Sleeping Beauty	Maleficent
Same characters		
Aurora		
personality	pure and kind	pure and kind
roles	To represent beauty and justice	To push Maleficent's changes
Philip		
personality	brave and love Aurora by heart	logy and love Aurora at first sight
roles	save Aurora with true love kiss	To prove true love needs time
Maleficent		
personality	evil and vicious	kind by nature, ambivalent in hatred and forgiveness
roles	To represent evilness and dark	To show a sentient figure can be changed by love
Steven		
personality	responisbile and kind parents	ambitious and greedy, full of hatred
roles	Aurora's father	To act as a antagonist and show a greedy human figure
Three fairy		
personality	kind but carelsee	kind but careless
roles	Bring Aurora up	Bring Aurora up
New characters		
King Hubert		/
personality	traditional and funny	/
roles	To show marriage concept at that time	/
King Henry	/	
personality	/	ambitious and vengeful
roles	/	To show human's endless desire
Crown Diaval	/	
personality	/	loyal and considerate
roles	/	To act as Maleficent's wing and show Maleficent's real thoughts

From the above table, we can conclude that comparing with *Sleeping Beauty*, *Maleficent* adds some new characters to the film and makes them play much more complex roles than in *Sleeping Beauty*, thus adding complexity to the whole film.

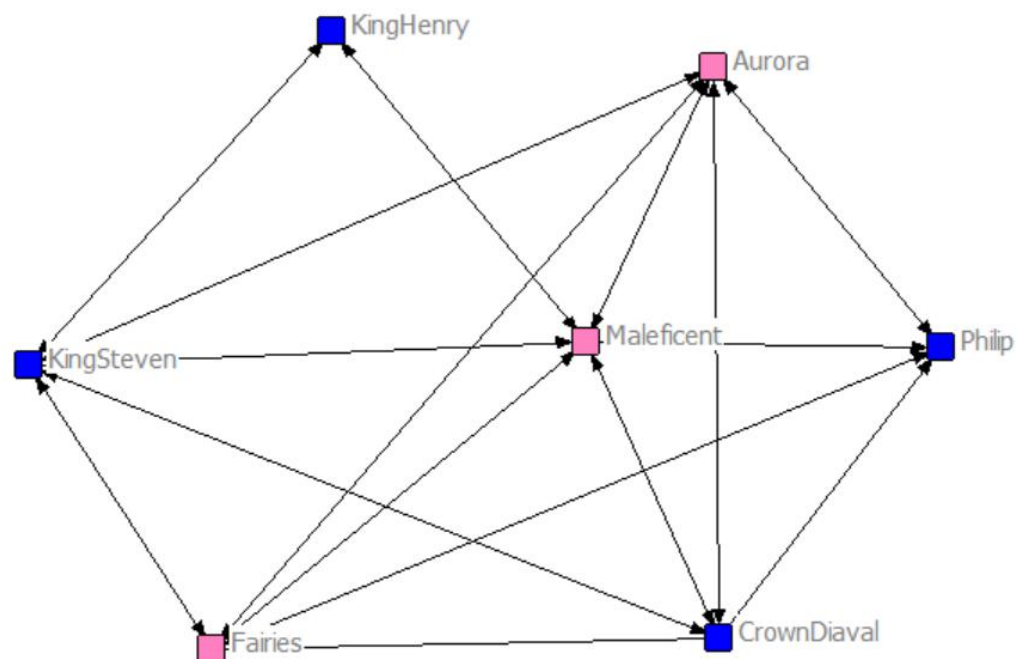
5.3 Network Analysis

5.3.1 Basic Analysis

Sleeping Beauty



Maleficent



Network Analysis is a technical tool to represent the relationship between each character and the different roles of each character. In the above two network analyses, I use red nodes to represent female characters and use blue nodes to represent male characters.

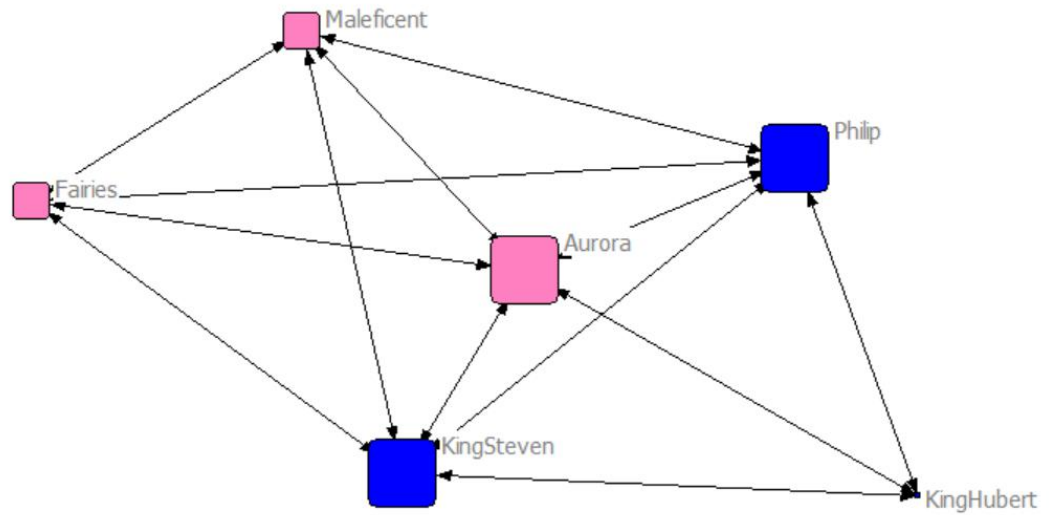
In the basic network analysis of *Sleeping Beauty*, we can see that Aurora is absolutely main character in the whole film. She has relationships with every other characters in the film.

On the other hand, in the basic network analysis of *Maleficent*, we can see that Maleficent is the main character instead. Maleficent has relationships with every other character while Aurora only has relationship with 5 other characters.

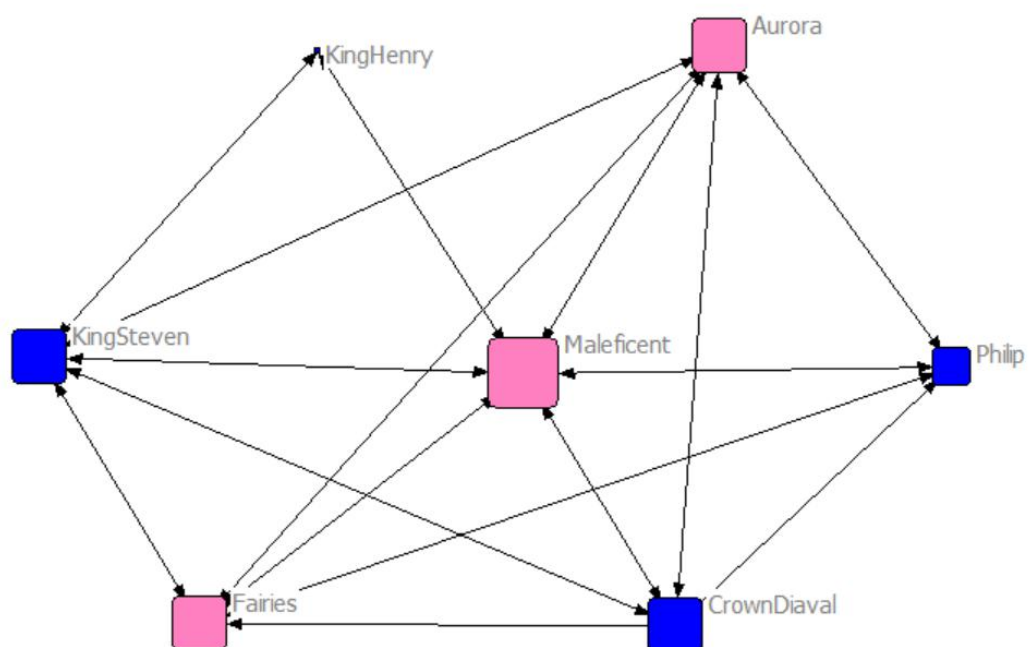
Comparing two network analysis of *Sleeping Beauty* and *Maleficent*, we can see that the character relationship network of *Maleficent* is more complex than that of *Sleeping Beauty*, since the network analysis of *Sleeping Beauty* has more nodes, thus creating more relationship lines.

5.3.2. Degree Analysis

Sleeping Beauty



Maleficent



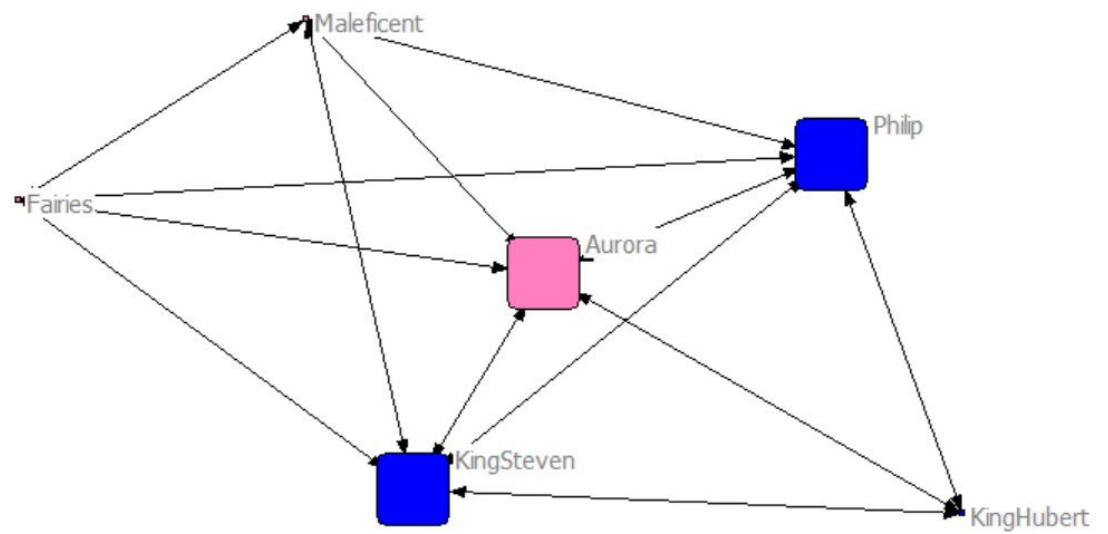
According to the slides in Network Analysis, "Degree for a node is highest when the node has the maximum possible number of direct connections to other nodes. Degree is thus the number of direct ties to other nodes." (De Meyer, POPNetwork Analysis, 109). In the above two figures, I use different sizes to represent the different degree of each character node. The larger the size of the node, the more possible number of direction connections to other nodes a node have.

In *Sleeping Beauty*, The size of node Aurora, Philip and King Steven are the same largest while the size of node King Hubert is the smallest, which means Aurora, Philip and King Steven are absolutely protagonists and King Hubert takes the minimum part in the whole film.

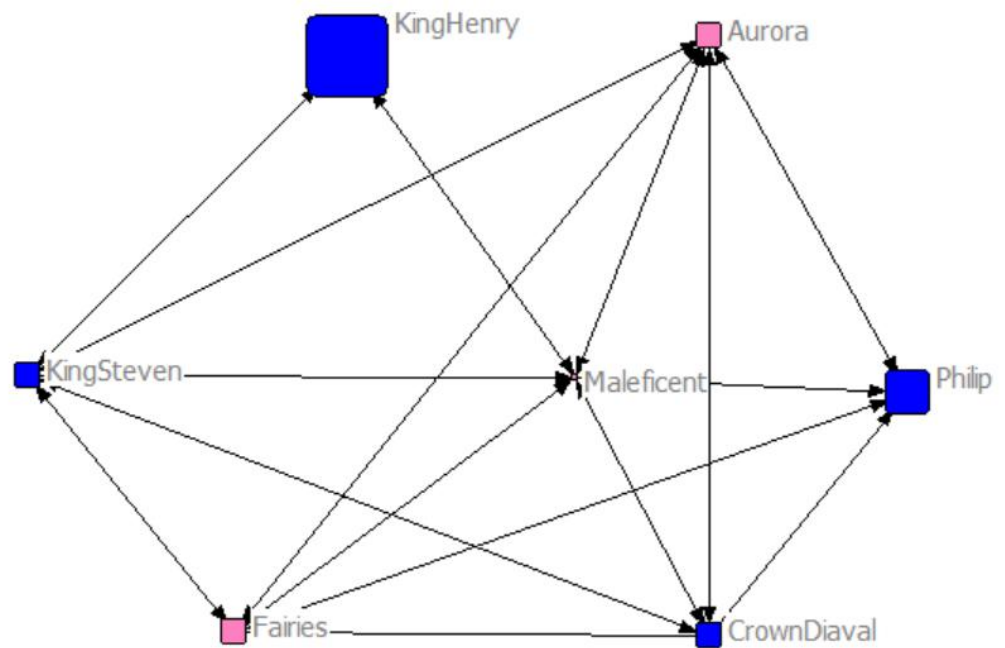
In *Maleficent*, The size of node Maleficent is the largest in the whole map of network analysis. It means instead of three main characters taking almost the same position in *Sleeping Beauty*, *Maleficent* only has one main character taking the most important part in the whole film.

5.3.3. Closeness Analysis

Sleeping Beauty



Maleficent



According to the slides in Network Analysis, "Closeness for a node is highest when a node can reach all other nodes in the network." (De Meyer, POPNetwork Analysis, 109). In the above two figures, I use different sizes to represent the different closeness of each character node. The larger the size of the node, it means this node can reach more other nodes in the network.

In *Sleeping Beauty*, The size of node Aurora is the same largest while the size of node King Hubert, Maleficent and Fairies are the smallest. This means Aurora can reach all other character nodes. In another word, Aurora has relationships with all other character nodes. King Hubert, Maleficent and Fairies nodes' sizes are the smallest, which means they have few relationships with other characters.

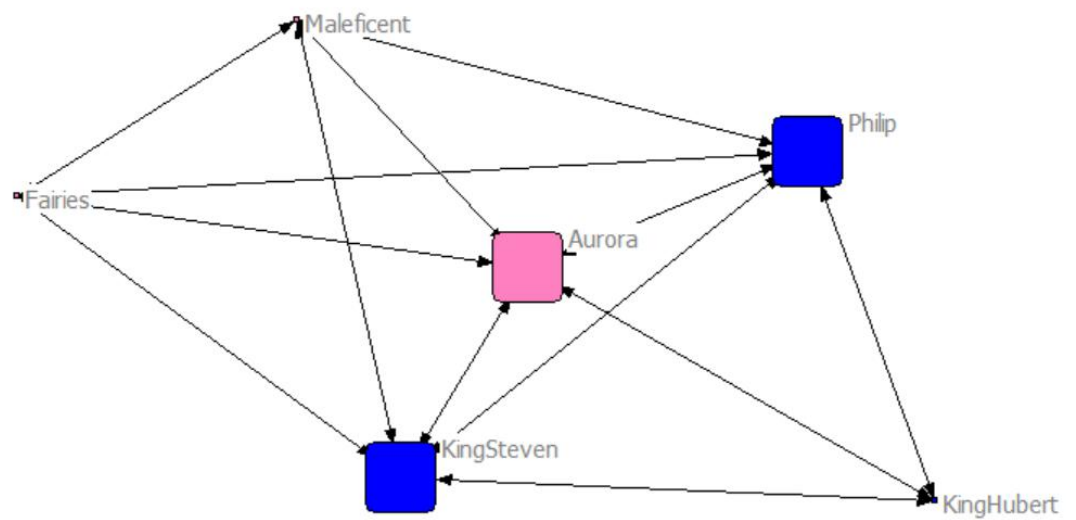
In *Maleficent*, it is a little strange for me that the size of node King Henry is the biggest while the size of node Maleficent is the smallest. Maleficent is the main character of the whole film, but it is the least node that can reach all other character nodes. However, King Henry is the antagonist of the whole film, but he is node that can reach all other nodes in the film. That may mean that closeness has no relationship with the importance of character roles but only the network relationship of characters.

Comparing with two film network analyses of closeness, we can see the huge difference between two closeness network analyses. The size of closeness of character nodes in *Sleeping Beauty* is fit for what I expect, since Aurora and Philip are the main characters and they occupy the largest closeness nodes. However, in *Maleficent*, it is similar closeness network as *Sleeping Beauty*, but

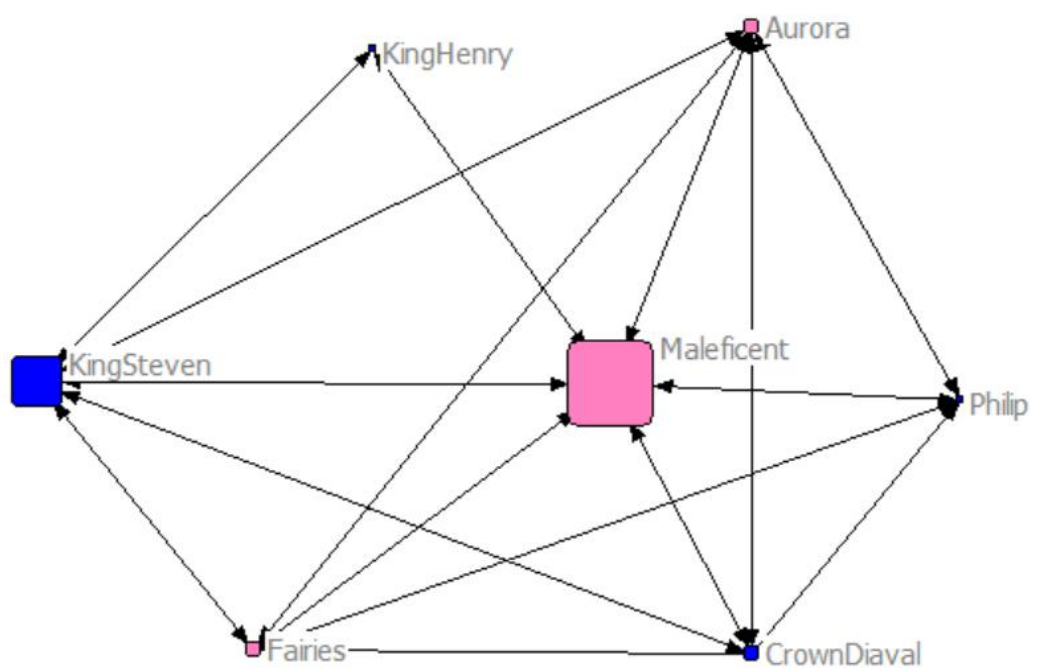
Maleficent, who is the main character in the film, is the smallest node instead of the largest one.

5.3.4. Betweenness Analysis

Sleeping Beauty



Maleficent



According to the slides in Network Analysis, "Betweenness for a node is highest when that node is maximally utilized by nodes connecting to other nodes." (De Meyer, POPNetwork Analysis, 109). In the above two figures, I use different sizes to represent the different betweenness of each character node. The larger the size of the node, it means this node is used most by other nodes to set up a relationship network.

In *Sleeping Beauty*, the betweenness figure of character relationship is quite similar to the closeness figure of network analysis. Aurora, Philip and King Steven are the same largest nodes in the whole network while Maleficent, King Hubert and fairies are the smallest nodes. That means Aurora, Philip and King Steven are centered characters most used by other character nodes to connect to other nodes while Maleficent, King Hubert and fairies belong to edge characters that are separated from the centered character network.

In *Maleficent*, the betweenness figure of character relationship is totally different from the closeness figure of network analysis. In betweenness figure of *Maleficent*, Maleficent is the most centered character that is maximally used by other minor characters. King Steven is the second-most used character and Aurora is the third-most used character.

Comparing two films, we can see in these two films, the betweenness changes a lot in about 70 years between two films. Maleficent, who is the least-betweenness character in *Sleeping Beauty*, becomes the most-betweenness character in *Maleficent* while Aurora, who is the most-betweenness character in

Sleeping Beauty, becomes only the third-betweeness one in *Maleficent*.

6. Marketing Strategy

For Sleeping Beauty,

Sleeping Beauty is an animated film whose target audience is children, so in order to attract more children, *Sleeping Beauty* tries its best to create a princess dream and use this as its marketing strategy. As a saying goes, every girl has a princess dream at the bottom of her heart. It is Disney that uses children's dream as business opportunities. In *Sleeping Beauty*, Aurora is created as a perfect girl figure. She is young and beautiful, with sunshine gold hair and shame-rose lips. She is noble, born in a royal family. With father a king and mother a queen, her birth is celebrated by thousands' of citizens. Although being cursed by an evil witch, Aurora is finally awakened by her Mr. Right, a prince, and finally marries the prince. Aurora's life is what every illusioned girl dreams of. A girl born with a gold spoon and beautiful appearance and finally receives a true love, these elements are used as marketing strategies by Disney and it do works.

For Maleficent

Compared with using dreamlike elements as marking strategy in *Sleeping Beauty*, *Maleficent* use a totally different way. *Maleficent* is a dark fantasy film which not attract children naturally, and that's why its target audience are normal people instead of small kids.

Complexity in story and characters are one of marketing strategies Disney uses to attract the audience. The character figures *Maleficent* creates are more complex, where conflicts and contradictory subjected in their heart. Maleficent is not a representation of pure evil, but a flash-and-blood woman who is easily to be absorbed in the love and be hurt. Like a human being, her hurt can be cruelled by Aurora's purity and she finally forgives the hatred between Steven and herself. The character of King Steven is also a light spot in *Maleficent*. Instead of describing Steven as a loved and kind king, *Maleficent* describes Steven as a greedy and ambitious man who regards position and wealth as the most important thing in his heart. He does love Maleficent, but his love is overshadowed by his own desire. The love and hatred story between Maleficent and Steven enrich the whole story, making it no more a simple story of a prince waking up a beautiful princess with his true love kiss. Nowadays, as the media becomes more and more complex and intellectually challenging, people also become smarter and look forwards to more complex film. Therefore, in terms of catering to the audience's taste, Disney's marketing strategy of using complexity as selling point is absolutely successful.

Another remarkable marking strategy Disney uses in *Maleficent* is increasing the audience's watching experience by adding many special effects and film formats. For special effects, *Maleficent* pay much attention to balancing "the use of practical and computer-generated effect" to create a magic and dreamlike setting of the film (wiki). For example, the magic Moors forest and the creatures in the forest are all created by using blue and green screen and computer composition. While Maleficent's horns

and facial prosthetics are created by makeup, but facial capture technique is also used to create high-quality frames (wiki). For film formats, *Maleficent* also has released multiple film formats such as “Disney Digital 3D”, “RealD 3D”, “IMAX 3D” and as well as screening them in conventional theatre, to attract more audience, and its method did works. In 2014, *Maleficent* grossed over \$758 million worldwide, becoming the fourth-highest-grossing film of 2014 (wiki). It is absolutely a huge success.

Although using different marketing strategies, the aims of *Sleeping Beauty* and *Maleficent* are pretty similar, which is to cater to the audience’s taste and attract more audience.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, I regard *Maleficent* a more complex film than *Sleeping Beauty*, which in a way proves what Steven Johnson says in his book “popular culture has, on average, grown more complex and intellectually challenging” (Johnson, 10). *Maleficent* has more complex story, more complex plots, more conflicted and variable characters, more complex characters’ relationships, more complex photographing techniques and more usage of marketing strategies.

Therefore, the audience regard *Sleeping Beauty* as a perfectly good film, but not as attractive as *Maleficent*, which is also corresponding to Steven Johnson’s statement “Today’s popular culture may not be showing us rightest path, but is making us

smarter”(Johnson). People become smarter because of complex popular culture and look forward to more complex ones.

Not only in *Maleficent*, we can also easily find more complex elements in recent films than early-ages film. The possible reasons for more complexing trend of popular can be concluded as three points.

First, the development of new technology adds to the complexity of film. Nowadays, many films use special effects and even 3D technique as their marketing strategies. For example, In *Maleficent*, blue-and-green-screen technique is applied to the film while it is impossible for people to get attached to these high technology in early ages.

Second, as time goes, people have a more profound understanding of human beings and human relations. For example, in early ages, Disney films are always a simple story of prince and princess such as *Snow White*, *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty* which mentioned throughout my whole paper. However, as time goes, more and more media begin to talk about humanity and complex human relations, giving audience an impressive and deep understanding of human, thus adding to the complexity of the media. Third, after hearing so many stories, people are always looking for new and unknown stories. People love new and different things, and that’s why the old story that was interesting is not more attractive after being told for several times. That’s why recent films which are adapted from old stories intend to add some complexity to increase their attraction.

With the increase in complexity of popular culture, the audience becomes smarter

and expects more complex stories. The possible reasons for that can be concluded as below. Complex popular culture gives people a desire for exploring, thus making people smarter during the period of exploration. Since the development of the world, people are not only enjoy the interesting story of the film, but also pay more attention to the techniques used and meaning implied in the film. They begin to analyze the photographing and editing techniques as well as exploring the deep meaning under the interesting story. Through exploration, people learn more techniques to understand complex things from increasingly complex films, thus becoming smarter and smarter.

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